A MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP FOR WORK PERFORMANCE ACROSS LEVELS IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

by

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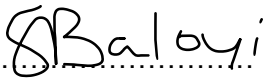
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled, “A model of employee engagement, leadership and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature of student: …  …… Date: 12 October 2026

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ABSTRACT

A MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP FOR WORK PERFORMANCE ACROSS LEVELS IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

By Sylvia H Baloyi

Supervisor: **Prof OM Ledimo**
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This study aimed to develop a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations. The secondary aim was to understand the relationship between biographical variables and research variables.

The researcher conducted quantitative research, in which data were collected through a survey and statistically analysed. The instrument developers permitted the researcher to use their scales. The researcher received ethical clearance to collect research data. The survey questionnaire consisted of 5 sections, with the first section being biographical, followed by four respective scales namely: South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) by Nienaber & Martins (2014); the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) by Barbuto & Wheeler (2006); the Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) by Kelley (1992), and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) by Koopmans (2015).

A sample of 393 participants completed the survey via the iFeedback online system. The results revealed that employee engagement has a positive relationship with performance, leadership has a positive relationship with performance, and followership has a small but significant relationship with performance. Employee engagement has a positive relationship with leadership and a non-significant relationship with followership. Leadership has a positive relationship with followership. The biographical variables (gender, age, job grade) are significantly related to research variables, including employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance.

The theoretical model was developed to provide conceptual clarity and to explain the relationships among research variables and biographical variables. The theoretical model was tested to develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership and their effects on work performance across levels in South African organisations.

The study developed the theoretical and empirical models as a contribution to industrial and organisational psychology. The models can be used to advance future research and practice, providing deeper insights into how organisations can effectively foster engagement and performance in the workplace. The research limitations and recommendations for further research were provided.

KEYWORDS

Employee Engagement, Followership, Work Performance, Leadership, Power Dynamics, Model Development, Servant Leadership, Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Workplace, Quantitative Research

IQOQA

INDLELA YOKUHLANGANYELA KWABASEBENZI, UBUHOLI KANYE NOKULANDELELA INDLELA YOKUSEBENZA KUWOWONKE AMAZINGA KWIZINHLANGANO ZASENINGIZIMU AFRIKA

Ngu Sylvia H Baloyi

Induna uSolwazi: **Prof OM Ledimo**
UMnyango: **Wezezimboni Nokusebenza Kwengqondo Ezikhungweni Zokusebenza**
Iziqu: **Ezobudokotela (EZENGQONDO)**

Lesi sifundo sihlose ukuthuthukisa indlela yokuhlanganyela kwabasebenzi, ubuholi, kanye nokulandelela indlela abasebenzi abasebenza ngayo kuwowonke amazinga kwizinhlangano zaseNingizimu Afrika. Inhloso yesibili kwakuwukuqonda ubudlelwano phakathi kokuguquguquka okumayelana nempilo yangempela yomuntu kanye nokuguquguquka kocwaningo.

Umcwaningi wenze ucwaningozinombolo, lapho imininingo yaqoqwa ngesaveyi futhi yahlaziywa ngezibalomdanti. Abathuthukisi bezinsizaqoqamininingo bavumele umcwaningi asebenzise izikali zabo. Umcwaningi uthole imvume yokuziphatha ukuqoqa imininingo yocwaningo. Uhlu lwemibuzo lwesaveyi lwalunezigaba ezi-5, isigaba sokuqala sibe ngempilomlando womuntu, silandelwa yizilinganiso ezine okuyilezi: Isikali Sezokuhlanganyela Kwabasebenzi baseNingizimu Afrika (i-SAEES) sa-Nienaber no-Martins (2014); Uhlu Lwemibuzo Lwezobuholi Bezabasebenzi (i-SLQ) lwa-Barbuto no-Wheeler (2006); Uhlu Lwemibuzo Ngezindlela Abantu ababuza ngayo (i-PSQ) lwa-Kelley (1992), kanye Nohlu Lwemibuzo Lokusebenza Komuntu Ngamunye (i-IWPQ) lwa-Koopmans (2015).

Isampula yababambiqhaza abangama-393 baqede isaveyi ngohlelo lwe-inthanethi lwe-iFeedback. Imiphumela iveze ukuthi ukuhlanganyela kwabasebenzi kunobudlelwano obuhle nokusebenza, ubuholi bunobudlelwano obuhle nokusebenza, kanti abalandeli banobudlelwano obuncane kodwa obubalulekile nokusebenza. Ukuhlanganyela kwabasebenzi kunobudlelwano obuhle nobuholi kanye nobudlelwano obungabalulekile nabalandeli. Ubuholi bunobudlelwano obuhle nabalandeli. Okuguquguqukayo okumayelana ngempilomlando yomuntu (ubulili, iminyaka, isikhundla somsebenzi) kuhambiselana kakhulu

nezinguquko zocwaningo, okufaka ukuhlanganyela kwabasebenzi, ubuholi bezisebenzi, abalandeli, kanye nendlela abasebenzi abasebenza ngayo.

Injulalwazi eyinsuselakuyo yathuthukiswa ukuhlinzeka ukucaciseleka komqondo kanye nokuchaza ubudlelwano phakathi kokuguquguquka kocwaningo kanye nokuguquguquka ngempilomlando yomuntu. Injulalwazi eyinsuselakuyo yavivinywa ukuthuthukisa imodeli yokuqina yokuzibandakanya kwabasebenzi, ubuholi, nokulandela kanye nomthelela wabo kwindlela abasebenza ngayo kuwowonke amazinga kwizinhlangano zaseNingizimu Afrika.

Isifundo sithuthukise amamodeli enjulalwazi kanye abambekayo njengegalelo Izimboni Nokusebenza Kwengqondo Ezikhungweni Zokusebenza. Amamodeli angasetshenziswa ukuqhubekisela phambili ucwaningo nokusebenza kwesikhathi esizayo, ahlinzeke imininingwane ejulile yokuthi izinhlangano zingakhuthaza kanjani ngempumelelo ukuhlanganyela nokusebenza emsebenzini. Imikhawulo yocwaningo kanye nezincomo zocwaningo olwengeziwe zanikezwa.

AMAGAMA ASEMQOKA

Ukuhlanganyela Kwabasebenzi, Ubulandeli, Indlela abasebenza ngayo abasebenzi, Ubuholi, Amandla kwezeziguquguquli, Imodeli Yokuthuthukisa, Ubuholi Kwezokusebenza, Izimboni Nokusebenza Kwengqondo Ezikhungweni Zokusebenza, Indawo yokusebenza, Ucwaningozinombolo

TSHOBOKANYO

MMOTLELE WA GO TSAYA KAROLO GA BADIRI MO TIRONG, BOETELEDIPELE LE BOLATEDI JWA TIRAGATSO YA TIRO GO RALALA MAEMO MO DITLAMONG TSA AFORIKABORWA

Ka Sylvia H Baloyi

Mookamedi: **Mop. OM Ledimo**
Lefapha: **Thutotlhaloganyo ya Diintaseteri le Ditlamo**
Lekwalo Thuto: **PhD (THUTOTLHALOGANYO)**

Thutopatlisiso e e ikaeletse go tlhama mmotlele wa go tsaya karolo ga badiri mo tirong, boeteledipele, le bolatedi jwa tiragatso ya tiro go ralala maemo mo ditlamong tsa Aforikaborwa. Maikaelelo a bobedi e ne e le go tlhaloganya kamano magareng ga diphetogo tsa bayokerafi le diphetogo tsa dipatlisiso.

Mmatlisisi o dirile patlisiso ya sekwantitatifi, e mo go yona dinewa di neng tsa kokoanngwa ka patlisiso le go sekasekwa ka dipalopalo. Batlhami ba didiriswa ba ne ba letla mmatlisisi go dirisa dikala tsa bona. Mmatlisisi o amogetse tetla ya maitshwaro go kokoanya dinewa tsa patlisiso. Lenaanepotso la patlisiso le ne le na le dikarolo di le 5, mme karolo ya ntlha e ne e le ya bayokerafi, e bo e latelwa ke dikala di le nne ka go latelana e leng: Sekala sa go Tsaya Karolo ga Badiri mo Tirong sa Aforikaborwa (SAEES) ka Nienaber & Martins (2014); Lenaanepotso la Boeteledipele jwa Bodiredi (SLQ) ka Barbuto & Wheeler (2006); Lenaanepotso la Ditaele tsa Botho (PSQ) ka Kelley (1992), le Lenaanepotso la Tiragatso ya Tiro ya Motho ka Nosi (IWPQ) ka Koopmans (2015).

Sampole ya batsayakarolo ba le 393 e ne ya konosetsa patlisiso ka thulaganyo ya maranyane ya iFeedback. Dipholo di senotse gore go tsaya karolo ga badiri mo tirong go na le kamano e e siameng le tiragatso, boeteledipele bo na le kamano e e siameng le tiragatso, mme bolatedi bo na le kamano ya botlhokwa e nnye le tiragatso. Go tsaya karolo ga badiri mo tirong go na le kamano e e siameng le boeteledipele le kamano e e seng botlhokwa le bolatedi. Boeteledipele bo na le kamano e e siameng le bolatedi. Diphetogo tsa bayokerafi (bong, dingwaga, maemo a tiro) di amana thata le diphetogo tsa patlisiso, go akaretsa le go tsaya karolo ga badiri mo tirong, boeteledipele jwa bodiredi, bolatedi, le tiragatso ya tiro.

Mmotlele wa tiori o ne wa tlhamiwa go tlamela ka tlhaloso e e tlhamaletseng ya dikgopolo le go tlhalosa dikamano magareng ga diphetogo tsa patlisiso le diphetogo tsa bayokerafi. Mmotlele wa tiori o ne wa lekwa go tlhama mmotlele wa maitemogelo wa go tsaya karolo ga badiri mo tirong, boeteledipele, le bolatedi le ditlamorago tsa tsona mo tiragatsong ya tiro go ralala maemo mo ditlamong tsa Aforikaborwa.

Thutopatlisiso e tlhamile dimmotlele tsa tiori le tsa maitemogelo jaaka ketleetso mo thutong ya tlhaloganyo ya diintaseteri le ditlamo. Dimmotlele di ka dirisiwa go tsweletsa dipatlisiso le tiriso mo isagong, go tlamela ka dintlha tse di tseneletseng tsa ka fao ditlamo di ka rotloetsang go tsaya karolo le tiragatso ka katlego mo tirong. Dikgoreletsi le dikatlanegiso tsa patlisiso e nngwe di ne tsa neelwa.

MAREO A DIKÔNÔKÔNÔ

Go Tsaya Karolo ga Badiri mo Tirong, Bolatedi, Tiragatso ya Tiro, Boeteledipele, Diphetogo tsa Maatla, Tlhabololo ya Mmotlele, Boeteledipele jwa Bodiredi, Thutotlhaloganyo ya Diintaseteri le Ditlamo, Lefelo la Tiro, Patlisiso ya Sekwantitatifi

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I dedicate this study to my late parents, Lucas and Johanna Baloyi, for believing in me, serving as role models, and inspiring me to become the best version of myself.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial intelligence
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
AVE	Average variance extracted
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CI	Confidence interval
CR	Composite reliability
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human resources management
IFT	Implicit followership theory
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IWPQ	Individual Work Performance Questionnaire
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
NDP	National Development Plan
PSQ	Personal Styles Questionnaire
SAEES	South African Employee Engagement Scale
SEM	Structural equation modelling
SLQ	Servant Leadership Questionnaire

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study focused on developing a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across South African organisations. The researcher focused on understanding leadership and followership from a behavioural perspective. A significant body of knowledge, including articles, conventions, commissions, policies, legislation, and resolutions, addressed employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

This chapter presents the study's background and motivation, problem statement, research questions, aims and hypothesis, contributions and significance, paradigm, and literature review. Subsequent sections outline the research methodology and design utilised. The research design encompasses methodology, strategy, research tools, and processes. The final section presents statistical analysis, findings, limitations, conclusions, and recommendations. A summary of the organisation of the chapter is included at the conclusion.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

This study intends to identify the underlying factors of employee engagement, leadership, and followership dimensions to develop a work performance model. The model serves as a framework to guide employees' development, enhance workplace performance, promote engagement, foster collaboration between leaders and followers, promote fairness, and improve their quality of life. The study included individuals across South African organisations. Understanding the nature of workplace changes and how they affect individuals, teams, and organisations post-COVID-19 was essential.

This research took place in South African organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted traditional organisational methods and accelerated workplace transformations already underway. A major workplace change was the rapid adoption of technology-driven methods (Nascimento et al., 2025). Organisations had to reevaluate entrenched policies and procedures for work arrangements, leading to greater adoption of remote, hybrid, and digitally facilitated work models (Pavlista et al., 2024). Although remote work was not new before the pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated its adoption as organisations sought to maintain operational continuity during social distancing and lockdowns.

The subsequent transition to post-pandemic employment has permanently altered organisational work practices, employee expectations, and employer-employee relationships. This shift has created both opportunities and challenges for organisations and employees. Remote and hybrid work arrangements gave employees greater autonomy, flexibility, and opportunities to balance work and personal responsibilities (Kalmanovich-Cohen, 2025). At the same time, geographically dispersed employment may hinder communication, collaboration, social interaction, organisational connection, and the psychological boundary between work and personal life. Post-pandemic, organisations progressively implemented flexible work policies endorsed by leadership, performance management systems, and employee wellness efforts to optimise productivity while maintaining employee engagement (Bloom et al., 2024).

These changes persisted after the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed below.

Workplace changes at the individual, team, and organisational levels require systematic, integrated attention because examining these interconnected levels enabled the researcher to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics, mechanisms, and contextual factors underlying the research problem. (Bögel et al., 2019; Alavi et al., 2023).

At the individual level, workplace changes can alter employees' knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, professional identity, psychological resources, and perceived ability to work efficiently (Ackerman & Kanfer, R., 2020). Technological shifts or changes in professional roles may create skill gaps, while changes can raise doubts about career trajectories and employment circumstances. (George, 2024).

Team-level changes occur when employees modify how they engage, communicate, organise responsibilities, and share accountability (Ejaz, 2024). Digital technologies have redefined how teams communicate, collaborate, and manage work. In contrast, hybrid and flexible work configurations require new methods to foster connection, trust, accountability, and effective communication among employees (Lane et al., 2024). These changes can create role ambiguity and may lead to interpersonal conflict if expectations are not clearly defined. Team members require the opportunity to jointly interpret the change and develop productive ways of working (Leonardi et al., 2024)

Organisational-level workplace changes involve adjustments that affect an organisation's structure, strategy, systems, policies, technology, culture, and overall operating methods (Ashok et al, 2021). Organisations encounter digital advancement, technology adoption, adjustments in work setups, mergers and acquisitions, legislative shifts, economic strains, and

shifting client expectations. These changes can alter employees' roles, reporting lines, workload, performance expectations, and sense of job security. Change should be conceptualised as an organisational and people-management process. (Trennerry, 2021)

Addressing individual, team, and organisational changes will improve employee engagement, increase collaboration between leaders and followers, and enhance workplace performance. The next section elaborates on the constructs of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

a. Employee engagement

Employee engagement is a crucial source of competitive advantage in organisations. According to Nienaber and Martins (2015, p 405), employee engagement refers to “engaged employees at both the individual, team and organisational level, who are fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work, and so take positive action to further the organisation’s reputation and interests”. This definition addresses engagement at individual, team and organisational levels. The dimensions of employee engagement are organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, strategy and implementation, and immediate manager.

According to Gallup (2025), global employee engagement dropped from 23% to 21% in 2024, costing the global economy in productivity losses. Employee engagement contributes significantly to organisational effectiveness by reducing absenteeism, turnover intentions, and workplace stress while enhancing creativity, organisational citizenship behaviour, and productivity (Cai et al., 2024). Leadership will be discussed next.

b. Leadership

Leadership has evolved, as evidenced by early and contemporary perspectives. Early leadership theories were based on the idea that successful leaders have certain characteristics that differentiate them from one another. Although the researcher discusses leadership broadly, the focus is on servant leadership because it aligns with employee engagement and followership. The researcher takes a behavioural perspective on leadership. According to Yukl et al. (2013, p 23), “leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”.

This definition suggests that leadership involves influencing others and encouraging them to achieve shared goals.

Barbuto and Hayden (2011, p. 32) define servant leadership as a leadership ideology that prioritises service to others over self-interest and is typified by organisational stewardship, wisdom, emotional healing, altruistic calling, and persuasive mapping. In servant leadership, a leader's motivation and actions are guided by their values, beliefs, and ideals.

Servant leadership is an essential organisational tool that can influence employees' attitudes, behaviours, and mental states. Followership is discussed next.

c. Followership

Organisations rarely use followership and follower concepts; instead, they often use terms such as subordinates, employees, or staff to refer to followers. According to Kelley (1992, p. 12), followership refers to "people who know what to do without being told; the people act with intelligence, independence, courage and a strong sense of ethics". This definition implies that followers engage in independent thought and action to fulfil organisational objectives.

Kelley (1992) identified two dimensions of followership: critical thinking and active involvement.

Furthermore, Kelley (1992) argues that leaders contribute, on average, no more than 20% to organisational success, while followers contribute the remaining 80%. This suggests that followers play a bigger role in the organisation's success than leaders do. Work performance will be discussed next.

d. Work performance

Work performance draws on various disciplines (including psychology, management, human resources (HR), business, and consulting). Koopmans et al. (2014, p. 53) defined individual work performance as behaviours or actions relevant to organisational goals. This definition suggests that individuals act and behave in ways that achieve organisational goals. The dimensions of individual work performance are task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Based on the literature, understanding the relationships among employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance is necessary, as these factors contribute to organisational productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Complexity of work performance

i) Work performance is better understood as a multifaceted, behavioural, and contextual concept rather than a single measure of an employee's output. This complexity stems from the fact that effective performance encompasses multiple behaviours that operate concurrently and can vary in their impact on organisational effectiveness. The literature often categorises task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour as significant facets of individual job performance (Koopmans, 2011; Krijgsheld et al 2022;

ii) The main technical elements of task execution include efficiently accomplishing formal responsibilities, obligations, and job-specific tasks. Contextual performance involves behaviours that support the social, psychological, and organisational settings in which work occurs. Adaptive performance involves an employee's ability to address dynamic work expectations, technological advancements, procedural changes, role modifications, and varying conditions. Counterproductive work behaviour reflects the negative side of performance and includes actions that can hinder organisational or interpersonal efficiency (Krijgsheld et al., 2022). This multifaceted nature implies that performance evaluation must focus on both employees' behaviours and the methods they use. This is clarified through the concepts of adaptive performance and unproductive work behaviour.

A third intricate facet concerns the situational nature of performance. Work performance is not merely a result of an employee's inherent traits; it arises from the interplay of personal abilities, motivation, job requirements, organisational resources, leadership, interpersonal dynamics, and the overall work context. Thus, performance must be understood within the circumstances in which employees execute their tasks.

The problem statement is presented next.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Employees at all levels of the organisation navigate an increasingly complicated employment context defined by technological change, fluctuating job arrangements, economic instability, increased performance demands, and shifting relationships between employees and employers (Hesselbarth et al., 2024). Despite differing experiences among executive, senior management, management, supervisory, and operational employees, these challenges are linked and can collectively affect employee engagement, psychological health, organisational commitment, and job efficacy (Hameli et al., 2025). The challenges facing different levels are presented below

i) Operational or subordinate levels

Employees at operational or subordinate levels often face workload pressures, reduced autonomy, limited resources, unclear expectations, job insecurity, and limited opportunities for career advancement (Zhang et al., 2025). These employees may have little influence over organisational decisions, even as they directly face client interactions, production demands, administrative obligations, and performance objectives.

ii) Supervisory and management levels

At supervisory and management levels, workplace challenges become more complex because these individuals sit between senior management and operational employees. Supervisors and middle managers are expected to translate strategic goals into actionable tasks, oversee performance, address employee challenges, and enforce organisational policies, while also accommodating senior management requests (Jimmy & Le Roux, 2025). This intermediary role can create role ambiguity, emotional pressure, and conflicting expectations.

iii) Senior management and executive levels

Senior management and executive levels face challenges tied to strategic ambiguity, responsibility, organisational change, resource allocation, and reconciling conflicting stakeholder demands. Senior leadership addresses fiscal requirements, technology advancements, employee expectations, compliance regulations, and organisational performance objectives. As a result, senior and executive levels must ensure that technological advancement remains aligned with the human aspects of work (Wang et al., 2024). These challenges across levels show that employee well-being and performance are multilevel

organisational phenomena, not individual outcomes. Those in operational positions may require greater autonomy, resources, and developmental prospects; supervisors and middle managers may seek stronger leadership support, role clarity, and skills to manage multifaceted teams; while senior leaders need strategic, ethical, and human-centric competencies to navigate technological, economic, and organisational shifts (Wang et al., 2024).

These employee-level challenges affect the four constructs studied. Employee engagement, servant leadership, and followership have become essential organisational constructs that jointly influence individual and organisational performance in an increasingly complex, uncertain, and technology-driven work environment. This background and motivation led to the research questions as discussed below.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against this background, the study formulated its main research questions.
The study then formulated general and specific theoretical and empirical questions.

1.4.1 General research question

Can a model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance be developed?

1.4.2 Research questions related to the literature review

From the literature review, the following specific research questions were developed for the theoretical part of the study:

- Research question 1: How is the construct of employee engagement and its dimensions conceptualised in the literature?
- Research question 2: How is the construct of leadership and its dimensions conceptualised in the literature?
- Research question 3: How is the construct of followership and its dimensions conceptualised in the literature?
- Research question 4: How is the construct of work performance and its dimensions conceptualised in the literature?

- Research question 5: Are there any differences between biographical variables in relation to construct variables, namely, employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance?
- Research question 6: Is there a theoretical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance?
- Research question 7: Based on the literature review, can a theoretical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance be developed?

1.4.3 Research questions related to empirical study

The following specific empirical research questions were developed for the empirical part of the study:

- **Research Question 1**: What is the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations?
- **Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations?
- **Research Question 3**: What is the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations?
- **Research Question 4:** What is the relationship between work performance and its dimensions measured within South African organisations?
- **Research Question 5**: What are the differences in biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance?
- **Research Question 6:** What is the empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance?
- **Research Question 7:** Can an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance be developed

1.5 AIMS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

1.5.1 General aim of the study

The general aim of this research is as follows:

To develop a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations.

1.5.2 Specific aims related to the literature study

The following aims were formulated for the literature review:

- **Research Aim 1**: To conceptualise the construct of employee engagement and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 2:** To conceptualise the construct of leadership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 3:** To conceptualise the construct of followership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 4**: To conceptualise the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 5**: To determine differences between biographical variables about employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.
- **Research Aim 6:** To determine the theoretical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 7:** To develop a theoretical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

1.5.3 Specific aims related to the empirical study

The following aims were developed for the empirical study:

- **Research Aim 1**: To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions on work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 2:** To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions on work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 3**: To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions on work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 4:** To measure work performance and its dimensions within a South African perspective.
- **Research Aim 5**: To determine differences between biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

- **Research Aim 6**: To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 7:** To develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

These research aims led the researcher to develop the following hypotheses.

1.5.4 Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses empirically tested in this study are indicated below:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance.
- H4: There is a significant relationship between work performance and its dimensions.
- H5: There are significant differences between biographical variables in relation to the construct variables of the study.
- H6: There is a significant fit between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance in the performance model.
- H7: Develop a model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

The study highlighted important contributions, discussed below.

1.6 CONTRIBUTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study contributed theoretically, empirically, and practically.

1.6.1 Theoretical contributions

Theoretically, the study contributed to the body of knowledge on the constructs examined: employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Specifically, the study:

- Extends industrial and organisational psychology theory by integrating employee engagement, servant leadership, and followership into a unified framework.
- Advances followership literature by positioning followers as active contributors to performance outcomes.
- Contributes to positive organisational psychology literature by examining strengths-based organisational processes.

1.6.2 Empirical contributions

Empirically, the theoretical model results served as the basis for developing a model of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

Specifically, the study:

- Provides evidence from African (in particular South African) organisational contexts where empirical studies remain limited.
- Provides an integrated model linking employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.
- Offers insights into the mechanisms through which employee engagement, servant leadership, and followership influence work performance outcomes.

1.6.3 Practical contributions

Finally, at a practical level, the study contributed to industrial and organisational psychology in general and to organisational development specifically. The study:

- Assists organisations in designing leadership development interventions focused on servant leadership competencies.
- Supports employee engagement strategies.

- Promotes followership development programmes emphasising accountability, initiative, and collaboration.
- Provides evidence-based recommendations for improving organisational performance in increasingly complex and technology-driven workplaces.

1.7 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

This section explains the philosophical assumptions of the current research. A paradigm is a unified set of assumptions, concepts, beliefs, and recognised methodologies that shape how a scientific community perceives events, develops research questions, and identifies what qualifies as genuine information. Kuhn (1970) argued that scientific communities operate within shared disciplinary frameworks that shape which problems are considered meaningful, which methods are legitimate, and which standards are used in research. In social sciences, a paradigm therefore extends beyond a particular research method; it provides a worldview that shapes assumptions about reality, knowledge and appropriate forms of inquiry. This study adopts positivist and humanistic paradigms. The positivist paradigm is fundamental in social science research. In this perspective, the researcher used scientific methods to understand behaviour. The two paradigms were discussed in detail below:

1.7.1 Positivist paradigm

The study was grounded in a positivist research paradigm, which assumes that reality exists independently of the researcher and can be objectively measured through empirical observation and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). This study adopted a positivist paradigm, which is a scientific approach that involves proposing hypotheses to explain phenomena and then designing research to test them. According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), the positivist paradigm enables researchers to rely more on statistics and to make more generalisations, resulting in the development of universal rules and conclusions. To make outcomes more valid and broadly applicable, the research process must be objective. Maksimovic and Evtimov (2023) note certain assumptions of the positivist paradigm. First, the quantitative method implies a positivist worldview grounded in cause-and-effect relationships, which both challenges and supports existing hypotheses. Second, the positivist paradigm maintains that phenomena in the social sciences are just as measurable as those in natural science. Third, the positivist paradigm emphasises objective facts unaffected by subjective interpretation.

1.7.2 Humanistic paradigm

The humanistic paradigm focuses on understanding the behaviours that enable individuals to flourish. The humanistic paradigm conceptualises human beings as active, purposeful, meaning-making, and potentially self-directed, rather than merely passive recipients of environmental forces. Humanistic psychology therefore regards the person as an integrated whole and places considerable importance on understanding individuals within

Maslow's (2013) contributions added significance when humanistic thought is applied in organisational and developmental frameworks. This provides a foundational theory for recognising that humans can surpass immediate material or security anxieties in pursuit of competence, purpose, contribution, and the actualisation of potential.

Rogers (1951) contrasted contexts characterised by acceptance with those that impose conditions of worth. His framework underscored three key therapeutic conditions: congruence (sincerity), unconditional positive regard, and empathetic understanding. These conditions were first established in psychotherapy but have gained prominence outside of counselling, as they present a theoretical rationale for how interpersonal relationships might enhance psychological growth. (Rogers 1951).

Although the current study employs a positivist paradigm, the humanistic paradigm remains relevant because of the constructs examined: employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance, all of which support employee development, empowerment, and well-being (Antoci, 2019; Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leadership is fundamentally based on fostering and serving followers, with an emphasis on their personal development and well-being (Eva et al., 2019; Greenleaf, 1977). Employee engagement refers to employees' psychological commitment to their work and organisation (Schaufeli et al., 2010), while modern followership theories view followers as proactive, autonomous, and accountable participants in organisational success, rather than passive recipients of leadership (Kelley, 1992).

Thus, the humanistic paradigm offers a significant theoretical framework by highlighting individual development, purposeful employment, and supportive workplace relationships, which align with the study's emphasis on identifying factors that improve work performance (Antoci, 2019; Eva et al., 2019). The positivist and humanistic paradigms informed the literature review on employee engagement, leadership, followership, and individual work performance.

Despite their divergent philosophical assumptions, positivism and humanism complement each other within this study's framework.

1.7.3 Research Assumptions

The research assumptions are explained through ontology, epistemology and methodology.

i) Ontology

Ontology assumes that a measurable organisational phenomenon exists. It concerns assumptions about the essence, structure, and existence of reality, establishing the philosophical basis for what can be validly examined (Lundh, 2018). In this study, elements such as employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance are treated as tangible aspects of organisational existence that can be measured using assessment tools.

ii) Epistemology

Epistemology focuses on the fundamental aspects of knowledge, the interaction between the researcher and the examined reality, and the conditions under which knowledge claims are considered achievable (Lundh, 2018). Within a quantitative positivist paradigm, epistemology generally contends that methodical observation, measurement, and empirical testing can provide knowledge of an external reality, with the researcher striving to diminish subjective influence throughout the study process. Guba and Lincoln (1994) characterise positivism as adopting dualist/objectivist epistemology. Researchers investigating the connections among employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance would develop theoretically grounded hypotheses and assess them utilising data gathered through suitable assessment tools. The rigour of the study depends on the quality of conceptualisation, operationalisation, reliability and validity of the metrics, sampling methodologies, statistical premises, model delineation, and interpretation of findings.

iii) Methodology

Methodology describes the methodical reasoning and processes through which information is developed, and research problems are investigated. In a quantitative positivist study, methodology often involves converting theoretical constructs into quantifiable variables, defining theoretically derived relationships, collecting systematic numerical data, and applying appropriate statistical analyses to evaluate hypotheses (Creswell et al, 2023).

Methodological questions concern the methods and tools used to gather information. In the current study, the researcher selected a sample to test their theories and hypotheses and collect and analyse data; they used techniques such as surveys and quantitative analysis (Liu, 2022).

1.7.4 Meta-theoretical statement

The meta-theoretical perspective enabled the researcher to understand and apply theory to validate, test, and select variables that informed the understanding of human behaviour. The concepts and theories of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance formed part of the meta-theories researched from industrial and organisational psychology, positive psychology and organisational behaviour. The following meta-theoretical statements were relevant to the study.

1.7.4.1 Industrial and organisational psychology

According to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2025a), industrial and organisational psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour and the application of psychological principles in organisations and the workplace. The aim is to ethically explain, assess, predict, and influence human behaviour and its reciprocity at the individual, group, and organisational levels, to support optimal functioning, human flourishing, and the sustainable development of all affected stakeholders.

Schreuder and Coetzee (2010) summarise the various sub-fields as follows:

- Personnel psychology is concerned with the scientific study of individual differences in work settings.
- Organisational psychology is the study of how organisations affect the attitudes and behaviours of their employees.
- Career psychology provides models and explanations for organisational career-related activities, which is the primary goal of career psychology.
- Psychometrics focuses on the process of measuring, predicting, interpreting, and communicating an individual's distinctive qualities for a variety of work-related objectives. It is a component of psychological evaluation.

- Ergonomics is the study of human–machine interfaces or how people interact with systems, including decision-making processes, communication networks, and industrial systems.
- Consumer psychology focuses on the psychological aspects of consumer behaviour. It systematically studies the relationship between the producers or distributors and consumers (actual or potential recipients) of goods and services.

1.7.4.2 Organisational development

This research examines the variables from an organisational development perspective.

According to Mohapatra and Subhadarshini (2025), organisational development is a deliberate, all-encompassing effort. It aims to advance flexibility, effectiveness, and health through process improvement, leadership development, and cultural transformation. It examines interventions that link shared values, norms, and organisational structures to external factors.

1.7.4.3 Positive Psychology

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2014) define positive psychology as a science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions that promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless.

It shifts from a predominant focus on pathology to enriching attributes that contribute to a fulfilling life. Hope, knowledge, creativity, forward-thinking, bravery, spirituality, responsibility, and tenacity are disregarded or characterised as evolutions of more true adverse instincts. (Wang et al. 2023)

Employee engagement, leadership, followership, and job performance may be regarded as interdependent facets of a larger positive organisational ecosystem. Leadership can foster circumstances that yield psychological and relational resources; employees, as followers, actively interpret and respond to these circumstances; engagement is vital in the current research.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

The four study variables, employee engagement, leadership in general and specifically servant leadership, followership, and work performance, are discussed in this section, starting with employee engagement. The rationale for choosing these four constructs was that they illustrate separate yet interconnected elements of the same organisational structure. Employee engagement reflects employees' psychological and energetic dedication to their work; leadership refers to the overarching process of influencing employees; servant leadership offers a relational and developmental perspective on how leadership is practised; followership views employees as active agents in that relationship; and work performance represents a key behavioural outcome. Each variable is discussed below.

1.8.1 Employee engagement

Employee engagement plays a crucial role in this study because it reflects the extent to which employees dedicate cognitive, emotional, and energetic resources to their tasks, thereby translating organisational conditions into employee performance. Although employee engagement is widely applied in academic and workplace settings, no agreed-upon definition exists. Definitions and interpretations of employee engagement are inconsistent. Kahn's 1990 personal engagement theory remains a foundational work in organisational psychology. According to Kahn (1990, p. 694), personal engagement is “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Modern engagement theories include social exchange theory (Saks, 2006). Saks (2006) defines engagement as a reciprocal relationship between employees and their organisation.

According to Nienaber and Martins (2015, p. 405), “employee engagement refers to engaged employees at both the individual and organisational level, who are fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work, and so take positive action to further the organisation’s reputation and interests.”

An organisation with ‘high’ employee engagement may therefore outperform those with ‘low’ employee engagement, all else being equal. According to Ndoro and Martins (2019), employee engagement takes place at the individual, team, and organisational levels. Because they relate to their work emotionally and cognitively, engaged employees are more likely to work harder.

Employee engagement is becoming an essential tool organisations use to improve performance.

The dimensions of employee engagement in this study are as follows (Martins & Nienaber, 2018):

- Organisational satisfaction includes having a meaningful, enjoyable, and inspiring job, a general feeling of job satisfaction, and represents engagement at the individual level.
- Organisational commitment involves a commitment to the organisation, taking pride in the work being done, the congruence between personal and organisational values, positivity about the organisation's future, and engagement at the organisational level.
- Organisational strategy and implementation determine whether employees are encouraged to develop new ideas and whether initiatives are encouraged. Such initiatives aim to determine whether employees are involved in implementing the strategy and represent engagement at the organisational level.
- The last dimension is the immediate manager, which measures how an employee is supported and engaged by their immediate manager or supervisor.

1.8.2 Leadership

Leadership is essential in this research because it is a crucial organisational tool for establishing direction, influence, support, significance, and behavioural norms.

Leadership has evolved, as evidenced by early and contemporary perspectives. Early leadership theories were based on the idea that successful leaders have certain characteristics that differentiate them from one another. Contemporary theories offer multi-dimensional perspectives.

Below are leadership theories which emerged over the years and focused on different aspects of leadership

- The great man theory substantially influenced early leadership studies by positing that specific human characteristics affect leadership efficacy (Carlyle,1841)
- Trait theory posits that successful leaders exhibit discernible personal attributes, such as intelligence, confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Initially, trait theory aimed to identify universal leadership attributes (Stogdill, 1948)

- Behavioural theory posits that effective leadership is contingent upon visible actions rather than innate traits, therefore endorsing the notion that leadership can be acquired and cultivated (Northouse, 2023).
- Ohio State University and the University of Michigan identified characteristics associated with effective leadership, including task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours
- Contingency theory enhanced leadership research by acknowledging that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the interplay between leadership style and situational favourability (Fiedler, 1967)
- Situational leadership theory acknowledges that proficient leaders modify their leadership behaviours based on the competence and commitment of their followers (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969)
- Charismatic leadership theory was established by Weber (1947), who characterised charisma as an exceptional trait in leaders that engenders loyalty and dedication among their followers.

- Transformational leadership enhances employee motivation, organisational commitment, innovation, and performance by inspiring followers to pursue higher-order organisational goals (Bass, 1985
- Transactional leadership relies on exchanges between leaders and followers that involve rewards and corrective measures (Bass, 1985).
- Ethical leadership entails exhibiting normatively suitable behaviour and promoting ethical conduct among subordinates (Brown et al., 2019).
- Spiritual leadership enhances meaningful work, organisational commitment, employee well-being, and intrinsic drive by cultivating hope, vision, and altruistic principles (Meng, 2016; Fry,
- Authentic leadership enhances trust, psychological safety, and employee engagement by promoting transparency, self-awareness, and ethical conduct (Alavi & Gill, 2017; Walumbwa et al., 2008).
- Contextual leadership offers a more comprehensive understanding of leadership by acknowledging that organisational, cultural, and environmental factors affect leadership effectiveness (Oc, 2018).
- Systems leadership fosters comprehensive thinking by acknowledging organisations as interrelated systems, thereby facilitating organisational learning, collaboration, and sustainable transformation (Senge, 2006).

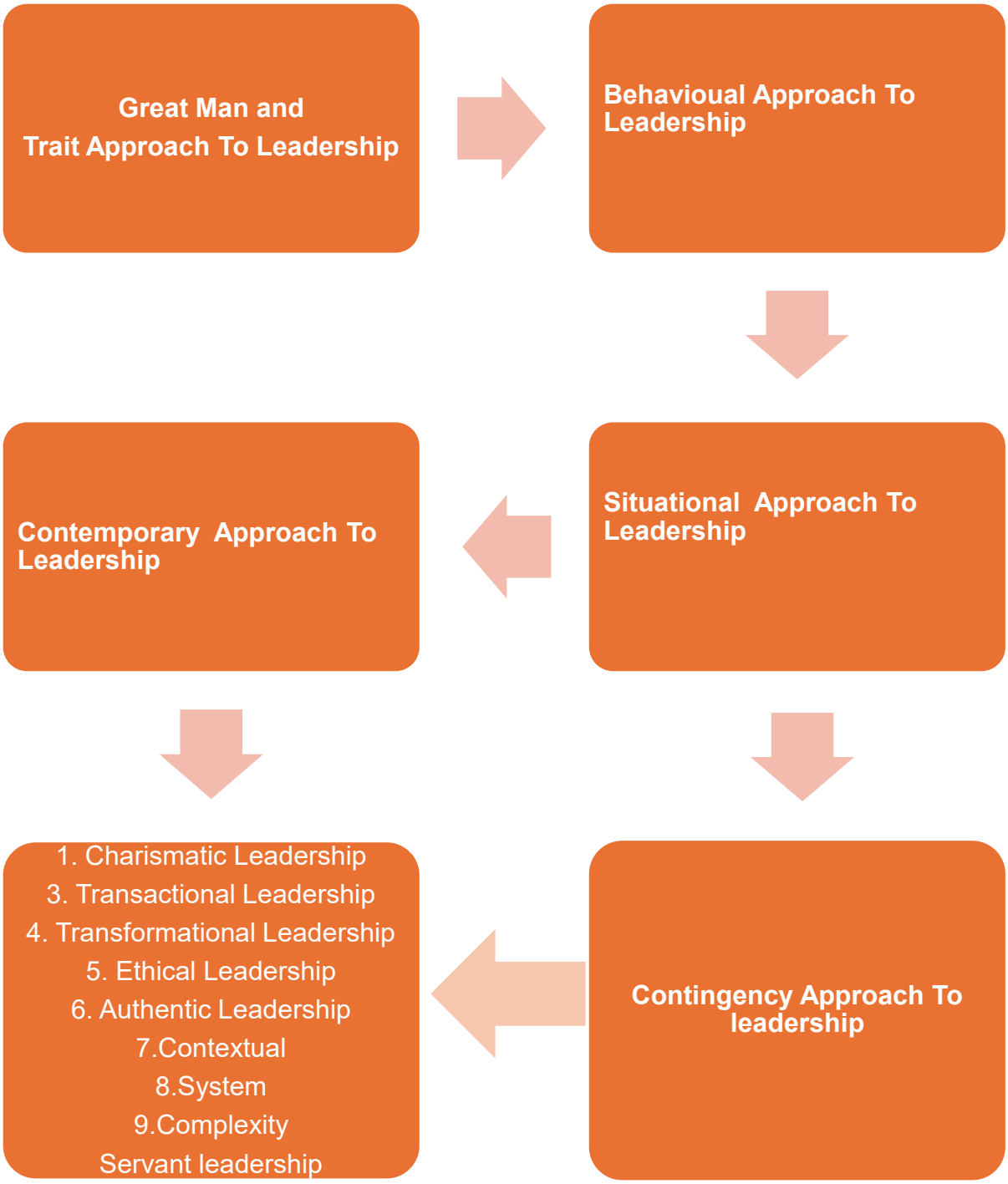
- Complexity leadership facilitates interactions among organisational members to enhance adaptive capacity, innovation, and organisational learning Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018

Each of the above theories is relevant to this study for understanding the different leadership approaches leaders can adopt in the workplace. The detailed discussion will be presented in Chapter 3

This study focuses on servant leadership, which will be discussed next.

Figure 1.1

Widely used leadership approaches



1.8.2.1 Servant leadership

Servant leadership is an essential concept because it offers a distinctive, value-based conception of leadership in which serving, developing, empowering, and supporting followers are central to the leadership process. Servant leadership is evident at various levels within

modern organisations. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) argue that the servant leader serves at all levels, from the individual to the societal level. They have a passion to serve on an individual basis. At the interpersonal level, followers benefit from the leader. At the group level, the leader meets group members' needs. At the organisational level, the leader structures the organisation to serve the community. Lastly, on a societal level, the leader leaves a legacy for the common good.

This study presents the dimensions and measures of servant leadership adopted below.

i) Barbuto & Wheeler's Dimensions of servant leadership

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) conducted research to confirm the connections among the 10 dimensions identified by Spears (2010). They found that altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship are the five qualities crucial to servant leadership. Table 3.4 presents the five elements of servant leadership as formulated by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) through the empirical validation of Greenleaf's servant leadership concept. In contrast to Greenleaf's foundational conceptualisation, Barbuto and Wheeler translated servant leadership into quantifiable characteristics that encompass both interpersonal and organisational facets of leadership.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) posit that servant leadership reconceptualises leadership as an ethical obligation defined by listening, stewardship, empathy, humility, and a dedication to fostering individuals and communities (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995). This viewpoint is especially pertinent in varied and dynamic organisational settings, such as those in South Africa, where relational trust, social justice, employee dignity, and inclusive participation are increasingly acknowledged as vital factors in organisational effectiveness (Eva et al., 2019; Northouse, 2023).

Servant leadership aligns more closely with modern theories of followership and employee engagement than many leader-centric approaches. Servant leadership promotes follower empowerment, active engagement, collective accountability, and individual growth (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977). Thus, servant leadership is congruent with contemporary followership models that prioritise autonomous critical thinking and proactive involvement.

These five key dimensions that characterise servant leadership are altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, pp. 318–319). Table 1.1 presents and explains these.

Table 1.1

Key dimensions of servant leadership

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Altruistic calling	The leader's natural desire to impact the lives of others positively. Serving others and prioritising their needs over their own is how this leader hopes to make a positive impact.
Emotional healing	The leader's capacity and commitment to support spiritual recovery from trauma or adversity. This leader can help a follower recover spiritually. The employee's skilful listening and sympathetic attitude help them work through their issues.
Persuasive mapping	The degree to which leaders employ sound reasoning and mental models—the capacity to use sound reasoning and mental models to promote lateral thinking to influence others to act.
Wisdom	The best way to access knowledge since it combines the highest level of knowledge with practicality—the capacity to pay attention to what is going on around one and foresee its outcomes and consequences.
Organisational stewardship	The degree to which leaders equip their organisations to make constructive contributions to society through outreach, programmes, and community development.

According to Coetzer et al. (2017), servant leadership positively impacts work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, creativity and innovation, organisational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, person–job fit, leader–member exchange, and work–life balance, all of which benefit individuals. Servant leadership also affects team- or group-level characteristics, including identification, service culture, climate, procedural justice climate, and organisational citizenship behaviour. Lastly, servant leadership is strongly correlated with sales and customer service at the organisational level. According to Williams et al. (2017), servant leaders support and serve followers through empowerment, humility, leading through organisational insight, persuasion, and conceptualisation for the organisation's benefit. When leaders apply servant leadership principles, they show the authenticity and sincerity needed to care for followers' well-being.

Through cultivating networks, servant leaders gain insight into the organisational resources needed to benefit their followers. Servant leaders are likely to positively impact followers' intrinsic motivation, fostering meaning and purpose in their work and igniting employees' creativity (Williams et al., 2017).

Servant leadership enhances employee welfare, trust, collaboration, organisational commitment, and ethical culture by prioritising followers' needs and development (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Eva et al., 2019; Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership can impede decision-making, as leaders devote significant attention to consultation and workforce development (Northouse, 2023). Moreover, the approach may be less effective in highly competitive or crisis scenarios that require swift decision-making (Yukl et al., 2013). This perspective is particularly relevant in contemporary workplaces, where businesses increasingly pursue sustainable performance via employee engagement, psychological safety, inclusivity, and employee well-being. Servant leadership views employees as esteemed collaborators whose individual and professional development enhances organisational success, rather than treating followers solely as tools for achieving organisational objectives (Eva et al., 2019; Greenleaf, 1977; Northouse, 2023).

Second, servant leadership offers a stronger relational and ethical foundation than several conventional leadership methodologies. Historically, many traditional leadership theories have been criticised for prioritising leader authority, hierarchical influence, and organisational objectives over follower growth and well-being (Northouse, 2023).

1.8.3 Followership

The third variable is followership. Followership is essential in this study because understanding leadership requires followers to serve as engaged contributors in the leadership framework, with their insights, conduct, and feedback potentially shaping leadership execution and its translation into workplace achievements. Followership research has evolved more slowly, even though there are more followers than leaders, and leaders also play a significant role in followership. (Kelly, 1992) Kelley (1992) developed one of the earliest and most influential theories of followership, fundamentally shifting organisational research from a leader-centric perspective to one that recognised followers as active contributors to organisational success. Kelley argued that organisational effectiveness depends on competent leaders and followers who demonstrate independent critical thinking and active engagement.

Kelley (1992) challenged the traditional assumption that followers are passive recipients of leadership influence, proposing instead that effective followers can analyse situations independently, make informed decisions, solve problems proactively, and contribute constructively to organisational objectives. His work positioned followership as a behavioural competency rather than a subordinate organisational status.

Kelley's theory has significantly influenced subsequent research on followership by prompting scholars to examine the reciprocal dynamics between leaders and followers, rather than viewing leadership as a one-sided process.

Modern scholars have broadened their conceptualisation by highlighting followership as a relational, socially constructed, and context-dependent phenomenon characterised by reciprocal impact between leaders and followers (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Recent scholarship indicates that effective followership encompasses critical thinking, engagement, adaptation, ethical responsibility, collaboration, voice behaviour, and shared leadership in complex organisational contexts (Oc et al., 2023).

Kelley (1992) categorises followers by their thinking and acting dimensions. Hence, influential followers are described as independent and critical thinkers who consider the impact of their actions, are willing to be creative and innovative, and may offer constructive criticism. Followers are becoming more empowered to decide whether to support their leaders.

Table 1.2 presents and explains the two dimensions of followership identified by Kelley (2008).

Table 1.2

Followership dimensions

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Independent critical thinking	Independent critical thinking refers to followers' ability to evaluate information objectively, question assumptions, exercise sound judgement, and, when necessary, respectfully challenge decisions.
Active engagement	Active engagement reflects the extent to which followers participate enthusiastically in organisational activities, accept responsibility, demonstrate initiative, and exceed minimum job expectations.

The research focused on the two dimensions, critical thinking and active participation, which are behaviours that can be developed. Table 1.3 presents and explains the types of followers identified by Kelley (2008).

Table 1.3

Types of followers

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Conformist followers	Individuals who agree with everything the organisation's leaders say. They appear unenthusiastic and rely entirely on the leader for guidance or support.
Alienated individuals	They tend to be negative, critical, and independent in their thinking and carrying out their tasks but are less likely to make a positive contribution to the organisation.
Pragmatist followers	Individuals who do not want to take a stance on organisational issues. They avoid going against the leaders and do what is necessary to master the rules and survive in a bureaucratic organisation.
Passive followers	They adopt a safe attitude, require constant supervision, and cannot take initiative.

(Kelley, 2008)

In this study, the researcher defines followership as the collaborative process through which followers take responsibility for their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours to fulfil their roles effectively and contribute to achieving organisational goals. The followership approach resembles traditional leadership models, emphasising traits, skills, and styles/behaviours. The last construct is work performance, as discussed below.

1.8.4 Work performance

Work performance is established as the key outcome construct, as the fundamental significance of this research encompassing leadership and employee-related variables is in demonstrating the relationship between these elements and employees' contributions to organisational objectives. Crucially, recent research advocates for a multidimensional perspective on performance.

Koopmans et al (2011, 2014) developed one of the most comprehensive contemporary conceptualisations of individual work performance (IWP). They defined IWP as employee behaviours or actions relevant to organisational goals that can be measured by proficiency. Their definition integrates previous behavioural theories while recognising the increasing complexity of modern workplaces characterised by rapid technological change, teamwork, innovation, and organisational flexibility.

Unlike earlier performance models that focused primarily on outcomes (Koopmans et al., 2011), this model conceptualises work performance as a multidimensional construct comprising four interrelated behavioural domains: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. This broader perspective acknowledges that employees contribute to organisational effectiveness not only by completing assigned duties but also by collaborating, innovating, adapting, and avoiding harmful workplace behaviours. Consequently, work performance is viewed as a dynamic behavioural construct influenced by both individual competencies and organisational contexts. Koopmans et al. (2011) conceptualised it as follows. has become one of the most widely accepted frameworks in occupational health psychology, industrial psychology, and HRM.

Koopmans (2015) defined work performance as an employee's acts or behaviours, not the outcomes of those activities that are pertinent to the organisation's objectives. Individual work performance has four dimensions (Koopmans, 2015).

Task performance refers to the primary job responsibilities delegated to employees. It encompasses planning and organisation, decision-making, administration, problem-solving, oral and written communication, resource monitoring and control, correctness and neatness, job knowledge, work quantity, job quality, skills, and current knowledge.

Contextual performance is employee behaviour that supports the social, psychological, and organisational environment in which the main activities are carried out. Such behaviours include effort, initiative, duty-related focus, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, drive, perseverance, proactivity, inventiveness, collaboration and assistance to others, communication, politeness, interpersonal relationships, and organisational commitment.

Adaptive performance refers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in a work system or role. It entails adapting plans and objectives to circumstances, generating fresh, creative ideas, acquiring new skills and technology, understanding diverse cultures and groups, being adaptable and open-minded, demonstrating resilience, analysing quickly, remaining composed, and acting appropriately.

Counterproductive work behaviour is deemed detrimental to the organisation's well-being. It encompasses behaviours such as off-task behaviour, presenteeism, taking too many or too long breaks, absenteeism, incorrect task performance, complaining, tardiness, accidents, arguing or fighting with coworkers, stealing, misusing privileges, ignoring safety procedures, aggression, and substance abuse.

The four dimensions of individual work performance are presented and explained in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4

Four dimensions of individual work performance

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Task performance	Primary job responsibilities delegated to employees.
Contextual performance	Behaviour of employees that supports the social, psychological, and organisational environment in which the main activities are carried out.
Adaptive performance	Employees' ability to adapt to changes in a work system or role.
Counterproductive work behaviour	Deemed detrimental to the organisation's well-being.

When employees collaborate and support one another, they enhance their performance. Based on the literature, it is essential to understand the roles of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, and how they contribute positively to work performance, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability.

1.8.5 Research gaps related to the variables

Despite a substantial body of research on employee engagement, servant leadership, and followership, several gaps remain. The research gaps are presented below:

- A significant research gap is that organisational behaviour studies treat employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance as separate entities, rather than integrating them into a conceptually unified explanatory framework. (Trigoso-Yupari & Gago-Chávez, 2025).
- The followership dimension represents a particularly important theoretical gap. Historically, organisational studies have placed far greater emphasis on leadership than on followership, despite the inherently relational and interdependent nature of both processes (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2018).
- Most of the earlier evidence comes from the United States of America, Europe, and Asia, which limits its applicability (Trigoso-Yupari & Gago-Chávez, 2025). Nonetheless, African research is increasing.

Empirically, the proposed model contributes by bringing together evidence largely generated through separate relational pathways and different organisational contexts. Previous empirical studies have shown positive associations between leadership, engagement, and performance, including evidence that leadership can enhance job resources and need fulfilment, which subsequently support employee engagement and performance (Breevaart et al., 2016). The theoretical integration is presented below

1.8.6 Theoretical Integration of the relationships between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance

Employee engagement serves as the psychological mechanism that energises people; servant leadership fosters a helpful and stimulating work environment, while followership converts motivation into productive workplace behaviours, hence enhancing work performance (Cai et al., 2024). Employees exposed to servant leadership show higher engagement, organisational commitment, psychological safety, and discretionary effort, all of which enhance individual and organisational performance (Demeke et al., 2025). Effective followership, marked by vocal engagement, accountability, critical analysis, and proactive problem-solving, enhances employees' capacity to convert leadership support into superior job outputs.

Empirical evidence indicates that employee engagement mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work performance. By cultivating empathy, support, and the satisfaction of employees' psychological needs, servant leaders enhance employees' vigour, commitment, and engagement, resulting in improved task, contextual, and adaptive performance, as well as innovative work behaviour (Cai et al., 2025).

1.9 RESEARCH METHOD

The current research was conducted in South Africa, a country that transitioned from apartheid to a democratic state and continues to transform for the betterment of its citizens. Inequality and social problems such as poverty, crime, unemployment, health issues, and corruption affect employees in the workplace.

South Africa has established an extensive legislative and policy framework to address enduring socioeconomic issues, such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, and low productivity. The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 is pivotal to these initiatives, offering a long-term vision to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality through inclusive economic growth, enhanced state capacity, skills development, and effective leadership (National

Planning Commission, n.d.). The NDP acknowledges that sustainable national development requires cooperative leadership, an engaged citizenry, and stronger human, institutional, and organisational capacities. This study particularly emphasises enhancing leadership, developing employee competencies, and promoting intersectoral collaboration to improve organisational and social outcomes (National Planning Commission, n.d.).

The Department of Labour, in conjunction with the NDP, are pivotal in regulating the labour market through legislation and policies aimed at fostering decent work, equitable employment practices, labour productivity, and effective labour relations (Department of Labour, 2019). The mandate includes enhancing economic efficiency and productivity, safeguarding employees' rights, eradicating workplace discrimination, advancing occupational health and safety, strengthening social dialogue, and increasing labour market flexibility, while ensuring decent employment (Department of Labour, 2019). These policy objectives are closely aligned with modern organisational behaviour concepts, including servant leadership, employee engagement, followership, and individual work performance, all of which aim to foster healthy, inclusive, and productive workplaces.

The labour regulatory framework of South Africa is founded on several principal statutes, including the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, and the Employment Services Act 4 of 2014, among others (Department of Employment and Labour, 2019). Collectively, these legal measures set basic employment requirements, promote equitable labour practices, safeguard employee welfare, facilitate skills development, and support fair workplace participation. Consequently, organisations must foster work environments that comply with legal standards while enhancing employee well-being, performance, and organisational effectiveness.

The wider institutional context also strengthens these goals. Productivity South Africa (Productivity SA) advocates for improved productivity and organisational competitiveness. At the same time, the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) fosters social interaction among government, organised labour, business, and community partners. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) promotes workplace justice by advocating equitable labour practices and adjudicating employment disputes in line with the Labour Relations Act (Department of Labour, 2019). Together, these institutions strengthen South Africa's commitment to equitable labour relations, organisational productivity, and sustainable economic development.

In this legislative and policy framework, organisations must adhere to statutory obligations while also implementing leadership strategies that foster employee engagement, ethical conduct, inclusivity, and strong individual performance. Thus, analysing the interconnections among servant leadership, followership, employee engagement, and individual work performance aligns with South Africa's overarching national goal of developing competent organisations, enhancing productivity, and strengthening human capital to fulfil the aims of the NDP 2030. The current research involved employees across South African organisations.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Slater and Hasson (2025), research design provides the framework for organising, conducting, and analysing data in a study. The researcher conducted quantitative research, collecting and analysing data to address the research questions and hypotheses. This was accomplished by applying comprehensive, methodical, and objective data-collection procedures. These are presented in an understandable, transparent way that enables other researchers to replicate the process.

1.10.1 Research approach

Quantitative research focuses on understanding variables using data from a sample of subjects. The relationships among the variables employee engagement, leadership, and followership were examined using various statistical measures, including correlations, relative frequencies, and mean differences, to test theories. The following characteristics of quantitative research were adopted in this research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015):

- The research focused on understanding objective reality.
- The researcher was separate from the topic studied.
- The researcher formulated the hypotheses at the beginning of the research, to be tested through the research.
- A sample of the population was selected as participants.
- Data were gathered using structured and validated questionnaires.
- The collected data was statistically analysed through methods such as descriptive, comparison, and correlation.
- The results of the research were generalised and used to explain the prediction.
- Research findings of statistical significance were reported.

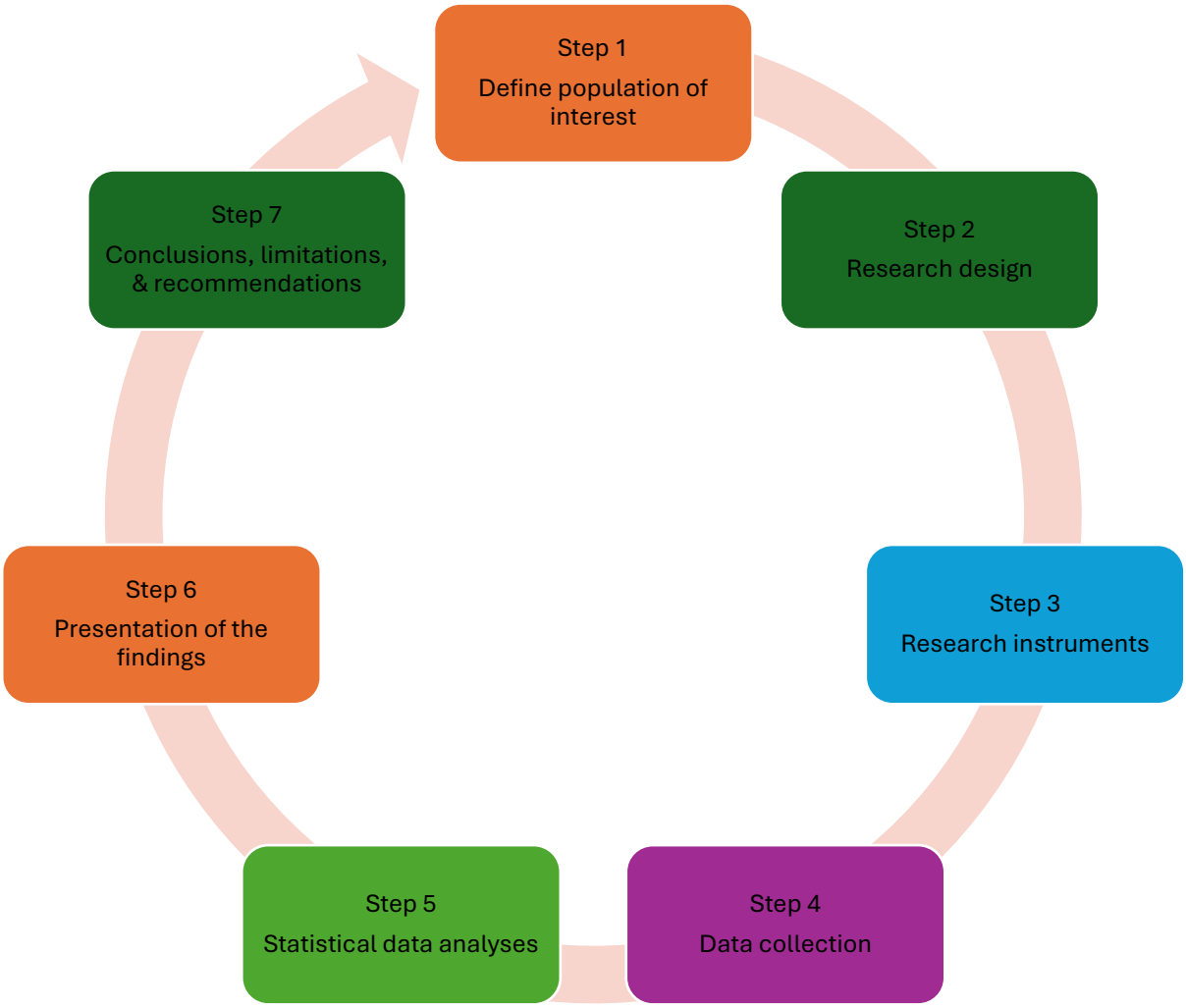
1.10.2 Research strategy

This study used a survey strategy and collected data using validated, reliable questionnaires. Figure 1.2 presents an overview of the research methodology, which included the following seven steps:

- Step 1 defines the population of interest – employees in South African organisations from the iFeedback database.
- Step 2 is the quantitative research design, focusing on the positivist and humanistic approach.
- Step 3 is the research instruments – four instruments were used in this study.
    - South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015) was used to assess employee engagement.
    - Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) was used to assess servant leadership
    - Kelley Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) (Kelley, 1992) was used to assess followership
    - Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans, 2015) was used to assess work performance
- Step 4 involved data collection – the data were collected using an online survey.
- Step 5 involved statistical analyses, including both descriptive and inferential statistics.
- Step 6 is the presentation of findings – theoretical and empirical findings.
- Step 7 is the conclusions and recommendations – the conclusions were drawn from the results, and recommendations for future research are provided.

Figure 1.2

Overview of research methodology



1.10.2.1 Sampling

Sampling was one of the most important phases in the research process. Identifies six steps in the sampling process.

These steps include the following:

- Define the target population
- Select the sampling frame
- Select the sampling method
- Determine the sample size
- Collect data

Taherdoost (2016) (Wu et al., 2022).

The researcher followed these steps.

Table 1.5

Sampling process

Stage 1: Clearly Define Target Population	Defining the target population is the first stage in the sampling process (Taherdoost, 2016).
Stage2: Select Sampling Frame	We used the sampling list to select the actual cases.
Stage 3: Choose Sampling Technique	We examined sampling methods before choosing a probability technique. Two sampling technique types: Probability or random sampling Non- probability or non-random sampling We examined sampling methods before choosing a probability technique.

Stage 4: Determine Sample Size	An adequate sample size is needed to avoid sampling errors or biases (Taherdoost, 2016).
Stage 5: Collect Data	At this stage, data were collected.
Stage 6: Assess Response Rate	The response rate is the number of cases that agreed to participate in the study (Taherdoost, 2016).

1.10.2.2 Research variables

Research variables are identified as independent and dependent variables, with Kaur and Mittal (2021) explaining the differences between the two. An independent variable explains or accounts for variations in the dependent variable. In the current study, employee engagement, leadership, and followership are independent variables, whereas work performance is the dependent variable.

1.10.3 Validity and reliability of research

The researcher considered the validity and reliability of the measures for the variables to ensure the research's credibility. The various methods for ensuring validity and reliability are explained below.

1.10.3.1 Validity

According to Verwey et al. (2012), validity refers to the extent to which the researcher focuses on what they claim to have researched. According to Mouton and Marais (1988), validity is ensured through clear conceptualisation, which focuses on theoretical aspects, and operationalisation, which focuses on the measurement aspects of the research. The conceptualisation includes the definition, dimensions, and theories of the four variables.

Drost (2011) identifies the types of validity considered in this study, including internal, construct, and external validity. Internal validity deals with the validity of the research itself. The researcher aimed to understand the nature of the relationship and identify any potential confounding variables that might influence the research. The researcher analysed the correlations among employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual job performance, while accounting for various confounding variables that may affect these associations.

External validity refers to the ability to generalise the findings to different populations, settings, and periods. External validity was established by employing an adequate sample size and sampling methods, enabling the researcher to assess the extent to which the results could be generalised to the target population.

Construct validity was confirmed by verifying that each instrument effectively measured the desired construct. This involved assessing face validity, in which the researcher determined whether the dimensions appeared to measure the intended constructs, and content validity, in which the selected instruments adequately represented the theoretical implications of employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance.

Face validity refers to a subjective judgement of a construct's operationalisation. The researcher determined if the dimensions appeared to measure the intended constructs.

Content validity is a qualitative method of ensuring that dimensions reflect the meaning of a concept as defined by the researcher. The researcher’s chosen instruments adequately represented the theoretical implications of employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance.

Criterion-related validity is the degree of correspondence between a test measure and one or more external referents (criteria), usually measured by their correlation. In this study, the researcher examined correlations between the dimensions of the independent and dependent variables, whereas predictive validity pertains to the constructs' ability to forecast future outcomes.

For convergent and discriminant validity, the researcher assessed convergent validity by evaluating the strength of relationships among measures of the same construct. In contrast, discriminant validity was verified by establishing that employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance are conceptually distinct constructs, exhibiting sufficiently low inter-construct correlations after adjusting for measurement error (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022).

1.10.3.2 Reliability

Reliability denotes the consistency and stability of a measurement instrument in producing comparable results under uniform conditions (Drost, 2011).

This study assessed the reliability of instruments measuring employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance to ensure consistent measurement across respondents. The study evaluated internal consistency using recognised reliability coefficients, including Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, to assess whether items within each construct consistently measured the same underlying construct.

Reliable measurement instruments reduced random measurement error and increased confidence in the observed correlations between the three independent variables and the dependent variable. The study enhanced the credibility, precision, and replicability of its findings by using validated instruments with established psychometric properties and evaluating both validity and reliability (Drost, 2011; Mouton & Marais, 1988; Verwey et al., 2012).

1.10.4 Measurement instrument(s)

The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections, the first section being the biographical information and then the four measuring instruments, namely the South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015); Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); Kelley Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) Kelley (1992) and Individual Work Performance (IWP) Koopmans et al 2011.

1.10.4.1 Employee engagement: South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES)

The SAEES (Nienaber & Martins, 2015) was administered to measure employee engagement. It is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that evaluates team, organisational, and individual engagement (Nienaber & Martins, 2015). The current study used a 30-item self-report questionnaire that was relevant to the research topic.

A 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and five denoting "strongly agree", is used to assess items on the SAEES. Higher ratings indicate higher engagement, while lower ratings indicate lower engagement across all dimensions. The intricacy of workplace involvement is explained using a three-layered method.

According to Nienaber and Martins (2015), there are three levels of engagement: individual, which is associated with trait, state, and behavioural traits; team, which is focused on work design, leadership, and trust; and organisational, which is focused on vision, purpose, goals, and strategy.

According to Nienaber and Martins (2015), employee engagement has four dimensions. Organisational satisfaction [SAEES_OS] encompasses the meaningfulness of a job, including an enjoyable and inspiring work environment and a general sense of job satisfaction. Organisational commitment [SAEES_OC] involves taking pride in the work done for the organisation and the congruence between personal and organisational values. The organisational strategy and implementation dimension [SAEES_SI] determines whether employees are encouraged to develop new ideas and take initiative. The last dimension is the immediate manager, which measures how an employee is supported and engaged by their immediate manager or supervisor [SAEES_IM].

In previous studies, SAEES scores achieved acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ranging from 0.895 to 0.951 (Martins & Ledimo, 2016; Nienaber & Martins, 2015). In the present study, SAEES reliability scores ranged from 0.86 to 0.95. Gallant and Martins (2018) confirmed the instrument's reliability and validity, indicating that invariance could be expected across racial groups within South African institutions. Organisations that foster an environment for highly engaged employees are likely to succeed.

1.10.4.2 Leadership: Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)

The SLQ was administered to measure leadership. The instrument consists of 23 items measuring 5 dimensions: altruistic calling [SLQ_AC], emotional healing [SLQ_EH], wisdom [SLQ_W], persuasive mapping [SLQ_PM], and organisational stewardship [SLQ_OS]. This study focused on servant leadership. According to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that values service to others over self-interest.

An altruistic calling [SLQ_AC] is the desire to influence others positively through service. It is considered central to the ideology of servant leadership. Emotional healing [SLQ_EH] is a leader's ability to foster a follower's spiritual recovery from hardship and trauma. Wisdom [SLQ_W] is the ability to pick up cues from the environment and to recognise their possible consequences and implications. Persuasive mapping [SLQ_PM] is the ability to use mental models and sound reasoning to encourage others to think laterally.

Lastly, organisational stewardship [SLQ_OS] describes the extent to which leaders have prepared their organisation to make a positive contribution to the community and society.

Barbuto and Hayden (2011) report Cronbach's alpha values for the SLQ sub-scales, used to assess reliability, ranging from 0.82 to 0.92. Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) validated the SLQ in a South African sample. They found high reliability across the sub-scale and reported a good fit to the data for the SLQ's five-dimensional measurement model. The authors recommend replicating the study in the public and private sectors to see whether similar results emerge.

1.10.4.3 Followership: Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ)

The PSQ is the original questionnaire that Kelley developed and has revised over the years. The PSQ consists of 40 items that assess followership styles based on two behavioural dimensions: independent thinking [PSQ_Y_IT] and active engagement [PSQ_Y_AE]. The PSQ groups followers into types such as passive, conformist, alienated, pragmatic, or practical. Kelley (1992) argues that critical thinking and active engagement describe how people follow.

1.10.4.4 Work performance: Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) is a self-report measure consisting of 18 items, organised into 3 scales: task performance, contextual work behaviour, and counterproductive work behaviour. Task performance [IWPQ_TP] focuses on the competence an individual demonstrates in performing their duties. Contextual performance [IWPQ_CPerf] refers to support behaviours and organisational, social, and psychological citizenship. Counterproductive work behaviour [IWPQ_CProd] refers to behaviour that can be detrimental to the organisation's well-being. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (seldom) to 5 (always).

In Koopmans' (2015) validation study of Dutch and USA populations, all IWPQ items showed strong correlations with measures of success (ranging from 0.79 to 0.89) and good content validity. The internal consistency of various scales includes task performance ($\alpha = 0.78$), contextual performance ($\alpha = 0.85$), and counterproductive work behaviour ($\alpha = 0.79$). In addition, Koopmans demonstrated face and structural validity, as well as sufficient convergent validity and good discriminative validity.

Koopmans et al. (2014) conducted a study to improve IWPQ scale targeting by adding items. The results showed improved scale targeting compared with previous versions.

Koopmans et al. (2014) indicate that this scale is a more reliable measure for employees at all ability levels, can discriminate among employees across a broader range on each scale, and can identify changes in individual work performance. Dåderman et al. (2020) validated the IWPQ using a pilot group of managers in Sweden. They suggest validating the tool with a larger group of managers from heterogeneous white- and blue-collar worker groups before use. In addition, they are concerned with determining correlations with relevant constructs such as work engagement or emotional intelligence.Van der Vaart (2021) conducted research in South Africa among 296 information technology specialists to evaluate the construct validity of the IWPQ. The aim was to examine the instrument's construct validity, specifically its convergent, discriminant, and nomological aspects. The results supported the measure's construct validity. The results showed that individual work performance is a three-dimensional construct with adequate convergent and discriminant validity. Job resources were likewise connected to the three performance aspects.

1.10.5 Research procedure

A sample of employees from the iFeedback database, drawn from various South African organisations, received an online survey with five sections: a biographical section, followed by four sections measuring employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, respectively. Respondents had access to an online briefing document explaining the research rationale and a consent form for voluntary participation (Annexure A). Online assessments are advantageous because they are easily accessible to respondents, allow targeting a wider audience, and automatically save data electronically, reducing time spent on data capture. The researcher administered and completed a questionnaire online to reach a wider audience.

1.10.5.1 Ethical considerations

The researcher ensured the research was conducted ethically to protect participants and data integrity. The HPCSA (2025b) provides ethical guidelines that served as the basis for this study. The researcher obtained ethical clearance (Annexure B) from the university and the iFeedback institution before conducting the research. Respondents volunteered to participate in the study and consented to the use of the collected data. The respondents completed an online consent form before completing the questionnaires (Annexure A). They had the right to withdraw from completing the survey if they wished. The data gathered were treated confidentially.

Respondents did not provide personal details, such as their names and surnames, which kept the data anonymous and protected their identities. The results also focused on trends rather than individual responses.

1.11 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics focused on the presentation and summarisation of data, while inferential statistics enabled the generalisation of the data to a larger population (Kern, 2013). The distinction between descriptive and inferential statistics is foundational to analysing research problems (Kern, 2013).

1.11.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics present the data and identify trends, relationships, or abnormal behaviour. The data are presented in graphs, charts, and tables, and various descriptive measures, such as averages, measures of variation, and percentiles, are calculated (Maravelakis, 2019). Descriptive statistics use categorical data. It satisfies the study's wide-ranging curiosity by organising and summarising the observations (Kern, 2013). Conclusions that are equivalent to the findings are observed.

In descriptive statistics, no interpretive errors are possible. In this study, frequency, mean, and standard deviation statistics were used to explain the biographical information. In descriptive statistics, frequency refers to the number of times a score for a variable is repeated. The percentage of the score also helps in summarising the results. Furthermore, the mean is the average score of the observed values of the variables. In contrast, the standard deviation measures the deviation of the variable's observed values from the mean.

1.11.2 Inferential statistics

According to Kern (2013, p. 1), inferential statistics are used to draw inferences from observed data. Inferential statistics include statistical comparison tests, multivariate risk analyses, effect size estimates, hazard ratios, correlation coefficients, predicted differences in the means or variance of comparison groups, confidence intervals for forecasting future data, p-values (corrected or uncorrected for multiple comparisons), and tables or arrays presenting such statistics. This study employed structural equation modelling (SEM), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlations.

Inferential statistics extend beyond the observed data to answer specific questions posed before the study (Kern, 2013). Inferential statistics utilise numerical distinctions, including point estimation, interval estimation, and hypothesis testing.

It can detect differences of any magnitude. It detects characteristics that differ between groups or fail to differentiate adequately. It can detect individual differences (Kern, 2013). Furthermore, inferential statistics help identify likely patterns in the central data and answer specific numerical questions established before the study's commencement; inferential statistics group individuals to achieve adequate statistical power for comparison.

Correlations enable the examination of the relationship between variables. Guetterman (2019) asserts that correlation indicates whether the values of two variables tend to change together regularly. He lists the following three basic outcomes: (1) the two variables increase and fall together; (2) one variable declines as the other rises; and (3) there does not seem to be a systematic relationship between the two variables. The primary objective is to determine whether these variables are correlated. If a relationship exists, it is necessary to determine whether it is positive or negative.

ANOVA is a statistical method used to compare means across two or more groups in a study. SEM is a family of flexible statistical techniques applicable to experimental and non-experimental data across disciplines (Kline, 2011). In this study, SEM was used to test the work performance model. SEM explains covariance patterns among observed variables in terms of the relationships hypothesised by the measurement and structural models (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). While the structural model explains the connections between the latent variables, the measurement model explains how each latent variable is operationalised by corresponding manifest indicators (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). The three stages of building a model include Exploratory factor analysis, Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling.

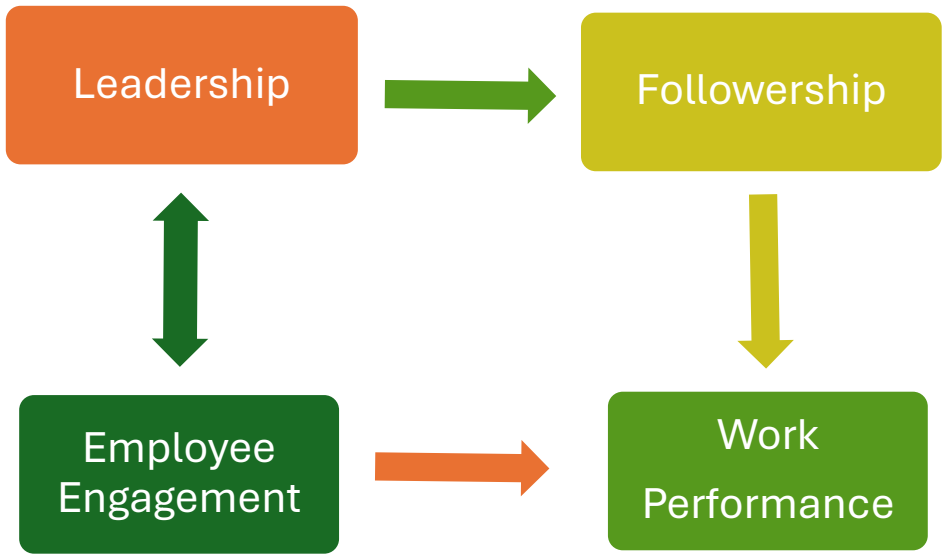
Kline (2011) lists the steps followed in SEM. First, the model must be specified, presenting the hypotheses as a structural equation model. Second, the model must be identified. In this step, the model is identified if the software can theoretically derive a unique estimate for every model parameter. Third, measures are selected (constructs are operationalised), and the data are collected, prepared, and screened. The fourth step involves estimating the model using SEM software. This step involves evaluating the model fit (if it is poor, proceed to Step 5), interpreting parameter estimates, and considering equivalent or nearly equivalent models (if so, skip to

Step 6). Fifth, the model is re-specified (return to Step 4 if the initial model's fit is poor). Lastly, report the results specification, describing the analysis fully and accurately in written reports.

Figure 1.3 presents a visual representation of the SEM used in this study. The four variables are involved: employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. As shown in the figure, employee engagement is likely to influence performance, and employee engagement and leadership are likely to influence each other reciprocally. Furthermore, leadership is likely to influence followership, and followership, in turn, is likely to influence work performance.

Figure 1.3

Structural equation modelling in this study



1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has various limitations. First, the theory was restricted to the research scope. Second, only quantitative data were collected, limiting the in-depth experiential understanding of the results from a qualitative perspective. Lastly, because the dataset was limited to employees from various South African organisations, the results may not generalise to all South African organisations.

1.13 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Scientific Orientation to Research. This chapter provided an overview of the study's motivation and background. It outlined the research questions and hypotheses and described the research design. The chapter also presented the research approach, ethical considerations, and statistical analysis employed.

Chapter 2: Employee Engagement. This chapter conceptualises employee engagement and its dimensions. The chapter discusses employee engagement, encompassing definitions, relevant theories, antecedents, and outcomes.

Chapter 3: Understanding Leadership, specifically Servant Leadership. The chapter conceptualises leadership, specifically servant leadership, and its dimensions. The chapter discusses leadership, specifically servant leadership, encompassing definitions, relevant theories, antecedents, and outcomes.

Chapter 4: Followership. The chapter conceptualises followership and its dimensions. The chapter discusses followership, including definitions, relevant theories, antecedents, and outcomes.

Chapter 5: Work Performance. The chapter conceptualises work performance and its dimensions. It discusses work performance, including definitions, relevant theories, antecedents, and outcomes.

Chapter 6: Research Design and Methodology. This chapter conceptualises the quantitative research strategy, including data collection and analysis techniques, and integrates and presents the results.

Chapter 7: Research Results and Findings. The chapter presents the sample's biographical data, along with descriptive and inferential statistics, factor analysis, and structural equation modelling.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations. This chapter concludes the study, discusses the limitations, and makes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 conceptualises employee engagement and its dimensions. The chapter discusses employee engagement, including definitions and relevant theories. It also presents the employee engagement perspective, antecedents, and outcomes. This chapter addresses Research Aim 1: conceptualising the employee engagement construct and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement has emerged as a well-researched concept in industrial and organisational psychology due to its relationship with employee well-being, organisational effectiveness, and sustainable success. Researchers have studied the construct extensively across countries, industries, organisations, human resource management methods, consulting firms, and academic institutions. This extensive use indicates growing recognition that engaged individuals are more likely to exhibit higher levels of motivation, discretionary effort, organisational commitment, innovation, and job performance (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Saks, 2022).

The following definitions of employee engagement provide further insight into the concept.

2.2.1 Definition of employee engagement

Employee engagement is defined and interpreted differently by different people. A collection of commonly used definitions is provided below. These definitions illustrate the diverse ways researchers and practitioners describe employee engagement.

According to Nienaber and Martins (2014, p. 405), employee engagement refers to “engaged employees at both the individual and organisational level, who are fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work, and so take positive action to further the organisation’s reputation and interests”. The definition suggests different levels of engagement: individual and organisational.

The researcher defined employee engagement as “the multidimensional integration of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and energetic engagement and a commitment to work and the organisation”. A supportive work environment fosters this engagement, which is collectively oriented towards enhancing individual performance, achieving team-level objectives, and driving broader organisational outcomes.

Additional definitions that assist us in understanding employee engagement are presented below:

Kahn (1990, p. 694) defined employee engagement as “the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. This definition characterises employee engagement as the degree to which employees allocate resources to complete their professional tasks.

Saks (2006) defines employee engagement as “a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance” (p. 602). The definition focuses on how employee engagement relates to role performance.

According to Macey and Schneider (2008, p. 3), employee engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses trait, state, and behavioural variables, as well as the organisational and work environments that may support state and behavioural engagement. This definition views employee engagement as a multidimensional construct related to organisation and work environments.

Schaufeli et al. (2010) defined work engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). This definition focuses on positive aspects of employee engagement.

Gallup (2025) defines employee engagement as “the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in both their work and workplace” (p. 138). This concept highlights that engaged individuals are excited about their work and organisation.

2.2.2 Organisational context and job levels for employee engagement

The organisational and job contexts are essential for understanding the environment in which the research takes place. The current study is taking place at multiple levels within South African organisations.

i) The organisational context

The countries exhibit considerable diversity in cultural aspects, organisational structures, labour regulations, leadership conventions, and employment practices. Confining participants to a single country minimises contextual variability and enhances the internal validity of the outcomes.

ii) Job level

Job level refers to the organisational hierarchy that determines access to information, decision-making authority, leaders' responsibilities, and performance expectations. As a result, distinguishing participants by job level enables researchers to assess whether relationships among the study variables vary across hierarchical levels and to strengthen the credibility of multilevel analyses. Studies in organisational behaviour increasingly suggest the importance of exploring leadership and employee sentiments across different levels of the hierarchy rather than viewing organisations as monolithic structures. (Stollberger et al 2019)

This study considers different job levels, ranging from employees to top management. Robbins & Judge (2023 identified the following job levels in the organisation.

- Employees are individuals holding non-managerial roles within the organisation, tasked with performing operational, technical, or administrative functions to achieve organisational goals. In contrast to the managerial level, operational employees typically have limited formal authority and primarily perform tasks delegated by supervisors and managers (Robbins & Judge, 2023)
- Supervisors occupy the first level of formal management within organisations and are responsible for directing, coordinating and evaluating the performance of operational employees while simultaneously implementing organisational policies developed by higher management

- Managers oversee several supervisors and allocate departmental resources to achieve organisational goals. Unlike supervisors, managers focus on planning, resource management, coordination, and departmental productivity while maintaining indirect ties with operational employees.
- Senior managers are responsible for converting organisational strategy into operational initiatives across several departments. Their duties encompass strategic planning, organisational transformation, policy execution, and resource amalgamation. As a result, senior managers' leadership behaviours affect the organisational climate more broadly than middle managers' do.
- Top management consists of executives accountable for the organisation's vision, governance, long-term strategy, and sustainability. They establish the organisational culture, strategic objectives, and leadership principles that permeate the entire organisation.

2.2.3 Employee engagement theories

This section explains early and modern engagement theories, providing an overview of the concept’s development and its applications.

2.2.3.1 Early theories of engagement

The early theories of engagement include personal engagement (Kahn, 1990).

a. Needs satisfying approach: Personal engagement

Kahn (1990) presented a foundational theory of engagement that emphasised a comprehensive understanding of how employees connect with their jobs. Personal engagement results when an individual’s psychological needs are met. Individuals and organisations have a psychological contract.

When performing their roles, engaged employees often express themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). Engaged employees are physically immersed in tasks, have heightened cognitive awareness, and empathise with others. They also build relationships, are creative, hold fast to their principles, and reflect on their thoughts and feelings.

According to Kahn (1990), three psychological factors influence participation: meaningfulness, safety, and availability.

- The term psychological meaningfulness describes aspects of the job that either encourage or discourage participation. Engaged employees feel important, helpful, and valued; they also make a difference and are not taken for granted.
- Psychological safety focuses on components of social structures that foster engaging social circumstances (Gallo, 2023). When individuals believe that their participation will not result in punishment, they feel secure.
- An individual's psychological availability refers to their ability to perform their job effectively without distractions or other issues (Kahn, 1990).

Although Kahn's (1990) model provided a theoretical basis for employee engagement, a broader approach is needed that integrates organisational, social, and contextual determinants of employee engagement (Boccoli et al., 2023). Research evidence shows that Kahn's psychological conditions are fundamental precursors to employee engagement; however, they are more effective when integrated with organisational resources and contextual influences that support sustained employee participation and wellbeing.

When engaged employees successfully balance the demands of their personal and professional lives, they are more likely to excel in their roles.

By contrast, personal disengagement is the withdrawal and protection of one's preferred self through actions, which leads to a lack of relationships and emotional, cognitive, and physical presence, as well as passive and insufficient role performance (Kahn, 1990).

Table 2.1 Summary of Kahn's dimensions of employee engagement.

Table 2.1

Kahn's dimensions of employee engagement

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Physical engagement	The extent to which employees invest physical energy and effort while performing their work roles.
Cognitive engagement	The degree of mental attention, concentration, and focus devoted to work activities.
Emotional engagement	Employees' emotional attachment, enthusiasm, pride, and psychological connection with their work.

b. Social exchange theory – Saks

Saks (2006), building on Kahn's (1990) research, contended that employee engagement is best understood through the framework of social exchange theory (SET). Employees exhibit greater engagement when they believe their organisation appreciates their contributions and prioritises their well-being. According to the principle of reciprocity, employees reciprocate positive organisational treatment with increased cognitive, emotional, and behavioural effort in their work (Saks, 2006). Saks' theory distinguishes between job engagement and organisational engagement, acknowledging that people may be interested in their work tasks yet differ in their commitment to the organisation. Table 2.2 summarises Saks' dimensions of employee engagement.

Table 2.2

Saks' dimensions of employee engagement

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Job engagement	Psychological investment in one's specific job and work tasks.
Organisational engagement	Psychological attachment to the organisation itself, as well as its values and objectives.

Saks (2006) significantly distinguished between job and organisational engagement. A limitation is that the employee engagement construct remains conceptually linked to other positive work attitudes, such as organisational commitment, job involvement, and organisational citizenship behaviour, which calls into question its discriminant validity (Christian et al., 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Moreover, although social exchange theory explains reciprocal ties between employees and organisations, it does not fully address other motivational factors, including intrinsic drive, meaningful work, and the fulfilment of psychological needs (Deci et al., 2017; Saks, 2022). This section discusses modern theories of employee engagement.

2.2.3.2 Modern theories of employee engagement

The following section explains various modern theories of employee engagement.

a. Positive state-of-mind employee engagement – Schaufeli

Schaufeli et al. (2010) focused on the positive aspects of work engagement characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. These characteristics are explained below (Schaufeli et al., 2010)

- Vigour refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working.
- Dedication is characterised by enthusiasm, inspiration, significance, pride, and challenge.
- Absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly, and detachment from work becomes difficult.

Table 2.3 summarises Schaufeli's dimensions of employee engagement.

Table 2.3

Schaufeli's dimensions of employee engagement

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Vigour	Refers to high levels of energy, mental resilience, persistence, and willingness to invest effort in work despite challenges. Employees with high vigour remain energetic and resilient when facing workplace demands (Schaufeli et al., 2010).
Dedication	Represents a strong psychological involvement in work characterised by enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, significance, and a sense of challenge. Dedicated employees perceive their work as meaningful and worthwhile (Schaufeli et al., 2010).

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Absorption	Describes being fully concentrated and happily immersed in work, whereby employees become deeply engrossed in their tasks, often losing track of time and finding it difficult to detach from work (Schaufeli et al., 2010).

Schaufeli's (2017) contribution to employee engagement theory is incorporating the JD–R framework into employee engagement. This reflects the quality of the interaction between employees and their work and is shaped by the balance between job demands and resources within the JD–R paradigm. Schaufeli (2017) developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which has enabled comprehensive empirical studies across many countries, professions, and sectors. A limitation of this theory is that its dimensions of vigour, dedication, and absorption may conceptually overlap with related constructs such as intrinsic motivation, job involvement, affective commitment, and psychological well-being, leading to ongoing debates about construct distinctiveness (Christian et al., 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). The next discussion is presented by Macey and Schneider (2008)

b. Employee engagement – Macey and Schneider

Macey and Schneider (2008) posited that employee engagement ought to be understood as a psychological state, a collection of behaviours, and a dispositional trait, along with the antecedent conditions and behavioural outcomes linked to these elements. They established an integrative framework that differentiates between trait, state, and behavioural engagement.

- Trait engagement represents relatively stable individual differences, including conscientiousness, proactive personality, positive affectivity, and an individual's propensity to become engaged. They further argued that organisational conditions, such as effective job design and transformational leadership, facilitate state engagement and, in turn, promote behavioural engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008).
- State engagement embodies employees' psychological experience of work, encompassing attributes such as vitality, enthusiasm, vigour, devotion, absorption, awareness, and pride. They additionally observed that this psychological state intersects with other categories, such as job involvement, organisational commitment, and the positive emotional elements of job satisfaction (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

- Behavioural engagement is the behavioural expression of state engagement and is reflected in proactive behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour, role expansion, personal initiative, and adaptive performance, which contribute to organisational effectiveness (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

The primary strength of Macey and Schneider's (2008) work is its conceptual clarity. By differentiating between traits, psychological states, and behaviours, they markedly enhanced conceptual precision and fostered more theoretical consistency in engagement research. A secondary strength is its incorporation of personality into engagement theory, which helps explain why individuals in identical organisational situations may exhibit varying degrees of engagement. A notable contribution is the differentiation between engagement and its behavioural outcomes. The definition's complexity limits its operationalisation. The framework is predominantly conceptual rather than explanatory. It offers limited explanations of the causal pathways linking characteristics, psychological states, and behaviours. Third, conceptual overlap persists despite the authors' efforts to differentiate involvement from analogous ideas.

The authors have been challenged to differentiate behavioural engagement from organisational citizenship behaviour. Another critique is the disproportionate focus on personality, with little attention given to organisational aspects such as leadership, organisational culture, job design, and psychological safety. The approach provides insufficient focus on evolving work settings marked by hybrid work, digital transformation, employee well-being, and diversity and inclusion. Macey and Schneider's dimensions of employee engagement are discussed below.

Table 2.4 summarises Macey and Schneider's dimensions of employee engagement.

Table 2.4

Macey and Schneider's (2008) engagement framework

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Trait engagement	Stable personality characteristics, such as conscientiousness, positive affectivity, and proactive personality, that predispose individuals to become engaged.
State engagement	Employees' psychological state, characterised by vigour, enthusiasm, dedication, absorption, and involvement.
Behavioural engagement	Observable behaviours, including initiative, organisational citizenship behaviour, adaptability, and proactive performance.

Macey and Schneider's (2008) theory is best viewed as an integrative conceptual model rather than a standalone theory of employee engagement. Next, this paper discusses Gallup Organisation's employee engagement.

c. Satisfaction engagement approach – Gallup Organisation

Gallup's employee engagement framework remains one of the most impactful practitioner models in organisational psychology. Gallup (2024) defines engagement, through its Q12 satisfaction-engagement survey tool, as working conditions that empower employees to perform optimally and add significant value to organisational performance. The concept has gained broad recognition because of its comprehensive empirical validation. Gallup's (2024) satisfaction-engagement approach is based on workplace research conducted with employees in organisations across more than 160 countries and industries. The Gallup satisfaction-engagement survey is an easy-to-use, organised instrument for evaluating workplace conditions that affect employee engagement.

Gallup uses the Gallup survey to assess workplace conditions that influence employee engagement. The Q12 framework comprises four progressive dimensions: fundamental needs, individual contribution, teamwork, and growth, which encompass employees' experiences of role clarity, recognition, development, supportive relationships, and learning opportunities. Gallup classifies employees into three engagement categories: engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged, each associated with specific workplace behaviours and organisational outcomes (Harter, 2020b). The main advantage of Gallup's conceptualisation is its practical applicability. Various organisations worldwide have adopted Q12, yielding strong empirical evidence linking engagement to outcomes such as productivity, customer satisfaction, retention, safety, profitability, and well-being (Harter, 2020). Furthermore, its concise form makes it attractive for organisational diagnostics and benchmarking.

The Gallup survey's advantage lies in its practical workplace implementation through a survey designed to assess engagement. A secondary strength resides in its comprehensive empirical basis. Despite its practical value, the Gallup framework has faced persistent scientific critique regarding its conceptual and theoretical foundations. Macey and Schneider (2008) argued that Gallup's definition integrates antecedents, psychological states, and behavioural outcomes into a single construct, introducing conceptual ambiguity and making it difficult to distinguish engagement from related constructs such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job involvement, and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Saks (2006) contended that practitioner models, such as Gallup's, offer insufficient theoretical insight into the reasons behind employee engagement. Thus, Gallup's framework delineates key managerial behaviours but fails to explain the psychological processes that drive engagement through these practices.

Table 2.5 summarises the Gallup dimensions of employee engagement.

Table 2.5

Gallup dimensions of employee engagement

DIMENSION	EXPLANATION
Basic needs	Employees understand expectations and have the resources necessary to perform effectively.
Individual contribution	Employees receive recognition, use their strengths, and have opportunities to contribute.
Teamwork	Employees experience a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, and collaboration.
Growth	Employees have opportunities for learning, development, and connection to organisational purpose.

The Gallup Q12 survey is simple, provides extensive evidence, and is straightforwardly applicable to workplace improvement. However, its lack of theoretical depth, commercial orientation, and conceptual overlap with job satisfaction diminishes its academic strength. The next discussion focuses on employee engagement from Martins and Nienaber (2014/15)

d. Employee engagement – Martins and Nienaber

Martins and Nienaber (2014) embraced the engagement framework developed by Macey and Schneider (2008), which emphasises employees' work roles and their roles as members of the organisation. It focuses on engagement at the individual, team, and organisational levels. They argue that employee engagement emerges from the interaction between organisational systems, leadership practices, organisational culture, and individual commitment. Their model positions engagement as both an individual psychological state and an organisational capability that enables effective strategy implementation and improved organisational performance.

Nienaber and Martins' (2014) framework focuses on the individual, team/department, and organisational levels.

- Individual level dealt with aspects such as psychological traits, states, and behavioural engagement are part of the individual level. Trait engagement focuses on conscientiousness, a proactive attitude, trait-positive influence, and an optimistic outlook on life and work. Psychological states include sensations of vitality, engrossment, profound fulfilment, engagement, dedication, and empowerment. Behavioural components include extra-role behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour, proactive and individual initiatives, role extension, and adaptability.
- Team/departmental level, focused on trust, leadership, and effort, is all present. Autonomy, difficulty, and variety are all aspects of work.
- Organisational level addresses strategy, competitive advantage, vision, mission, goals, and purpose. The antecedents of engagement include trait engagement, work characteristics, leadership, trust, organisational vision, goals, mission, strategy, and competitive advantage, as well as the consequences of behavioural engagement that influence organisational performance. Antecedents of engagement influence engagement, which, in turn, impacts implications and, thus, organisational performance. Nienaber and Martins' (2014)

Nienaber and Martins (2014) developed and validated the South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) for use in a fast-growing, multicultural economy. The SAEES represents a significant advancement in employee engagement research by providing a culturally relevant, organisationally grounded framework for understanding engagement across diverse South African workplaces. Although foundational theories by Kahn (1990), Schaufeli et al. (2010), and Saks (2006) established the psychological and relational bases of engagement, the SAEES builds on these views by incorporating organisational climate, leadership, strategic alignment, and contextual factors pertinent to developing economies. Their framework is particularly relevant to the South African context and links involvement to organisational effectiveness, employee well-being, and performance outcomes.

Recent research (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Saks, 2022) indicates that future enhancements should strengthen theoretical integration, enhance construct distinctiveness, integrate individual psychological resources, and examine dynamic engagement processes through longitudinal and multilevel research designs. Such advancements would augment both the theoretical contribution and practical usefulness of the SAEES in industrial and organisational psychology.

Table 2.6 summarises the dimensions and levels of engagement according to the SAEES instrument.

Table 2.6

SAEES dimensions and levels of engagement

Individual Level	Team Level	Organisational Level
Satisfaction measures aspects such as the energy at work and whether the work is inspiring and enjoyable. Organisational commitment measures the energy exerted to support the organisation, the feeling of pride in being a member of the organisation, and the sense of identification with the organisation's goals and values. Job involvement deals with task engagement and job commitment. Engagement behaviour actions focus on behaviours related to work Role expansion behaviours address job-related opportunities and challenges.	Behavioural engagement deals with teamwork. * Engagement as a disposition focuses on conscientiousness, proactive personality, and autotelic personality. *	Behavioural engagement deals with teamwork. * Engagement as a disposition focuses on conscientiousness, proactive personality, and autotelic personality. * Feelings regarding engagement focus on self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-identity. Engagement behaviours deal with innovative behaviours and initiatives.

(Adapted from Nienaber & Martins, 2014, pp. 493–494)

SAEES Measurement instrument

The SAEES instrument aligns with the dimensions mentioned above.

Individual-level characteristics, such as job involvement, emotions of empowerment, organisational commitment, job and work environments, engagement behaviour activities, role expansion behaviours, and satisfaction, dominate the instrument.

While behavioural and dispositional engagement quantify innovative actions and initiatives, organisational and team dimensions focus on factors such as feelings of involvement.

Gallant and Martins (2018) completed a confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the reliability and validity of the SAEES instrument. Additionally, they found that financial institutions can be assumed to be the same for all races.

The contribution of Nienaber and Martins' (2014) model is its incorporation of leadership behaviours, human resource systems, and organisational strategy into a cohesive employee engagement framework. The model interprets employee engagement as a strategic tool that bolsters the effective attainment of organisational objectives. They developed an employee engagement instrument through a literature review, then enhanced and validated it for deployment in multicultural South African organisations, improving its contextual applicability and practical relevance (Nienaber & Martins, 2014, 2015).

While the Nienaber and Martins (2014) framework provides an extensive organisational perspective on employee engagement, it is constrained by the absence of a well-defined overarching psychological theory that clarifies how organisational practices lead to engagement. The framework has conceptual similarities with other categories, including organisational commitment, job satisfaction, organisational climate, and organisational culture. Moreover, it prioritises organisational structures and leadership over individual psychological assets, such as personality, resilience, psychological capital, and intrinsic motivation, which current studies recognise as significant factors influencing employee engagement (Nienaber & Martins, 2014; Bakker et al., 2023).

Martins and Ledimo (2016, p. 19) conducted quantitative research using employees from government institutions. They confirmed the validity and reliability of the SAEES questionnaire for government institutions and suggested a slightly different structure. Martins and Ledimo (2016) report differences in employee experiences across specific biographical groupings. Younger employees, along with top and senior management, experienced the highest levels of engagement compared to other levels within government institutions. Top management scored higher than all other job grades on customer service, immediate manager, vision and mission, strategy, and employee encouragement. The table below presents the variety of employee engagement perspectives.

2.3 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

The employee engagement perspectives reviewed in the literature encompass national, organisational, consultancy, human resources, and academic aspects. Employee engagement is a national dilemma across many countries (Fletcher et al., 2020). It is scrutinised as an organisational issue within both public and private domains, focused on consulting environments where diverse tools are used to assess engagement, a human resource imperative where strategic HRM methodologies markedly enhance engagement and productivity, and an academic role that bolsters the engagement initiative through empirical research and the formulation of actionable frameworks.
Fletcher et al . (2020).

2.3.1 National perspectives

Employee engagement is a concern in many nations, thereby influencing global movements. Employee engagement has emerged as a global priority in industrial and organisational psychology because of its proven impact on employee well-being, organisational success, and sustainable performance. Recent research in the United States has concentrated on understanding the organisational circumstances that foster employee engagement. Saks (2022), drawing on social exchange theory, contended that compassionate HRM practices, such as perceived organisational support, trust, meaningful work, and employee well-being, enhance employee engagement by cultivating reciprocal relationships between employees and their organisations. Keane et al. (2024) similarly found that person–environment fit at the individual, group, and organisational levels affects employee engagement, and that individuals are more inclined to engage when their values, abilities, and work environments are congruent.

Kwon et al. (2024) conducted research highlighting the reciprocal associations between employee growth and engagement, proposing that these factors culminate in higher job performance through a theoretically established upward spiral. Research further indicates that employee development initiatives, comprising learning and professional development opportunities, are associated with improved employee engagement. Kwon et al. (2024)

In Europe, research on employee engagement remains primarily influenced by the JD–R framework. Bakker and Demerouti (2023) confirmed that job resources, such as autonomy, supervisory support, performance feedback, and developmental opportunities, are the most significant predictors of employee engagement and enhance work performance and employee well-being.

Previous cross-national research by Schaufeli (2018) indicated that employee engagement varies across European nations because of organisational governance, national culture, and economic conditions, underscoring the importance of contextual factors.

In South Africa, research on employee engagement has increasingly focused on contextual variables that influence engagement in culturally diverse businesses. Martins and Nienaber (2014) developed the SAEES, one of the first culturally validated tools for assessing employee engagement in the South African organisational setting.

Reyneke-Geyer and De Beer (2024) recently showed that communication climate is a significant job resource that enhances employee engagement in the South African insurance industry.

Therefore, organisations are legally required to monitor psychosocial risk factors and promote employees' health and well-being. Although this legal framework is limited to European Union member states, organisations must monitor risks and promote global health and well-being, as this is likely to affect organisational and financial outcomes significantly. According to the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025 report (ILO, 2025), global growth rates were projected to remain stable at approximately 3.2 per cent in 2024 and 2025, but to decline in the medium term

2.3.2 Organisational perspectives

Employee engagement has been studied in both the public and private sectors. Organisations benefit from adopting best practices to enhance employee engagement. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) identify organisational strategies that result in a productive workforce and sustainable organisational success. These include building a positive, supportive, and healthy work environment, equipping employees with appropriate resources, and continually eliminating workplace ambiguity. Most organisations employ surveys to understand employee engagement. Mann and Harter (2016) argue that engagement should be viewed as an ongoing, disciplined process rather than a survey or programme aimed at improving performance and exploring opportunities to maximise utility.

2.3.3 Consulting perspectives

Various consulting organisations have developed and administered surveys to assess employee engagement. Consulting firms that administer engagement surveys include Gallup and Deloitte.

a. Gallup Consulting

According to Mann and Harter (2016, p. 3), Gallup has identified best practices to improve engagement. The first is a human capital strategy that incorporates employee engagement. Organisations with a clear purpose are more likely to foster employee engagement. Such a strategy includes leadership involvement and commitment, a communication strategy, systems that hold leaders and managers accountable for follow-up, and the utilisation of engagement data and learning and development aligned with the engagement factors. Employee engagement is not a standalone activity, but rather an ongoing process that integrates with other business activities.

Second, use a scientifically validated instrument to measure engagement (Mann & Harter, 2016, p. 3). Many engagement surveys exist, but most are not validated or peer reviewed. As a result, when organisations gather information unrelated to engagement, they may address the wrong problems. Third, understanding the organisation's current and future state is essential (Mann & Harter, 2016, p. 3). Each organisation has a vision of where it wants to be and works to achieve goals that improve engagement. This helps to create realistic milestones and actions.

Fourth, beyond viewing engagement as a single construct, some organisations focus on improving overall engagement while overlooking the tactical elements that drive performance improvements (Mann & Harter, 2016, p. 3). Engagement determines the outcomes of concrete performance management activities, such as clarifying work expectations, providing employees with the resources to perform their tasks, and offering development opportunities or fostering positive coworker relationships.

For example, expectations extend beyond a job description. Furthermore, doing one's best involves applying individual strengths more productively than general competencies. Lastly, engagement must be aligned with other workplace priorities. Engagement should be integral to how work gets done, not a separate consideration. Engagement is about continuous

investment in daily engagement, adopting business change, and addressing new initiatives (Mann & Harter, 2016, p. 4).

According to Mann and Harter (2016), Gallup's engagement study suggests that low employee engagement is a significant issue affecting the global economy. When employees are motivated, they perform well, which benefits the organisation.

Mann and Harter (2016) highlight problems businesses face when handling engagement data gathered from surveys, such as the Gallup 12. First, organisations prioritise survey data and reports over management and employee development.

Although survey results are typically disseminated within the company, few interventions are employed to foster development. Another concern is understanding engagement as a state of strong employee involvement, commitment, and excitement rather than as a percentage of unhappy or satisfied workers. Furthermore, rather than using a research-based methodology to uncover organisational management issues that affect engagement and performance, organisations rely on results that validate managers' and leaders' demands. Finally, rather than viewing employees as crucial stakeholders in achieving the organisation's future goals, the emphasis is on assessing their satisfaction and addressing their needs (Mann & Harter, 2016, p. 2).

The following elements have been found by Harter (2020b, p. 4) to influence an individual's level of engagement: having highly dedicated coworkers, feeling clear about one's function, having the resources necessary to execute the job, being permitted to perform at one's best, and working towards a common goal or purpose. The author also argues that managers significantly affect employee engagement, as more engaged team members tend to stay longer in their organisation, serve clients better, attract new ones, and are healthier and less likely to experience burnout. To raise employee engagement, leaders, teams, and people must work together.

b. Deloitte Consulting

According to Deloitte's report on global human capital trends, most organisations prioritise engagement (Deloitte, 2016). This is because it is closely related to an organisation's outcomes, including productivity, revenue growth, performance, retention, and engagement. To gain the benefits of engagement, a company's strategy must be deliberate. According to

Deloitte (2016), engagement management and measurement must be continuous, interactive processes that enable businesses to attend to and act on employee feedback.

Engagement encompasses meaningful work and jobs, effective management practices and behaviours, a positive work environment, opportunities for development and growth, trust in leadership, and flexible mobile working. Conversely, poor engagement results in high turnover, low performance, and low levels of innovation and customer service. Employee experience is therefore an emotional journey between culture and engagement.

The 2020 Deloitte worldwide survey of employees (Kwan et al., 2020) found that 80% of workers planned to stay with their current employers for the coming year. This represents a notable 45-point rise from the 2011 study. Nonetheless, a third (31%) of the employees evaluated expressed discontent with their jobs.

According to Kwan et al. (2020), organisations should focus on talent and retention strategies because workers often perceive few options in a competitive labour market.

2.3.4 Human resources perspectives

Recent evidence indicates that strategic HRM practices, such as learning and development, performance management, career development, leadership support, and perceived organisational support, significantly enhance employee engagement and individual work performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). These linkages are especially pertinent for high-potential individuals, since developmental opportunities and supportive organisational settings significantly affect their commitment, discretionary effort, and retention. While empirical evidence on high-potential employees in the manufacturing sector is relatively scarce, current research indicates that organisations that incorporate employee engagement into their talent and performance management systems are more likely to improve employee performance, foster innovation, and achieve sustained organisational effectiveness (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Thus, modern employee engagement studies progressively promote evidence-based HRM strategies that concurrently enhance employee engagement.

According to Amri (2024), strategic HRM links HR strategies to organisational goals, using innovative technology to gain competitive advantage and agility. Several HR procedures, including job design, hiring, selection, training, compensation, and performance management, all contribute to improving employee engagement. Nevertheless, companies often need to communicate their engagement strategy effectively in ways that go beyond simply updating

leadership and staff on engagement survey findings. The communication of their policy has also been stressed by organisations that have successfully developed and sustained engagement programmes. A thorough communication plan and clear messaging help ensure staff buy-in.

They argue that engagement helps the organisation remain competitive, boost performance, and ensure financial success. According to Robinson and Gifford (2014), HRM researchers have recently viewed engagement as a management strategy that emphasises “doing engagement” rather than “being engaged”.

According to Matthews (2018), engagement is a legitimate indicator comparable to profit and loss and should be viewed as a management rather than an HR concern. Human resources would collaborate with the company to determine the best course of action for employee engagement. When selecting a process, consider several key factors. To achieve business needs, HR and business must align and identify leaders. Engagement activities must set clear expectations.

Moreover, it is necessary to identify the required resources and provide a setting that supports selecting pertinent survey questions for respondents. Identifying post-survey actions and determining how to utilise engagement metrics are also necessary (Matthews, 2018).

In a university study, Ndoro and Martins (2019, p. 124) found that team involvement was the highest level of engagement, while individual engagement was the lowest. Furthermore, the authors conclude that staff members’ engagement levels are above average and favourable. They found that interventions to increase staff members’ engagement would benefit HR professionals. Employees who receive such interventions may become more engaged and more likely to be retained.

HR procedures can help improve employee engagement at work. Alnajim (2020, p. 4) asserts that HR business partners would benefit from creating training programmes for executives to assess their people’s management and leadership effectiveness. Leaders can close leadership skill gaps and enhance their self-awareness by utilising assessment tools such as 360-degree feedback. Leaders can improve employee engagement and team performance by using evaluation results to coach and inspire staff members, helping fulfil corporate objectives.

Leaders are encouraged to use quality standards for individual development plans to assess subordinates' competency levels and foster conversations about their career aspirations. Leaders must ensure development plans align with staff members' competency levels and quality criteria. Lastly, leaders should establish relationships with their staff, offer career advancement opportunities, provide clear communication channels, and share constructive feedback. According to Sunil (2020), organisations must choose leaders who possess the necessary abilities and keep them up to date if they want to flourish globally.

Leaders must adopt a global perspective and adjust to the global environment. They need to respond to global risks and problems by becoming effective global leaders. Research suggests global leadership requires problem-solving and the creation of new knowledge, systems, and innovations. Companies must adopt global leadership development programmes to succeed globally (Sunil, 2020).

2.3.5 Academic perspective

Academics play an essential role in advancing the employee engagement agenda by generating evidence-based insights, constructing solid theoretical frameworks, and translating research into actionable organisational practices. As entities increasingly engage in cross-border operations and operate in digitally integrated contexts, scholars are well positioned to explore how employee participation transforms across a spectrum of cultural, institutional, and organisational settings. Helms and Rumbley (2017) posited that internationalisation is characterised by persistent, mutually advantageous alliances that facilitate the transfer of knowledge and collaborative expertise among global players. Although conceived within the framework of higher education, this outlook emphasises the necessity of global academic collaboration to address complex workplace dilemmas, including those related to employee engagement.

Through international research alliances, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cross-sector engagement, academics help develop contextually appropriate engagement strategies that reflect the realities of today's workforce. According to the OECD (2023), international collaboration and knowledge sharing are vital for fostering innovation, organisational learning, and enhancing human capability, while UNESCO (2024) emphasises the essential contribution of higher education institutions in generating knowledge that addresses societal and employment challenges. These developments allow researchers to conduct comparative studies, develop culturally sensitive engagement strategies, and evaluate evidence-based methods that promote employee wellbeing, performance, and organisational sustainability across different national contexts.

The current study considered the South African perspective; the research took place in organisations, including consulting organisations, and the study contributes to human resources and academia. The next discussion point is the antecedents of employee engagement.

2.3 ANTECEDENTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Antecedents of employee engagement are the factors that influence or predict the level of engagement employees experience at work. Bailey et al (2017) identified factors of employee engagement, including perceived leadership and management, individual psychological states, individual perceptions of organisations, organisational interventions, and job design-related factors. These factors are discussed below.

2.3.1 Perceived leadership and management

Leadership and management play important roles in organisations: leaders provide direction and shape the organisation's future course, while managers focus on execution and provide day-to-day support. Bailey et al. (2017) concluded that a correlation exists between more positive leadership styles and higher levels of employee engagement. Furthermore, they reported correlations among engagement, charismatic leadership, ethical leadership, and supervisory coaching.

Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) argue that servant leaders provide vision, empowerment, and service to their followers, and implement interventions such as team building and fostering team members' growth and involvement. According to Eva et al. (2019, p. 114), servant leadership focuses on something or someone other than the leader and addresses ethical, spiritual, or communal challenges, or all of these. The welfare of the broader community and the organisation's stakeholders is the primary priority, and one-on-one relationships between leaders and followers are crucial. The servant leader's primary goal is to prioritise others' needs. Understanding servant leadership as a multifaceted notion is aided by the leader's motivational style and attitude. Second, servant leadership prioritises followers' needs, interests, and ambitions over the leader's own. It demonstrates an understanding that every follower is unique and has diverse requirements, interests, goals, aspirations, strengths, and limitations.

2.3.2 Individual psychological states

Individuals have internal strengths that help them navigate challenges. According to Bailey et al. (2017), individual psychological conditions include self-efficacy, resilience, and personal resources, which are favourable beliefs individuals have about their personal strength and capability. These beliefs were positively correlated with engagement.

According to Kossyva et al. (2023), empirical evidence supported individual-level outcomes of work engagement, with four encompassing sub-factors: personal resources (self-efficacy, organisation-based self-esteem, and optimism) and proactive work behaviour (personal initiative and voice). Furthermore, three individual-level employee engagement results were identified as conceptual; one encompasses sub-factors: employee effectiveness covers the dimensions of focal performance, contextual performance, and turnover intention.

A single individual-level result was recognised as a mediator of the relationship between employee engagement and a specific outcome.

Concerning work and job engagement, a single individual-level outcome was established with empirical backing. In contrast, for work and employee engagement, one individual-level outcome was validated through both conceptual and empirical evidence, and the individual-level outcome that pertains to both work and employee engagement comprises sub-factors; namely, extra-role performance entails proactivity, knowledge sharing, creativity, and adaptivity. Regarding work, staff, and occupational engagement, empirical evidence supported each individual-level outcome.

2.3.3 Social aspects

Individuals perceive organisations and teams differently depending on their experiences. Bailey et al. (2017) highlight that organisational and team dynamics such as organisational support, person–organisation fit, value congruence, communication, compensation, organisational trust, and employee voice are positively correlated with employee engagement.

These elements can be broadly categorised as manifestations of positive organisational behaviour. Idowu et al. (2017) examined how interpersonal relationships influence an individual's work effectiveness. Supervisors and lower-level staff, on the other hand, believed that practical communication training, teamwork, respect, trust, information- sharing, fair treatment, and a thorough understanding of job responsibilities enhance performance.

According to Kossyva et al. (2023), empirical evidence identified organisational-level outcomes related to job engagement, with 1 classified as conceptual. In addition, two organisational-level outcomes stemming from work engagement include the sub-factors of job resources, which encompass aspects such as autonomy, social support, supervisory mentorship, performance evaluation, and prospects for career growth. Moreover, the authors presented empirical evidence for two organisational-level outcomes associated with employee engagement. Regarding employee and job engagement, the authors empirically validated a single organisational-level outcome. At the same time, conceptual and empirical evidence supported an additional organisational-level outcome about both work and employee engagement. Empirical evidence has identified two organisational-level outcomes related to work, employee, and job engagement.

2.3.4 Job design-related factors

The job design provides a structure for individuals to carry out their responsibilities. Bailey et al. (2017) report that job design factors such as supervisory support, peer support, feedback, and autonomy were positively correlated with employee engagement. Vermooten (2019) argues that the following job resources are essential for effective performance: supervisor support, colleague support, autonomy, and feedback. Job demands refer to the organisational, social, psychological, and physical elements that require constant mental, emotional, and physical effort from employees. Job design significantly impacts employee engagement.

2.3.5 Organisational interventions and activities

Individuals can participate in various interventions and activities to improve themselves. Bailey et al. (2017) report that interventions and activities such as training and development programmes, innovative work methods, forum theatre training, and mindfulness training correlate with employee engagement. The outcomes of employee engagement are discussed next.

2.4 OUTCOMES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The outcomes of employee engagement are performance and morale. This study focuses on performance outcomes. This study discusses high-level performance outcomes, including organisational or team performance, and individual-level outcomes, which consist of three subsections: task performance, extra-role performance, and counterproductive performance (Bailey et al., 2017).

2.4.1 Task performance

According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997), in-role task performance is associated with behaviours typically listed in the job description that contribute to the organisation's technical core. This study examined in-role performance, service quality, and care quality. Pradhan and Jenna (2017) posit that task performance focuses on task-related behaviours, including the duties, abilities, and knowledge needed to finish the job.

2.4.2 Extra performance

Extra-role performance supports task performance by maintaining and enhancing the social and psychological environment. Counterproductive performance can harm the organisation (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). The dimensions of extra-role performance include citizenship behaviour, flexibility, innovative work behaviour, and adaptive service offerings; knowledge sharing is also related to employee engagement (Bailey et al., 2017). According to Borah and Barua (2018), most studies on the impact of engagement have focused on extra-role behaviour, commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, and intention to leave.

2.4.3 Counterproductive work performance

According to Bailey (2017), counterproductive work performance, or deviant behaviours, pertains to actions that detrimentally affect the organisation. These behaviours include employee withdrawal. According to Motyka (2018), higher levels of engagement are linked to better performance, higher organisational commitment, better extra-role behaviour, lower turnover intentions, and higher job satisfaction among workers. Future studies should therefore examine the relationships between engagement and the monetary and non-monetary aspects of outcome performance. Individual performance includes zeal, excellence, contentment, and commitment. Customer loyalty, profitability, and productivity are all components of an organisation's performance (Sun, 2019).

2.4.5 Relationship amongst variables

Southgate et al. (2023) conducted an empirical investigation on the predictive influence of transformational leadership (TFL), transactional leadership (TSL), and servant leadership (SL) on employee engagement (EE) among university staff in Cape Town. The research investigated TFL, TSL, and SL as determinants of EE at a tertiary institution in Cape Town. The research demonstrated a statistically significant cumulative effect of TFL, TSL, and SL.

The study's findings indicate statistically significant effects of TFL and TSL on EE. Nonetheless, the findings reveal that SL did not have a substantial effect on EE.

Van der Vaart (2021) investigated the impact of employee engagement, servant leadership, training, and self-efficacy on employee performance. The study employed quantitative methodologies and surveys administered to personnel at global cargo shipping firms. The research findings indicate that servant leadership favourably influenced employee engagement in multinational cargo expedition firms, and training similarly had a beneficial effect. The theoretical contributions suggest that employee engagement may mediate the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance, and vice versa. The results of this research are beneficial for the HR department. The research was limited to examining employee performance and engagement in goods-shipping companies. The report recommends further research in other organisations.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 discussed the conceptualisation of employee engagement, which addressed Research Aim 1 of the study: To conceptualise the construct of employee engagement and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective. The chapter discussed different definitions, engagement theories, and perspectives. This chapter presented the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement. This chapter presented the relationships among employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance.

Thus, this chapter achieved Research Aim 1. Chapter 3 discusses the second variable: leadership.

CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND SPECIFICALLY SERVANT LEADERSHIP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current chapter focuses on the conceptualisation of leadership challenges in the workplace. Academics, researchers, and practitioners have defined leadership differently, focusing on aspects such as leader focus, behaviours and characteristics, and the processes of change or influence. The knowledge and practical application of leadership are essential to solving workplace problems. These definitions are relevant to this study because they describe leadership as the ability to influence and facilitate individual and collective efforts and to apply the servant leadership approach to achieve organisational goals.

Chapter 3 broadly conceptualises leadership and specifically examines servant leadership and its dimensions. The chapter discusses leadership and servant leadership, including definitions and relevant theories. It also presents the leadership and servant leadership perspective, antecedents, and outcomes. This chapter addresses Research Aim 2: the conceptualisation of leadership, specifically examining the servant leadership construct and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

The complex nature of leadership can be understood by considering its definition, the distinction between leadership and management, and various leadership theories.

3.2.1 Definition of leadership

There are various definitions of leadership. According to Stogdill (1974, p. 411), “leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organised group toward goal achievement" This definition highlights leadership as a process of influence aimed at attaining shared goals.

According to Yukl et al. (2013, 23), “leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. This definition highlights leadership as a process of influence that clarifies how individuals and groups can achieve goals.

Furthermore, Northouse (2023, p.6) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. Based on the above definitions, leadership is viewed as a process of influencing, interacting with, and facilitating individuals and collective efforts to achieve a common goal.

Malakyan (2014) asserts that influential leaders are at ease in the role of leader and delegate authority when necessary. When it comes to decision-making and action, leadership and followership may be crucial. Park et al.'s (2018) leadership framework is discussed next.

Park et al Leadership framework

Park et al. (2018) provided an integrated, comprehensive leadership framework, based on a rigorous review of the literature on global leadership behaviours and competencies. They examined 11 Indigenous studies on effective management and leadership practices in various nations, published between 1995 and 2016, as well as 14 global leadership competence models. Park et al. (2018) identified five research themes in their evaluation of the competency models: change and vision; personal traits and values, including ethics and openness/flexibility; and intercultural, interpersonal, and global issues.

Table 3.1 presents the core dimensions of the leadership framework by Park et al. (2018). As seen in the table, global leadership would be helpful when demonstrating the following competencies (Park et al., 2018): intercultural competency and emotional intelligence; social and networking skills; virtual teamwork; global awareness and understanding; ethics; transparency and adaptability; communication, morality, ethics, and standards; personal relationships and care; and organisational knowledge. These competencies are evolving to meet the leader’s ever-changing needs. Four main categories of prominent global leaders in relationship and change management are recognised: task, relationship, change, and external conditions.

According to Park et al. (2018), related to the task, leaders are responsible for guiding and shaping the organisation’s future. This is achieved by providing clear direction, clarifying purpose and expectations, managing time, resources, and plans, assessing quality, output, and progress, identifying causes of problems and resolving them, building global and organisational expertise, and sharing information.

Relationships support, develop, recognise, and empower others, which is crucial between leaders and employees, supports organisational success, and must be nurtured.

The leader needs to respond quickly and help employees, listen to employees' needs, recognise and reward, coach and mentor, delegate and consult, create and share knowledge, promote learning, show concern for others, connect emotionally with subordinates, build personal and close relationships, treat others fairly and equally, and build trust.

Table 3.1

Leadership framework: Core dimensions

EFFECTIVE GLOBAL LEADER	TASK: PLAN/CLARIFY/ MONITOR/SOLVE	RELATIONSHIP: SUPPORT/ DEVELOP/ RECOGNISE/ EMPOWER	CHANGE: ENVISION/ ENCOURAGE/ ADVOCATE/ FACILITATE	EXTERNAL: NETWORK/ WATCH/ REPRESENT/ ALLY
Convergent Intercultural competence; emotional intelligence Social/ networking skills Virtual teamwork Global mind/ knowledge; ethics Openness/ flexibility; communication	Prioritise, organise, and schedule Provide a clear direction Clarify purpose and expectations Manage time, resources, and plans Assess quality, output, and progress Identify problems, causes, and resolve them Build global and organisational expertise Share information	Respond quickly and help employees Listen to employees' needs Recognise and reward Coach and mentor Delegate and consult Create and share knowledge Promote learning	Lead with a vision Introduce innovations Advocate for change Adapt work conditions Motivate and celebrate	Engage and develop (outside) partnerships Respond to customer needs Scan and analyse environments Manage opportunities and risks Evaluate trends and technology Protect members

EFFECTIVE GLOBAL LEADER	TASK: PLAN/CLARIFY/ MONITOR/SOLVE	RELATIONSHIP: SUPPORT/ DEVELOP/ RECOGNISE/ EMPOWER	CHANGE: ENVISION/ ENCOURAGE/ ADVOCATE/ FACILITATE	EXTERNAL: NETWORK/ WATCH/ REPRESENT/ ALLY
Organisational knowledge		Treat others fairly and equally. Build trust	Have open communication Be accessible	

(Park et al., 2018)

According to Park et al. (2018), to effect change, leaders must envision, encourage, advocate, and facilitate their team's successful adaptation. Leaders must recognise changes and determine how to address them. To achieve this, leaders must set an example, introduce innovations, advocate for change, modify work conditions, motivate and celebrate, manage emotions effectively, uphold integrity, commit to their values and standards, and promote accessibility, fairness, and open communication.

Regarding external factors, networking, watching, representing, and allying are essential for leaders to remain competitive while also monitoring stakeholders and the external environment to ensure effective decision-making.

They must respond to consumer demands, engage with and build external alliances, scan and analyse the environment, manage opportunities and hazards, assess technology and trends, safeguard members, and set an example. Park et al. (2018) emphasise the criticality and distinctiveness of global leaders' roles, and the effective leadership behaviours required to navigate the changing business landscape. Leaders' performance is essential to improving living conditions in every country. Leaders need to build relationships, adapt to change, and remain mindful of external factors essential to leadership success. Based on the literature, successful leaders are outwardly focused and enable organisations and individuals to thrive, aligning with the servant leadership approach. The leadership theories are discussed next.

3.2.2 Leadership theories

Leadership theories have evolved, and each has benefits and drawbacks that add to the body of knowledge and its usefulness. This section covers the great man, trait, behavioural, situational, neo-charismatic, team leadership, follower-centric, contextual, complexity, and systems theories of leadership.

Table 3.2 summarises the progression of leadership theory from initial great man theory to relational, contextual, and follower-centric approaches. Early theories, such as great man and trait theories, focused on leaders' personal attributes. In contrast, behavioural, contingency, and situational theories shifted focus to observable leadership actions and the impact of organisational context. Modern theories, including transformational, authentic, ethical, spiritual, contextual, and systems leadership, view leadership as a dynamic, relational process that fosters organisational learning, ethical decision-making, employee engagement, and sustainable organisational performance. Servant leadership distinguishes itself by prioritising the service to followers as the central aim of leadership, with Greenleaf (1977) laying its philosophical groundwork and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) presenting one of the initial empirically substantiated multidimensional models of servant leadership.

Table 3.2

Key leadership theories

LEADERSHIP THEORY	KEY PROPONENT(S)	PRIMARY FOCUS	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
Great man theory	Carlyle (1841)	Inborn leadership characteristics.	Highlighted the importance of individual leadership qualities and inspired subsequent leadership research.	Ignores leadership development, contextual influences, and follower contributions.
Trait theory	Stogdill (1948)	Leader personality and characteristics.	Identifies important leader attributes, such as intelligence, confidence, integrity, and emotional stability.	No universal set of traits predicts effective leadership across all situations.
Behavioural theory	Ohio State University; Blake and Mouton (1982)	Task-oriented and people-oriented leadership behaviours.	Demonstrates that leadership behaviours can be learned and developed.	Underestimates the influence of organisational context and situational factors.
Contingency theory	Fiedler (1967)	Fit between leader style and situational favourableness.	Introduced the importance of context in leadership effectiveness.	Assumes leadership style is relatively inflexible.
Situational leadership theory	Hersey & Blanchard (1969).	Leader adaptability and follower readiness.	Encourages leadership flexibility and follower development.	Limited empirical support for some propositions and measurement challenges.

LEADERSHIP THEORY	KEY PROPONENT(S)	PRIMARY FOCUS	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
Charismatic leadership theory	House (1977); Bennis et al. (2018)	Inspirational influence and vision.	Enhances motivation, commitment, and organisational change.	May encourage excessive dependence on charismatic leaders.
Transformational leadership theory	Burns (1978); Bass and Avolio (1994)	Vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration.	Promotes innovation, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and performance.	May overemphasise leader influence and insufficiently acknowledge follower agency.
Transactional leadership theory	Burns (1978); Bass (1985)	Rewards, performance monitoring, and corrective actions.	Effective for maintaining organisational stability, efficiency, and goal achievement.	Less effective in promoting innovation, creativity, and long-term organisational change.
Ethical leadership theory	Brown et al. (2019). Shakeel et al. (2019)	Ethics, fairness, integrity, and accountability.	Promotes trust, organisational justice, and ethical organisational cultures.	May provide limited guidance when conflict between ethical principles or organisational priorities compete.
Authentic leadership theory	Walumbwa et al. (2008). Alavi and Gill (2017)	Authentic relationships and ethical behaviour.	Strengthens trust, psychological safety, and employee commitment.	The boundaries between authentic leadership and related positive leadership theories remain debated.
Spiritual leadership theory	Fry (2003); Meng (2016)	Meaningful work and spiritual well-being.	Enhances organisational commitment, purpose, and employee well-being.	Spiritual concepts may differ across cultures and organisational contexts.

LEADERSHIP THEORY	KEY PROPONENT(S)	PRIMARY FOCUS	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS
Contextual leadership theory	Dinh et al. (2014). Northouse (2023)	Contextual adaptation and organisational dynamics.	Reflects the complexity of contemporary organisations.	Contextual variables can be difficult to operationalise and measure.
Systems leadership theory	Senge (2006)	Systems thinking and organisational interdependence.	Supports organisational learning, innovation, and sustainable performance.	Require leaders to manage complex organisational relationships and long-term change processes.
Servant leadership theory	Greenleaf (1977)	Follower growth, stewardship, empowerment, and service.	Promotes employee development, trust, engagement, ethical behaviour, and organisational citizenship.	Originally conceptual and philosophical, with limited early empirical validation; balancing follower needs and organisational performance may present practical challenges.
Servant leadership (empirical model)	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)	Altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organisational stewardship.	Provides a validated multidimensional measure of servant leadership and operationalises Greenleaf's philosophy.	Some dimensions overlap conceptually with transformational and ethical leadership, requiring further examination of discriminant validity.

3.2.2.1 Early theories of leadership

The early leadership theories include the great man, trait, behavioural, situational, and contingency theories. Each theory focuses on different aspects that contribute to understanding and application of leadership in the workplace. These leadership theories are not in isolation. The shortcomings of one theory led to the development of another.

a. The great man theory

The great man theory posits that some individuals are born with the qualities necessary to be effective leaders. Carlyle (1841) popularised the theory by claiming that “the history of the world is but the biography of great men”, implying that extraordinary leaders are innate rather than developed. This perspective asserts that leaders exhibit distinctive traits, including courage, intelligence, vision, confidence, and moral authority, which set them apart from the general population.

Leadership is thus an intrinsic attribute rather than an acquired skill (Carlyle, 1841). Contemporary leadership researchers consider the great man theory historically important, as it established the conceptual groundwork for later trait-based leadership studies. People believed these qualities were intrinsic and could not be learned. Hossain (2015) emphasised that the 21st century requires honesty, simplicity, vision, dedication, inspiration, delegation, communication, courage, commitment, kindness, open-mindedness, fairness, forward-thinking, competence, experience, and knowledge. Northouse (2023) asserts that, despite the theory's lack of empirical validation, it established the concept that personal attributes affect leadership efficacy. Modern scholars recognise that numerous effective leaders exhibit remarkable personal traits, but they dismiss the deterministic notion that leadership capability is solely inherited (Northouse, 2023; Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

The theory lacks both theoretical and empirical rigour, as it does not provide a scientifically validated set of leadership attributes. It ignores situational, social, and environmental factors and maintains that leaders are born rather than developed. Additionally, it reflects historical and gender biases that limit its applicability across contexts. These shortcomings support the shift towards trait leadership, a more scientific approach to understanding leadership (Northouse, 2023).

b. Trait theory

Trait theory is grounded in differential psychology, which claims that relatively stable individual qualities influence behaviour across several contexts. The concept asserts that leaders possess distinct cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal attributes that enable them to influence others effectively. Stogdill's (1948) seminal review reshaped trait research by showing that no universal set of characteristics guarantees leadership effectiveness. Effective leadership depends on the interaction between leader characteristics and situational demands. This finding enabled the formulation of contingency and situational leadership theories while preserving the importance of leader attributes within broader organisational contexts.

Notwithstanding substantial empirical support, trait theory has been criticised for failing to explain how leadership abilities develop adequately and are refined through education and experience over time. Second, the theory provides inadequate guidance for the leadership behaviours required in diverse organisational contexts. Third, it often neglects follower attributes, organisational culture, and environmental intricacies. Therefore, modern researchers advocate integrating trait theory with behavioural, transformational, and complexity leadership frameworks to understand leadership effectiveness better (Bennis et al., 2018).

Recent advancements in trait leadership study increasingly incorporate personality psychology, neurology, and emotional intelligence. Researchers increasingly acknowledge that effective leadership encompasses cognitive capacity, emotional management, empathy, resilience, and flexibility. Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of leadership performance, especially in knowledge-intensive businesses where interpersonal interactions are essential (Goleman et al., 2013; Northouse, 2023).

Trait theory focuses on identifying the traits, attributes, skills, and competencies that differentiate leaders from non-leaders. Such traits include extraversion, self-confidence, and courage (Rijamampianina, 2018, p. 321). Trait theory offers a more methodical, research-focused perspective on leadership. It identifies and scientifically analyses traits associated with successful leadership, such as intelligence, self-assurance, and integrity. It contributes to leadership development, assessment, and selection processes by offering a more quantifiable and organised framework than the great man theory. It also encourages leadership and personal development by recognising that certain qualities can be cultivated.

Despite its contributions, trait theory lacks a comprehensive, widely recognised set of qualities, leading to conceptual uncertainty and inconsistent findings across research. It tends to undervalue situational, relational, and contextual factors in leadership effectiveness while overemphasising individual qualities. Furthermore, the idea that certain traits are directly linked to effective leadership outcomes is overly simplistic, limiting its ability to explain and forecast complex organisational situations. Zaccaro et al. (2018) contend that effective leadership results from a synergistic integration of cognitive abilities, social intelligence, emotional skills, and personality characteristics that interact throughout an individual's career.

c. Behavioural theory

Behavioural theory suggests that a leader's effectiveness is more a function of their behaviour than of their character traits. It offers a more pragmatic, development-focused perspective by shifting the emphasis from innate qualities to observable leader behaviours. By defining leadership behaviours that can be learned and repeated, such as task- and people-oriented acts, behavioural theory makes a substantial contribution. These leadership development initiatives increase access to leadership and enhance its application in organisational settings by offering a more transparent framework for assessing leadership effectiveness through observable actions.

(i) The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University is among the leading researchers who have contributed to understanding the leadership behaviours that make leaders effective. According to Allen (2018), the Ohio State University study identified two key leadership behaviours: initiating structure and consideration. Leaders exhibiting high initiating structure provide clarity and direction, and those with high consideration focus on people's needs.

(ii) Blake and Mouton (1982)

Blake and Mouton (1982) developed a managerial grid and concluded that the most effective leadership is team management, as it prioritises people and results at the highest levels. The underlying assumption of behavioural approaches is that leadership effectiveness depends on how leaders behave when interacting with followers, rather than on their personal traits.

Behavioural theory is limited by the assumption that specific behaviours always lead to effective leadership, without considering situational and contextual factors. It does not adequately explain why the same behaviour could have different results in other settings. Furthermore, by focusing on observable behaviours, it may overlook other factors, such as relational, emotional, and cognitive processes, that affect leadership efficacy, reducing its explanatory depth.

d. Contingency and situation theory

Contingency and situational leadership theories highlight the importance of context in understanding leadership effectiveness, but they differ in their views on adaptability and flexibility. According to contingency theory, a leader's effectiveness depends on matching the right leader to the appropriate circumstance, and the leader's style is essentially fixed. Situational theory, by contrast, assumes leaders are adaptable and can adjust their approach to the situation and followers' needs.

Firstly, Fiedler's (1967) model explains contingency theory, arguing that leaders have a dominant style that is challenging to modify, such as task- or relationship-oriented leadership. When a leader faces a situation that calls for a less dominant style, the solution is to change the circumstances or replace the leader. This theory provides a framework for understanding the fit between leadership style and situational factors. Its limitations include the belief that styles are fixed, the difficulty of measuring situational variables, and an impractical prescriptive approach to how leaders should respond to the situation.

Secondly, Hersey and Blanchard (1969)'s situational theory explains that leaders should adjust their actions to followers' readiness to suit the circumstances. The theory encourages leaders to choose an appropriate leadership style to address complex situations. Its limitation is that it oversimplifies the leader's reaction and assumes the leader can assess the situation and adapt accordingly.

Leadership is influenced by variables related to the issue facing the leader, the people, the task, the organisation, and other environmental variables. Variables such as leadership style, follower qualities, and the situation determine the type of leadership required. Leaders choose the best way to address the situation or circumstance they face. Leaders need to understand the situation at hand to respond appropriately (McCleskey, 2014).

Bălan and Vreja (2019, p. 1187) argue that certain situations, such as wars or emergencies, require an authoritarian leadership style, in which leaders give clear directives, rather than a participative leadership style, which could lead to failures or even catastrophes. The contingency approach acknowledges that the situation and other factors, such as the organisation, the goals to be achieved, and the leader's power, determine how leaders lead. Although the situational and contingency approaches explain certain aspects of leadership, they do not explain their origins.

3.2.2.2 Modern theories of leadership

Charismatic and neo-charismatic theories are modern theories that explain symbolic and emotional appeal, extraordinary subordinate commitment, and a practical approach to leadership.

a. Charismatic, transformational, and transactional theories of leadership

Charismatic, transformational, and transactional leaders bring new insights into understanding leadership.

i) Charismatic leadership

Charismatic leadership theory originated as a distinct leadership framework through the foundational contributions of Max Weber (1947), who characterised charisma as an exceptional quality that engenders strong loyalty and dedication among followers. Weber argued that charismatic leadership differs from traditional and legal-rational authority because it relies on followers' perceptions of a leader's extraordinary vision, courage, and personal attributes. Charismatic leaders are seen as having exceptional capabilities that allow them to sway views, values, and behaviours beyond formal organisational authority.

House (1977) expanded Weber's conceptualisation by suggesting that charismatic leaders affect followers by articulating an inspiring vision, exhibiting self-confidence, conveying elevated performance expectations, and manifesting unconventional behaviour.

House defines charismatic leadership as characterised by emotional appeal, personal risk-taking, sensitivity to followers' needs, and the capacity to forge deep emotional bonds between leaders and followers. This viewpoint shifted leadership research from an emphasis on personality traits to the behavioural mechanisms underlying charismatic influence.

Modern researchers define charismatic leadership as a symbolic and relational process in which leaders motivate followers through vision, emotional communication, and personal exemplification (Bennis et al., 2018; Northouse, 2023). Contemporary interpretations acknowledge that charisma is not solely an inherent personality trait but a socially produced phenomenon arising from interactions among leaders, followers, and organisational circumstances. Thus, charismatic leadership is increasingly regarded as a dynamic process shaped by organisational culture, environmental uncertainty, and follower perceptions.

According to Fragouli (2018), charismatic leaders can transform organisations by inspiring members to achieve higher levels of dedication and performance. Charismatic leadership refers to leaders who use charm, vision, and emotional appeal to inspire loyalty, commitment, and great effort. Conger and Kanungo (1998) identify behaviours essential in charismatic leaders, such as vision, inspiration, meaning-making, empowerment, setting high expectations, and fostering collective identity.

The dimensions, characteristics, and dynamics of followership, including the charismatic leader's personal approval of the follower, can improve self-worth. The context plays a role in understanding charismatic leadership.

Although academics have linked charismatic leadership to favourable organisational outcomes such as employee loyalty, performance, and motivation, critics argue that its excessive reliance on the leader may foster dependence, suppress disagreements, and encourage unethical behaviour. Charismatic leadership remains a dynamic leadership paradigm with great potential to drive organisational change, commitment, and inspiration. Its primary advantages include motivating followers amid uncertainty, building emotional connection, and providing visionary influence. However, the theory contains serious flaws, with concerns about sustainability, narcissism, overreliance, and ethics casting doubt on its long-term viability.

ii) Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership theory is one of the most influential contemporary leadership theories and was first introduced by Burns (1978). Burns distinguished transformational leadership from transactional leadership by arguing that transformational leaders elevate followers' values, motivations, and moral purpose beyond immediate self-interest. Through inspiration and shared vision, transformational leaders encourage followers to pursue higher-order organisational and societal goals, thereby fostering both individual and organisational transformation.

Bass (1985) expanded Burns' conceptualisation by developing a measurable model of transformational leadership comprising four behavioural dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Idealised influence refers to leaders serving as ethical role models; inspirational motivation involves articulating an inspiring vision; intellectual stimulation encourages creativity and innovation; while individualised consideration focuses on mentoring and developing followers. Bass argued that transformational leaders consistently achieve performance beyond expectations by strengthening follower commitment and intrinsic motivation. Contemporary scholars define transformational leadership as a process through which leaders inspire, empower, and develop followers to achieve exceptional individual and organisational outcomes (Bennis et al., 2018; Northouse, 2023).

Consequently, transformational leadership remains one of the most extensively researched and empirically supported leadership theories across diverse organisational settings.

Transformational leadership provides a thorough and powerful framework for comprehending leadership as a process of motivating and developing followers. It influences others by using their knowledge, interpersonal connections, and charisma to achieve higher levels of motivation, performance, and organisational change. Bass and Avolio (1994) divided the dimensions of transformational leadership into four groups. The first, idealised influence, elevates organisational ideals and positions leaders as role models who unite followers around shared objectives. However, it risks over-emphasis on leader behaviour and neglecting potential power disparities. The second is intellectual stimulation. In this dimension, leaders help followers foster creativity and critical thinking, emphasising contextual factors such as corporate culture and follower capabilities. Third, individual consideration emphasises responsiveness to followers' needs through development and assistance;

It may be challenging to apply consistently in large or resource-constrained environments. Finally, inspirational motivation emphasises presenting a compelling vision to encourage dedication; however, its effectiveness may depend heavily on followers' perceptions and may combine influence with genuine inspiration.

Transformational leadership theory asserts that leaders can persuade followers to put the group's needs ahead of their own, but this premise warrants critical examination. Although transformational leaders are often depicted as able to influence both strategic direction and day-to-day organisational issues, these assertions may overstate their consistency across situations. According to Udin's (2024) empirical findings, employee attitudes, particularly organisational citizenship behaviour, are positively correlated with transformational leadership. However, the degree and generalisability of this link remain context-dependent.

iii) Transactional leadership theory

Transactional leadership theory is founded on the principle of exchange between leaders and followers, in which leaders clarify expectations, set performance standards, and provide rewards or corrective actions based on followers' achievement of predetermined objectives. Burns (1978) first articulated the theory, distinguishing transactional leadership from transformational leadership by arguing that transactional leaders motivate followers primarily through contractual exchanges rather than by transforming their values or aspirations. In transactional relationships, leaders and followers engage in mutually beneficial exchanges that ensure organisational stability, efficiency, and goal attainment. Transactional leadership, which primarily focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers,

Bass (1985) expanded Burns' conceptualisation by identifying three core components of transactional leadership: contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and management-by-exception (passive). Contingent reward involves recognising and rewarding employees for meeting agreed performance standards, while management-by-exception focuses on monitoring employee performance and intervening when deviations from expected standards occur. Active management-by-exception involves proactive monitoring to prevent errors, whereas passive management-by-exception entails corrective action only after problems have emerged. These dimensions provide a structured framework for managing employee performance and maintaining organisational control.

Contemporary scholars define transactional leadership as a performance-oriented leadership approach that relies on clearly defined expectations, formal authority, accountability, and reinforcement mechanisms to achieve organisational objectives (Northouse, 2023; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Transactional leadership remains particularly relevant in highly regulated environments where compliance, operational consistency, and performance accountability are essential. Rather than replacing transformational leadership, many scholars argue that transactional leadership provides the managerial foundation upon which transformational leadership can build organisational excellence.

Conversely, transactional leaders strongly emphasise outlining employees' duties and responsibilities and rewarding them accordingly. McCleskey (2014) argues that the goal of transactional leadership is to facilitate quick, easy interactions between stakeholders, in which both leaders and followers benefit from the exchange.

Leaders influence followers by offering praise and feedback. Critics point out that these relationships often change, provide only temporary satisfaction, and can lead to animosity if needs go unmet. An additional issue is that the transactional approach appears to ignore the situational context of leadership.

According to McCleskey (2014), transactional leaders focus on accomplishing performance objectives and completing required tasks. Furthermore, they maintain the current organisational situation and motivate followers through contractual agreements. In addition, they use extrinsic rewards to guide followers' behaviour towards achieving established goals. Although leaders can employ both transformational and transactional leadership, they tend to lean towards transformational leadership in complex, challenging situations.

According to Dong (2023), although transactional leaders improve organisational performance, placing too much focus on them could stifle long-term development and innovation. Drawing on findings from other studies, they argue that transactional leadership offers useful insights for organisations seeking to improve their leadership practices.

An imprecise definition of transactional leaders' traits and behaviours may hamper organisational innovation and limit the focus on leader traits and behaviour. According to their findings, organisations should invest in focused leadership development programmes to strengthen transactional leaders' capabilities, balance them with other leadership philosophies

to foster creativity and long-term growth, and consider new fields and cross-cultural research to expand knowledge of transactional leadership across contexts.

Transactional leadership is grounded in social exchange theory, reinforcement theory, and expectancy theory, all of which assume that individuals are motivated by anticipated rewards and the avoidance of undesirable consequences. Social exchange theory suggests that effective organisational relationships develop through reciprocal exchanges between leaders and followers, while reinforcement theory proposes that behaviours followed by positive consequences are more likely to be repeated (Blau, 1964; Skinner, 1957).

Consequently, transactional leaders establish clear performance expectations and utilise rewards or corrective measures to reinforce desired employee behaviours. Bass (1985) positioned transactional leadership within the Full Range Leadership Model, arguing that effective leaders combine transactional and transformational behaviours depending on organisational circumstances. Transactional leadership ensures organisational efficiency by maintaining structure, clarifying roles, and monitoring performance, whereas transformational leadership inspires innovation and organisational change. This integrated perspective acknowledges that organisations require both managerial control and visionary leadership to achieve sustainable performance.

b. Moral leadership: Ethical, spiritual, authentic, and servant leadership

Moral leadership includes ethical, spiritual, authentic, and servant leadership. Each leadership type is explained below.

i) Ethical leadership

Ethical leaders behave ethically and encourage others to do the same. According to Shakeel et al. (2019), ethical leadership is the implicit and explicit pursuit of desired ethical behaviour for the leader and their followers. This is accomplished through efforts guided by rules and principles that foster motivation to learn, healthy optimism, and clarity of purpose, upholding the values of empowerment, service to others, concern for human rights, betterment through change, and the fulfilment of duties towards society, future generations, the environment, and sustainability.

Shakeel et al. (2019) emphasise the process of understanding ethical leadership. Ethical leaders develop personal ethics, set ethical benchmarks, welcome feedback, guide followers by rules, develop self-principles, serve others, and implement change with all stakeholders. Ethical Leadership offers substantial organisational advantages by fostering trust, fairness, psychological safety, and responsible organisational governance.

Employees who perceive organisational leaders as ethical demonstrate stronger organisational commitment, lower turnover intentions, higher job satisfaction, and reduced workplace deviance (Brown et al., 2019). Ethical leadership also strengthens organisational reputation and stakeholder confidence, making it increasingly important within organisations pursuing sustainability and environmental, social, and governance objectives. Nevertheless,

ii) Spiritual leadership

Some organisations focus on understanding workplace spirituality. Meng (2016) argues that understanding the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to inspire oneself and others to cultivate a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership is crucial. According to Meng (2016), spiritual leadership empowers people to be their best selves and fosters inner peace among leaders, followers, and other stakeholders. Through their acts and vision, leaders instil fundamental values in their followers. They also promote membership by upholding the core principles of humility, altruism, and sincerity in their service to followers and other stakeholders (Meng, 2016). Establishing trust is the cornerstone of collaboration and has been studied in greater detail in management and organisation research under the guise of spiritual, ethical, servant, and authentic leadership. Organisations need to be sensitive to the fact that promoting certain spiritual ideologies while ignoring others can create a hostile environment. Spiritual leadership contributes uniquely to organisational performance by satisfying employees' higher-order psychological needs for meaning, purpose, and organisational belonging.

Spiritual leadership is a values-based leadership approach most strongly associated with Louis Fry's (2003) causal theory, which frames leadership as an intrinsic motivation model centred on vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love. Fry (2003) argues that spiritual leadership seeks to create vision and value congruence across individuals, teams, and organisations, while also addressing higher-order needs such as calling and membership. In this sense, the theory is not limited to religious practice; it is positioned as a broader organisational framework for meaning, purpose, and commitment at work.

At its core, the theory explains how leaders inspire followers through a compelling vision, a sense of shared purpose, and a relational climate characterised by care, compassion, trust, humility, and integrity. Fry's original model explicitly links spiritual leadership to organisational outcomes such as commitment and productivity, as well as to a workplace culture that supports spiritual survival and meaningful work. This makes the theory especially relevant in organisations seeking to align performance with human flourishing rather than efficiency alone.

Research increasingly demonstrates that meaningful work positively influences resilience, employee engagement, and psychological well-being (Fry, 2003). Organisations characterised by strong organisational purpose frequently experience higher employee commitment and lower burnout because employees perceive their work as personally significant. However, Fry (2003) cautions that spiritual leadership must remain inclusive and avoid associations with specific religious beliefs, ensuring that organisational spirituality reflects universal values rather than faith traditions. The theoretical foundation of spiritual leadership is an intrinsic motivation model. Fry's framework proposes that leaders influence followers by satisfying deeper psychological and existential needs through purpose, belonging, and hope, rather than relying only on external rewards. The model draws together vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love to explain how organisations can create a motivating environment that supports learning, commitment, and productivity.

iii) Authentic leadership

Authentic leaders seem comfortable with their thoughts and emotions and are transparent in their relationships with followers (Alavi & Gill, 2017, p. 158). Such leaders are authentic and essential in inspiring and bolstering followers by providing psychological resources such as optimism, self-efficacy, hope, trust, and resilience. Followers of an authentic leader are influenced by their actions to adopt new habits, participate in change initiatives, and make informed decisions. Authentic leadership comprises four dimensions: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalised moral perspective, with leaders behaving in accordance with these moral values (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Authentic leadership also affects followers' organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational learning processes, and collaboration with others to effectively address change (Alavi & Gill, 2017, p. 158). According to Alavi and Gill (2017), authentic leadership fosters an environment in which followers are motivated to commit to changes and take the necessary actions to address complex challenges.

It is proposed that authentic leadership develops a vision, objectives, and values to guide followers in completing change projects. Leaders need to behave ethically in a competitive global environment; thus, building trust with individuals inside and outside the organisation improves productivity. The importance of trust in organisations has grown in both academic research and management practice, driven by the need for joint action and substantial transformation (Liu, 2017, p. 343).

Kalay et al. (2018, p. 12) report that employees whose managers demonstrate authentic leadership behaviours tend to show higher affective commitment and lower levels of reported role stress and departure intentions. Followers are better equipped to handle difficult circumstances when authentic leaders foster an environment of openness, transparency, and trust.

Such a positive atmosphere creates less ambiguity and fewer disagreements. Affective commitment mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and the intention to leave.

iv)Servant leadership allows the leader to model how to serve while leading others and will be discussed in detail in Section 3.3. The next discussion focused on contextual, complexity and systems theories.

c. Contextual, complexity, and systems theories

This section examined contextual, complexity, and systems theories of leadership. The leader plays a critical role in shaping an organisation's future.

i) Contextual leadership theory

Contextual leadership theory is based on the premise that leadership effectiveness cannot be understood independently of the organisational, social, cultural, and environmental contexts within which leadership occurs. Unlike traditional leadership theories that focus primarily on leader characteristics or behaviours, contextual leadership emphasises that leadership is a dynamic, socially embedded process shaped by organisational culture, stakeholder relationships, institutional structures, technological change, and external environmental forces.

According to Oc (2018), leadership is fundamentally context-dependent and requires leaders to interpret and respond appropriately to the unique demands of different organisational settings. Consequently, effective leadership is not characterised by a universal style but by the leader's capacity to align behaviours with contextual requirements. Contemporary scholars define contextual leadership as the ability to recognise, interpret, and leverage organisational and environmental conditions to achieve sustainable organisational performance.

Johns (2018) argues that context encompasses multiple dimensions, including organisational size, industry characteristics, national culture, institutional regulations, technological advancement, and workforce diversity. These contextual variables influence leadership behaviours, decision-making processes, and organisational outcomes. Accordingly, contextual leadership encourages leaders to develop contextual intelligence, enabling them to understand how organisational realities shape their effectiveness. Modern leadership research increasingly views contextual leadership as an integrative framework that complements transformational, servant, ethical, and complexity leadership theories.

Rather than replacing existing leadership models, contextual leadership explains why different leadership approaches succeed under different organisational conditions. Northouse (2023) notes that modern organisations operate within increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments, making contextual awareness a critical leadership competency. Therefore, contextual leadership represents an evolution from static leadership models to adaptive, environmentally responsive leadership.

The theoretical foundation of contextual leadership draws on contingency theory, institutional theory, organisational ecology, and social constructionism. These perspectives collectively argue that leadership effectiveness emerges from interactions among leaders, followers, and organisational environments rather than from leader characteristics alone. Oc (2018) proposes an integrative framework in which context operates at multiple levels, including the individual, team, organisational, and societal levels, influencing leadership processes and outcomes simultaneously.

Johns (2018) further conceptualises organisational context as comprising both omnibus and discrete dimensions. Omnibus context refers to broad environmental characteristics such as organisational culture, national institutions, and economic conditions. In contrast, discrete context focuses on specific situational variables such as task complexity, technology, and team composition.

This distinction helps researchers understand how different contextual factors interact to shape leadership effectiveness. Consequently, contextual leadership extends traditional contingency models by incorporating broader organisational and societal influences.

Recent leadership scholarship identifies contextual leadership as particularly relevant in organisations experiencing rapid technological disruption, digital transformation, and global competition. The emergence of AI, remote work, and platform-based organisations requires leaders to reassess organisational priorities and continuously adapt leadership approaches. Leaders are increasingly expected to demonstrate contextual intelligence by integrating technological innovation with human-centred leadership practices that promote employee well-being and organisational resilience (Avolio et al., 2024).

ii) Complexity leadership theory

Complexity leadership theory extends systems thinking by explaining how leadership operates within dynamic and unpredictable organisational environments. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) define complexity leadership as the process through which leaders enable adaptive capacity, innovation, and organisational learning by facilitating interactions among organisational actors.

Rather than controlling organisational behaviour, complexity leaders create conditions that enable creativity, experimentation, and self-organisation. Consequently, leadership becomes less about directing employees and more about cultivating adaptive organisational capabilities. Complexity leadership theory identifies three interconnected leadership functions: administrative, adaptive, and enabling (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

- Administrative leadership focuses on planning, coordination, and organisational governance.
- Adaptive leadership emerges through collaborative problem-solving and innovation among organisational members.
- Enabling leadership connects administrative and adaptive leadership by creating organisational conditions that encourage experimentation, knowledge sharing, and organisational learning. This tripartite framework enables organisations to balance operational stability with continuous innovation.

According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), complexity leadership theory examines dynamic (changing, interactive, progressive) free-form interactive patterns in and among organisational systems. In interactions with others, the leader is expected to navigate complex dynamics and address unpredictable long- and short-term situations within an organisation.

The emphasis is on understanding how leaders can be successful in turbulent environments.

Despite its considerable explanatory value, systems and complexity leadership present methodological and practical challenges. Measuring emergent leadership processes is inherently difficult because leadership is distributed across organisational networks rather than concentrated within individuals. Furthermore, managers accustomed to hierarchical control may struggle to implement adaptive leadership practices that require decentralisation and shared decision-making. Nevertheless, increasing organisational complexity has strengthened the theoretical relevance of systems and complexity leadership for understanding contemporary organisations.

Recent theories view leadership as a complex, dynamic, holistic, and positive phenomenon that impacts organisational outcomes. These theories ensure that followers become a critical part of the leadership dynamics and that leadership is distributed and shared across the organisation (Avolio et al., 2009). Leaders lead decisions about their organisation's direction, considering the economic and health impacts of their choices. As a result, they develop new strategies, protocols, systems, and procedures aligned with the government legislation passed to guide the response and ensure organisational survival. The workplace requires leaders who are creative and innovative and can adapt to organisational changes (Dinh et al., 2014, p. 38).

The evolution of leadership theory illustrates a progressive shift from reductionist explanations of leadership towards holistic and integrative perspectives. Contemporary scholarship no longer views leadership effectiveness as residing exclusively within leaders themselves. However, it recognises leadership as emerging through dynamic interactions among leaders, followers, organisational culture, technological systems, and external environmental conditions. This evolution provides a conceptual foundation for integrating multiple leadership theories to explain organisational performance in increasingly complex workplaces better.

iii) Systems leadership

Systems leadership is grounded in systems thinking, which recognises organisations as interconnected networks comprising multiple interdependent components. According to Senge (2006), organisational performance depends upon understanding relationships, feedback loops, and systemic interactions rather than isolated organisational functions.

Systems leaders, therefore, focus on enhancing collaboration, shared learning, and organisational adaptability by recognising how decisions in one part of the organisation influence outcomes elsewhere. This holistic perspective distinguishes systems leadership from traditional command-and-control leadership models.

The progression of leadership theory shows that each perspective contributes unique insights while addressing the limitations of earlier models. The great man and trait theories emphasise the importance of individual leader characteristics; behavioural theory explains observable leadership practices; contingency theory introduces contextual adaptability; transformational and charismatic theories highlight inspiration and change; transactional theory emphasises performance accountability; ethical, spiritual, and servant theories focus on values and human development; while contextual and complexity theories explain leadership within dynamic organisational systems.

Consequently, leadership should no longer be conceptualised as a single style or competency, but rather as a multidimensional capability that integrates personal characteristics, learned behaviours, ethical values, contextual intelligence, and systems thinking. This integrated perspective offers a more comprehensive explanation of leadership effectiveness than any single theory and lays the foundation for understanding how leadership influences individual work performance.

The researcher defines leadership as a “multidimensional approach to influencing others based on individual characteristics, observable leadership practices, contextual adaptability, inspiration and change, grounded in values and human development, to achieve business goals in a dynamic organisational system”. This definition focuses on the leader and people operating within a context to achieve a common goal. To further understand leadership, the emphasis is on understanding the differences between leadership and management.

3.2.2.3 Differences between leadership and management

Modern literature indicates that leadership and management serve as complementary rather than conflicting organisational roles. Management focuses on planning, organising, coordinating resources, and ensuring operational effectiveness, whereas leadership centres on setting strategic direction, influencing others, enabling transformation, and nurturing innovation (Yukl & Gardner, 2020). Organisations require both competencies for sustained success: management ensures stability and accountability, while leadership enables adaptation to evolving internal and external contexts.

Contemporary research posits that the conventional distinction between leaders and managers has become increasingly indistinct. Leadership is no longer perceived as solely the duty of senior executives; rather, it is recognised as a multilevel, relational process that individuals at every organisational level can engage in through influence, cooperation, and collective accountability (Liden et al., 2025).

As a result, managers are increasingly expected to exhibit leadership qualities, including motivating staff, facilitating transformation, and nurturing talent. At the same time, leaders must also undertake administrative tasks such as strategising, allocating resources, and overseeing performance.

The next section focuses on servant leadership.

3.3 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Greenleaf first introduced the concept of servant leadership in the 1970s, and since the late 1990s, several academics have looked at it as a legitimate field of leadership research (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 2010). A holistic strategy, servant leadership empowers followers to reach their full potential by involving them in the relational, ethical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life. Ethical leadership research draws on organisational behaviour and psychology and adopts a behavioural and perceptual approach. Ethical leaders demonstrate behaviours and characteristics that encourage followers to model ethical leadership, and they also show how ethical leadership relates to other leadership styles. When leaders behave ethically, it positively affects employees, as reflected in less deviant behaviour, more cooperative behaviour, improved performance, increased effort, and reporting problems to management (Den Hartog, 2015).

3.3.1 Definition of servant leadership

Various definitions of servant leadership are presented below:

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) define servant leadership as a leadership ideology that emphasises service to others. This definition views servant leadership as the practice of serving others.

Based on the literature, the researcher defines servant leadership as “a selfless vocation wherein the individual prioritises the needs of others and offers service without the expectation of personal gain or recognition”.

Greenleaf (1977, p. 1) defines the servant leader as one who sees themself as a servant first and has a natural inclination to serve others. In the process, the leader ensures that those served grow and become healthier, wiser, more accessible, and more autonomous (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 1). This definition implies that the servant leader is others rather than self-focused

According to Spears (2010, p. 25), servant leadership is a leadership style that aims to improve the organisation’s care and quality while promoting employee development. This definition suggests that servant leadership focuses on caring for and developing followers.

3.3.2 Theories of servant leadership

Servant leadership finds its roots in ancient and biblical times, although it was popularised in the 19th century. According to Greenleaf (1977), in 600 BC, the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu argued that the most significant leaders focused on developing others and placed less emphasis on their own needs. The Bible describes servant leadership in many passages. Servant leaders tend to focus on meeting others’ needs, caring for them, and expecting nothing in return.

3.3.2.1 Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership

Robert Greenleaf is the seminal scholar of servant leadership. His theory of servant leadership arose as a counter-hegemonic reaction to authoritarian and transactional leadership models. Greenleaf (1977) believed leadership originates in an inherent inclination to serve, with leadership arising from this service-oriented mindset.

The theoretical foundation is grounded in moral responsibility, stewardship, empathy, and follower growth. Greenleaf's "best test" asks whether the individuals served experience improved health, wisdom, freedom, and autonomy. This shifted leadership discourse from leader-centric authority to follower-centric empowerment. In modern academia, Greenleaf's theory is crucial to discourse on ethical leadership, humanistic management, and organisational citizenship.

Some critical considerations in explaining servant leadership are outlined below: servant and leader are two roles one individual can play, and such a person can live and be productive in challenging times. A leader is a servant first by nature, and servanthood cannot be taken away, regardless of whether the person is in a follower or leadership role. A leader and a follower are always searching, listening, and seeking better ways to live and deal with life's challenges. Power and authority dynamics are shifting from coercive leadership to more supportive leadership. To become a servant leader, an individual begins by having a natural desire to serve, followed by a conscious choice to lead others (Laub et al., 2018).

Table 3.3 delineates the ten dimensions of servant leadership initially articulated by Greenleaf (1977) and subsequently operationalised by Spears (1995). These dimensions collectively underscore that servant leadership is inherently follower-centric, with leaders prioritising the development, welfare, and empowerment of others over exercising authority.

Table 3.3

Greenleaf's dimensions of servant leadership

SERVANT LEADERSHIP DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Listening	Servant leaders actively listen to followers to understand their needs, concerns, and perspectives before making decisions.
Empathy	Servant leaders demonstrate genuine care and compassion by understanding and appreciating followers' feelings, experiences, and circumstances.
Healing	Servant leaders support the emotional, psychological, and professional well-being of followers by helping them overcome challenges and fostering personal growth.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Self-awareness	Servant leaders possess self-awareness and situational awareness, enabling ethical decision-making and a deeper understanding of organisational dynamics.
Persuasion	Rather than relying on positional authority or coercion, servant leaders influence others through dialogue, reasoning, and consensus-building.
Conceptualisation	Servant leaders maintain a long-term strategic perspective, balancing day-to-day operational responsibilities with broader organisational vision and future opportunities.
Foresight	Servant leaders anticipate future consequences by drawing on past experiences, present realities, and informed judgement to guide decision-making.
Stewardship	Servant leaders regard themselves as custodians of the organisation, responsibly managing resources while serving employees, stakeholders, and society.
Commitment to the growth of others	Servant leaders invest in followers' continuous personal, professional, and career development by providing learning opportunities, coaching, mentoring, and empowerment.
Building community	Servant leaders cultivate inclusive, collaborative, and supportive organisational communities characterised by trust, shared purpose, and mutual respect.

Recent rigorous reviews indicate that servant leadership positively correlates with employee engagement, psychological safety, trust, and performance across several sectors.

Nonetheless, Greenleaf's theory has faced significant criticism for its conceptual vagueness and philosophical idealism. Critics such as Northouse (2023) argue that Greenleaf’s model lacks operational precision and an empirical framework, making consistent measurement difficult. In contrast to transformational leadership, Greenleaf's initial work was more normative than empirically verifiable. The hypothesis suggests that leaders will inherently value followers over organisational goals, creating difficulties in high-performance settings where efficiency and profitability are paramount.

Moreover, experts contend that the “serve first” approach may reflect a cultural bias toward collectivist norms, potentially misaligning with competitive, individualistic organisational cultures. Despite these critiques, contemporary leadership research strongly endorses Greenleaf’s theory. Cravens (2025) identified a significant correlation among servant leadership, employee retention, self-efficacy, and motivation to serve. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2025) similarly found that servant leadership increases meaningfulness and workflow, thereby improving staff well-being and productivity. The theory's lasting significance lies in its ethical foundation, especially in contexts that require relational leadership, such as education, healthcare, and organisations influenced by African Ubuntu principles.

3.3.2.2 Spears’ theory of servant leadership

According to Spears (2010, p. 25), servant leadership means incorporating others in morally and compassionately based decision-making, which fosters employee development and raises the standard of care and organisational life. Spears (2010) operationalised Greenleaf’s abstract philosophy by delineating 10 traits of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth, and community building:

- Listening – actively and intently listening to others to understand their wants and needs.
- Empathy – having the attitude of putting oneself in other people’s shoes, thus better understanding others’ situations.
- Healing – having an attitude to heal oneself and one’s relationship with others, allowing them to recover from poor health and relations from life and workplace pressures.
- Awareness – possessing both general and self-awareness, which are regarded as critical strengths of servant leaders.
- Persuasion – influencing others instead of using positional power to coerce others.
- Conceptualisation – balancing conceptual thinking and a practical approach to solving problems.
- Foresight – possessing the ability to predict the future based on current experiences and outcomes.
- Stewardship – committing to serve the needs of others rather than one’s own needs. Stewardship is a multifaceted behavioural construct, not simply a moral ideal.
- Commitment to the growth of others – fostering the growth of others from both personal and professional perspectives.
- Building community – needing to build a community of people in the organisation.

Spears' contribution was crucial, as it converted Greenleaf's conceptual proposition into measurable behavioural dimensions. His theory enabled scholars and practitioners to see servant leadership as a multifaceted behavioural construct rather than simply a moral ideal.

The efficacy of Spears' theory resides in its pragmatic applicability and developmental focus. It provides organisations with a more defined framework for leadership development initiatives and behavioural evaluations. Spears' model is often acknowledged for incorporating emotional intelligence, relational ethics, and a long-term strategic perspective. Recent bibliometric analyses indicate that Spears' attributes continue to shape servant leadership studies worldwide, particularly in higher education and human resource development.

However, Spears' theory has faced criticism for its insufficient psychometric rigour. Eva et al. (2019) contend that Spears' ten traits were created through interpretation rather than empirical factor analysis. This renders the theory susceptible to comparison with other leadership theories, notably authentic leadership and transformative leadership. Critics argue that certain dimensions, such as healing and foresight, are challenging to operationalise and may lack broad applicability across industries. Furthermore, Spears' approach has been criticised for idealising leadership by excessively highlighting benevolence while neglecting organisational politics, power dynamics, and structural inequities. These dimensions were further examined empirically to assess their validity and reliability. The dimensions and measurement of servant leadership are presented below.

3.3.3 Barbuto and Wheeler's theory of servant leadership

Servant leadership is evident at various levels within modern organisations. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) argue that the servant leader serves at all levels, from the individual to the societal level. They have a passion to serve on an individual basis. At the interpersonal level, followers benefit from the leader. At the group level, the leader meets group members' needs. At the organisational level, the leader structures the organisation to serve the community. Lastly, on a societal level, the leader leaves a legacy for the common good. Empirical research on servant leadership is increasing (Hayden, 2011; Van Winkle et al., 2014). This study presents the dimensions and measures of servant leadership below.

ii) Barbuto & Wheeler's Dimensions of servant leadership

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) conducted research to confirm the connections among the 10 dimensions identified by Spears (2010). They found that altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship are the five qualities crucial to servant leadership. Table 3.4 presents the five elements of servant leadership as formulated by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) through the empirical validation of Greenleaf's servant leadership concept. In contrast to Greenleaf's foundational conceptualisation, Barbuto and Wheeler translated servant leadership into quantifiable characteristics that encompass both interpersonal and organisational facets of leadership.

Table 3.4 summarises Barbuto and Wheeler's dimensions of servant leadership.

Table 3.4

Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) dimensions of servant leadership

SERVANT LEADERSHIP DIMENSION	DEFINITION	LEADER BEHAVIOURS
Altruistic calling	A genuine desire to serve others by placing followers' needs above personal interests and seeking to make a positive difference in their lives (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).	Demonstrates selflessness, prioritises followers' welfare, supports employee development, and willingly sacrifices personal interests for the benefit of others.
Emotional healing	The ability to recognise, understand, and support followers' emotional and psychological recovery from adversity, trauma, or workplace challenges (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).	Demonstrates empathy, compassion, active listening, and emotional support, and creates a psychologically supportive work environment.
Wisdom	The ability to understand complex situations, interpret environmental changes, and anticipate the consequences of decisions through sound judgement and practical experience (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).	Makes informed decisions, demonstrates situational awareness, anticipates future challenges, and applies knowledge to solve organisational problems.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP DIMENSION	DEFINITION	LEADER BEHAVIOURS
Persuasive mapping	The ability to influence others through logical reasoning, conceptual thinking, and persuasive communication rather than relying on formal authority or coercion (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).	Encourages critical thinking, builds consensus, communicates a compelling rationale, and influences followers through evidence and sound judgment.
Organisational stewardship	The commitment to serving the organisation and broader society by promoting social responsibility, ethical conduct, community involvement, and long-term organisational sustainability (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).	Encourages corporate citizenship, community engagement, ethical decision-making, responsible resource management, and sustainable organisational practices.

Source: adapted from (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006)

iii) Barbuto & Wheeler's Measurement of servant leadership

In this study, the researcher used the SLQ to gather data on servant leadership. The SLQ comprises 23 items measuring five key aspects: altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organisational stewardship. Leadership challenges are explained.

vi) Reliability and validity of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) advanced servant leadership scholarship by developing one of the first validated multidimensional instruments for servant leadership. Their framework outlined five dimensions: altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organisational stewardship. This model is significant because it addresses a critical shortcoming in Greenleaf's framework: measurement validity. Barbuto and Wheeler transformed servant leadership from a philosophical discourse into an empirical leadership study by operationalising it into psychometrically measurable characteristics.

The empirical durability of this model is among its most notable accomplishments. The characteristics align closely with Greenleaf's initial objectives while offering measurable indicators for organisational study. Numerous studies have consistently linked Barbuto and Wheeler's technique to employee happiness, commitment, and innovative work behaviour. Its construct validity has made it highly pertinent in organisational psychology and HRM. The model is well suited to SEM, making it relevant for advanced research.

Critics argue that Barbuto and Wheeler's theory restricts servant leadership by confining it to measurable psychological traits, thus neglecting its significant ethical and spiritual dimensions. Van Dierendonck (2011) critiques the methodology for excessively emphasising individual characteristics while overlooking environmental and institutional factors. Some scholars question whether altruistic calling is truly distinct from transformational charisma or true relational openness. Recent research shows that servant leadership assessment is fragmented, with more than 16 distinct scales identified in the literature.

Zhao et al. (2016, p. 898) investigated the impact of servant leadership on desired outcomes towards coworkers and turnover intention. The results show that the identification processes underlying servant leadership determine subordinates' outcomes. When subordinates identify with the supervisor, they are likely to identify with the organisation.

Such an individual would relate better, show other-oriented service behaviour, and choose to stay with the organisation. Coetzer et al. (2017) identified the following servant leadership characteristics: authenticity, humility, integrity, listening, compassion, accountability, courage, and altruism.

They also identified competencies such as building relationships, empowerment, stewardship, and compelling vision. Servant leadership outcomes are divided into three categories: individual, team, and organisational. According to Coetzer et al. (2017), servant leadership positively impacts work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, creativity and innovation, organisational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, person–job fit, leader–member exchange, and work–life balance, all of which benefit individuals. Additionally, servant leadership was inversely correlated with fatigue and turnover intention. Servant leadership also affects team- or group-level traits, including identification, service culture, climate, procedural justice climate, and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Lastly, servant leadership is strongly correlated with sales and customer service at the organisational level. Coetzer et al. (2017) categorise servant leadership behaviours into two groups: strategic and operational. To expand the leadership literature, it was necessary to examine team and organisational culture, policies, external influences, and the leader's personality and demography. Followers evaluated the leader's servant leadership behaviours and personality. The data show that servant leaders are amiable, less extroverted, confident, and passionately identify with their organisation.

Table 3.5 summarises the characteristics, competencies, and outcomes of servant leadership (Coetzer et al., 2017, p. 10).

Table 3.5

Characteristics, competencies, and outcomes of servant leadership

Characteristics	Competencies	Outcomes	Team	Organisational
• Authenticity • Humility • Compassion • (Accountability • Courage • Altruism • Integrity • Listening	• Empowerment • Stewardship • Building relationships • Compelling vision	• Servant leadership relates to work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, innovative behaviour, organisational commitment, trust, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, person–job fit, person–organisation fit, leader–member exchange, and work–life balance. Furthermore, a negative relationship exists between burnout and turnover intention.	• Servant leadership related positively to four team or group outcomes, namely • group organisational citizenship behaviour, • group identification, • service climate and culture, and • procedural justice climate.	• Two significant organisational outcomes include customer service and sales performance.

Greenleaf, Spears, and Barbuto and Wheeler collectively embody the philosophical, behavioural, and empirical progression of servant leadership theory. Greenleaf establishes the ethical framework, Spears translates it into behavioural characteristics, and Barbuto and Wheeler operationalise the construct into quantifiable dimensions. Although all three models significantly enhance understanding of people-centred leadership, they share limitations: conceptual redundancy, Western philosophical biases, and inadequate contextualisation in non-Western settings. In African organisational contexts, servant leadership aligns closely with Ubuntu ideology, which prioritises communal welfare, dignity, and interdependence.

However, scholars argue that servant leadership needs decolonisation and contextual adaptation to fully address African workplace realities such as power distance, socioeconomic inequality, and collective identity. Future servant leadership research should focus on contextual integration, longitudinal designs, and multilevel analyses that link servant leadership to employee engagement, followership, and work performance.

3.4 LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

This chapter identifies and presents the leadership challenges that require shared power in the literature. The economic (Schwab, 2019) and human (Aguilar et al., 2020) perspectives are central to understanding leadership challenges.

3.4.1 Economic perspective

In economic terms, leadership is recognised as a system that enables organisations to utilise human, technological, and financial resources to yield effective organisational outputs. Leadership shapes how resources are allocated, priorities are defined, performance expectations are communicated, and organisational capabilities are synchronised. In this light, leadership is associated with productivity because managerial actions shape the efficiency of employee involvement, knowledge resources, and organisational structures.

Bloom and Van Reenen (2010) assert that fluctuations in management practices are linked to persistent productivity differences between organisations and countries, notably through strategies such as performance assessment, target setting, and motivational incentives. (Bloom and Van Reenan,2010). An excessive focus on short-term output may increase job pressure, reduce wellbeing, or create disconnection. Thus, the economic angle should be fused with the human angle to achieve sustainable work performance.

Organisations that prioritise effective leadership, employee engagement, followership, and high performance are better positioned to establish dynamic capabilities that drive innovation, adaptability, and sustainable competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving and uncertain global environment.

The human perspective is presented next.

3.4.2 Human perspective

Indicators of sustainable organisational competitiveness increasingly rely on the effective development and application of human capital rather than solely on conventional competitive advantages. The World Economic Forum (2024) argues that future growth will be driven by innovation, resilience, sustainability, and human potential, while the International Monetary Fund (2025) underscores that sustained productivity requires investment in workforce skills, digital advancement, innovation, and institutional effectiveness.

Leadership may strengthen these resources by providing support, coaching, recognition, autonomy, effective communication, clear roles, and development opportunities. In this regard, leadership serves as a conduit for transforming organisational aspirations into employees' psychological experiences, which subsequently affect their behaviour. National culture might impact the efficacy of interventions, making it intriguing to design positive feedback strategies in a collectivist cultural setting (Mazzetti et al, 2023)

3.4.3 Global labour market

Digitalisation enhances the usefulness of a global labour market perspective. Current organisations increasingly operate through digitally mediated and geographically distributed work formats, requiring leaders to coordinate employees across different locations, cultural contexts, and technological abilities, with varying expectations about autonomy and communication. Analyses of digital transformation indicate that digital leadership and digital transformation can shape employee outcomes, including performance and dedication to the organisation. According to Qiao et al. (2024), a study of digital transformation within organisations reveals beneficial links among digital transformational leadership, digital transformation, work engagement, and proactive employee behaviour.

To fully understand leadership, it is necessary to understand the power dynamics at play.

3.4.4 Leadership levels

Different leadership levels have distinct roles and challenges within the organisation. Lund (2019) conducted research to investigate how formal leaders at different levels felt and reacted to using their autonomy in interactions with employees and superiors in a knowledge-dominated organisation. According to Lund (2019), senior leaders confirmed that they took the lead, provided guidance, and aligned with government acts and laws.

The divisional or senior managers then developed an operational plan and processes to ensure successful implementation. Middle- and junior-level managers implemented the strategies and plans developed by the organisation's leaders.

They relied on getting their teams to implement and adhere to the directives. Middle managers tended to have limited influence over strategic direction but were expected to implement it. They also required additional authority and resources to implement the strategies effectively. Junior levels were the first line of supervision, with many subordinates reporting to them (Lund, 2019). The influential junior leaders showed consideration, support, and helpfulness, and defended their teams. They showed loyalty to the organisation and to subordinates; they were democratic—likely to encourage participation and seek input from subordinates—and flexible, allowing employees to achieve their goals. These changes affect individuals, who must adapt accordingly (Lund, 2019).

3.5 POWER DYNAMICS

Power constitutes a crucial principle in leadership and followership, as it influences how individuals sway behaviour, decision-making, and organisational performance. Yukl (2023) articulates that power entails the potential to influence others and can derive from diverse sources, including legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent power. Power strength depends not only on its source but also on how it is used and how others respond. From the standpoint of industrial and organisational psychology, power is better understood as a relational and contextual phenomenon rather than something leaders alone hold.

Leaders can influence their followers through formal power, specialised knowledge, incentives, or personal connections, whereas followers can similarly influence leaders through their knowledge, expertise, information, and social ties. Comprehending these reciprocal influence mechanisms is crucial for examining leadership, followership, ethical decision-making, employee engagement, and organisational efficacy (Yukl, 2023).

3.5.1 Sources of leadership power

Leaders have the power to guide others in various situations. They can use their power to appoint and terminate employees. According to Jones and York (2016, p. 6), leaders get their authority from a variety of sources. Table 3.6 summarises the sources of leadership power.

Table 3.6

Sources of leadership power

POWER BASE	DEFINITION	SOURCE OF POWER
Expert power	The ability to influence others through specialised knowledge, skills, experience, or professional competence. Followers comply because they recognise the leader's expertise and judgement.	Knowledge, technical competence, qualifications, and experience.
Referent power	The ability to influence others because followers admire, respect, trust, or identify with the leader. Influence is based on interpersonal relationships rather than formal authority.	Personal characteristics, credibility, trust, charisma, and strong interpersonal relationships.
Legitimate power	The formal authority granted to an individual through an organisational position or role, enabling them to direct the activities of others.	Organisational hierarchy, position, delegated authority, and organisational policies.
Reward power	The ability to influence behaviour by providing valued rewards or desirable outcomes to employees.	Control over organisational rewards and incentives.
Coercive power	The ability to influence behaviour through the threat or application of negative consequences for non-compliance or poor performance.	Authority to impose sanctions or withhold valued resources.

There are also instances of power abuse, with individuals dominating and controlling others. Power can lead to societal inequality and, when abused, significantly shapes life opportunities. Table 3.7 summarises constructive and destructive leadership power.

Table 3.7

Constructive and destructive leadership power

DIMENSION	CONSTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP POWER	DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP POWER
Purpose of power	Power supports, develops, empowers, and enables followers to achieve individual and organisational goals (French & Raven, 1959; Yukl, 2023).	Power is used to dominate, manipulate, control, or advance personal interests at the expense of followers and organisational objectives (Smith & Hofmann, 2016).
Nature of influence	Influence is based on trust, collaboration, legitimacy, reciprocity, and mutual respect. Leaders encourage participation and shared decision-making (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).	Influence is based on fear, dependency, coercion, and unequal access to valued resources, creating imbalanced leader–follower relationships (Smith & Hofmann, 2016).
Decision-making	Leaders encourage consultation, participation, and employee voice, thereby improving commitment and decision quality (Yukl, 2023).	Leaders centralise decision-making, suppress dissent, and discourage employee participation, limiting innovation and organisational learning (Guinote, 2017).
Leader–follower relationship	Relationships are characterised by mutual trust, empowerment, psychological safety, and shared accountability (Eva et al., 2019).	Relationships are characterised by excessive control, dependency, intimidation, and reduced autonomy (Lund, 2019).
Use of organisational resources	Leaders use authority and organisational resources fairly to support employee development, recognition, and organisational performance (French & Raven, 1959).	Leaders use control over resources to manipulate behaviour, reinforce dependency, or reward personal loyalty rather than merit (Smith & Hofmann, 2016).

DIMENSION	CONSTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP POWER	DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP POWER
Effect on followers	Enhances confidence, motivation, engagement, commitment, learning, and individual work performance (Eva et al., 2019; Yukl, 2023).	Reduces autonomy, psychological safety, motivation, and trust while increasing stress, disengagement, and conflict (Guinote, 2017; Lund, 2019).
Cognitive and behavioural effects	Encourages ethical judgement, collaboration, constructive problem-solving, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Yukl, 2023).	May increase self-focus, reduce perspective-taking, objectify subordinates, and contribute to unethical behaviour or corruption (Guinote, 2017).
Conflict management	Conflict is managed through dialogue, collaboration, and shared problem-solving, recognising differences as opportunities for learning (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).	Conflict is ignored, suppressed, or controlled through authority, creating unresolved tensions and limiting organisational effectiveness (Lund, 2019).
Organisational outcomes	Promotes employee engagement, innovation, organisational learning, ethical leadership, and sustainable organisational performance (Eva et al., 2019).	Contributes to inequality, reduced employee well-being, unethical behaviour, lower organisational commitment, and diminished organisational performance (Guinote, 2017; Smith & Hofmann, 2016).

Social and political theory has focused on identifying the factors that determine who holds power and how power is exercised in social and political life. According to Smith and Hofmann (2016), in any social relationship, one person exerts power over the other because they have and control the resources the other person needs.

A social exchange needs to occur, where one party gives something in exchange for something they need. For example, employees give their skills and time to employers in exchange for compensation. Similarly, employers provide employees with compensation to ensure they can

complete their tasks. A growing body of research shows that power energises speech, action, and thinking while guiding people toward important objectives associated with power roles, predispositions, tasks, and opportunities (Guinote, 2017, p. 353).

Power enhances confidence, self-control, and prioritisation of efforts towards achieving targeted goals by amplifying self-expression associated with active aspects of the self (the active self). The literature explores how power affects goal preferences, performance, cognitive processes, and corruption. It also examines how power may negatively affect social attention, perspective-taking, and the objectification of subordinates. According to Guinote (2017, p. 353), a growing body of research shows that power energises speech, action, and cognition while guiding individuals toward important objectives tied to power roles, tendencies, duties, and opportunities. Power increases self-expression associated with the active aspects of the self (the active self), boosting self-esteem and self-control and prioritising efforts to achieve primary objectives.

The literature explores the potential negative impacts of power on social attention, perspective-taking, and the objectification of subordinates. It also discusses power's impact on cognitive processes, goal preferences, performance, and corruption. Lund (2019, p. 383) investigated how formal leaders in a knowledge-dominated organisation perceive and respond to exercising their autonomy in interactions with staff and superiors. Formal leaders handled autonomy conflicts among institutional needs, leadership skills, and decision-making authority in such a convoluted way that they overlooked them, leaving them less clear than they initially seemed.

Leadership and followership conflicts are minimal in the literature review on autonomy (Lund, 2019, p. 384). Sometimes, formal leaders try to control or eradicate conflicts, ignore them, or fail to recognise the clear distinction between authority and autonomy. In knowledge-dominated environments, the concept of limited autonomy may also help formal leaders manage everyday conflicts. Power dynamics refer to how influence, authority, control, dependence, and decision-making are distributed and exercised between leaders and followers within organisations. In contemporary leadership literature, power is increasingly understood as relational rather than positional, meaning that effectiveness depends not only on formal authority but also on trust, legitimacy, reciprocity, and shared influence.

3.5.2 Leadership and servant leadership: Power dynamics

Traditional leadership typically operates within hierarchical power systems, wherein leaders influence employee behaviour through legitimate, reward, expert, referent, and occasionally coercive power. Effective leaders set direction, manage resources, and cultivate organisational culture; however, excessive concentration of control may diminish employee autonomy, psychological safety, and innovation.

Current research in organisational psychology indicates that distributed and participative leadership models enhance employee engagement, commitment, and adaptive performance by fostering a perception of power as shared rather than solely top-down (Banks et al., 2022; Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

Servant leadership reinterprets power by positioning leadership authority as service-oriented rather than dominance-oriented. Servant leadership uses authority through empowerment, stewardship, humility, and ethical persuasion. Rather than promoting dependence on leadership, servant leaders intentionally cultivate their subordinates' abilities and decision-making capabilities. This redistribution of authority fosters trust, belonging, and organisational citizenship behaviours while reducing the power disparity. In South Africa, servant leadership has received attention for its alignment with relational and communal values that foster inclusivity and employee wellness across diverse work contexts (Eva et al., 2019; Lemoine et al., 2025).

A notable tension in servant leadership's power dynamics lies in reconciling empowerment and accountability. Empowering individuals can foster ownership and innovation, but unclear roles may create ambiguity and hinder strategic implementation. Therefore, servant leaders must maintain authority structures while simultaneously fostering autonomy, expressiveness, and collaborative governance.

Current research suggests that the effectiveness of sustainable leadership stems from the amalgamation of influence, emotional intelligence, ethical conduct, and developmental relationships, rather than reliance on positional authority (Greenleaf, 1977; Hoch et al., 2018).

3.6 LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

When facing challenges, influential leaders adapt, communicate, and make decisions. By emphasising the importance of connecting with relevant stakeholders as individuals and fostering mutual trust, employing shared leadership responsibilities within situationally aware teams, and communicating clearly and regularly, academic leaders can be confident they are continually learning and improving. Executives are more likely than ever to encounter a crisis in the current unstable climate, according to McNulty et al. (2019, p. 38).

To strengthen their ability to withstand future crises and changes, organisations are beginning to take advantage of the opportunity to refine essential skills. Everyone should take advantage of this opportunity to be involved; when individuals from all departments and levels participate, they share concerns, create new opportunities, and identify potential threats. All stakeholders learn more about the company when they are involved.

Tourish (2020, p. 261) asserts that decision-making is more difficult when insufficient data supports decisions and results are uncertain. Leaders often have less knowledge, experience, and tools to help them navigate extreme uncertainty than is commonly believed (Tourish, 2020). Some leaders take advantage of uncertainty and label their responses as dictatorial, denialist, panicky, incompetent, and other such terms (Tourish, 2020).

According to Weible et al. (2020, p. 225), the leadership response illustrates a variety of adaptation and change processes, such as learning, spikes in policy responses, changes in local and international networks, the administration and execution of policies in response to transboundary issues, and the evaluation of the success or failure of policies. One challenge leaders face is that, even when they respond to changes intended to mitigate immediate societal threats, considerable confusion remains about which changes to discontinue and which to keep in place. Another difficulty is that, in addition to deciding to implement a policy, one must also decide whether to do nothing or postpone taking action. Furthermore, little is currently understood about how to effectively create and disseminate narratives and messaging to influence public behaviour, despite their crucial importance.

3.6.1 Leadership selection and development

According to Carnes et al. (2015, p. 360), selecting quality leaders requires a combination of structured interviews and assessment methods, such as leadership-type assessments, job simulations, or resume screenings for leadership experience. In addition, the validity, reliability, and legality of the assessment battery are crucial when selecting future leaders. Eva et al. (2019, p. 129) argue that organisations working towards creating a servant leadership culture would benefit from selecting pro-socially motivated leaders and offering them servant leadership training. They report that individuals who are self-centred, dogmatic, and narcissistic may find it challenging to learn to become servant leaders, characterised by being other-centred, sensitive, empathetic, and socially aware.

In addition, transforming an organisation from a command-and-control culture to a servant leadership culture is complex and challenging to implement and sustain.

According to Sunil (2020), for organisations to succeed globally, they must choose leaders with the necessary abilities and keep up with ongoing developments in their field of expertise. Leaders must adopt a global perspective and adapt to a changing international environment. They must lead globally to address worldwide threats and challenges effectively. Businesses must adopt comprehensive leadership development programmes to succeed globally, according to a study finding that global leadership requires behaviours enabling problem-solving, the creation of new knowledge, and the development of effective systems (Sunil, 2020).

In South Africa, transformative ambitions are profoundly influenced by employment fairness, diversity management, public accountability, and socioeconomic inequality. Consequently, leadership results include not only productivity measures but also employee engagement, resilience, retention, psychological well-being, team learning, and sustainable success. Critical academics caution that leadership discourse often romanticises leader influence while overlooking structural restrictions such as resource scarcity, labour instability, and institutional complexity, which may diminish leadership effectiveness despite positive leader behaviours (Southgate et al., 2023).

3.6.2 Antecedents of servant leadership

Servant leadership embodies a relational leadership paradigm that prioritises followers' growth, well-being, and development. In the South African context, servant leadership is particularly pertinent as it corresponds with Afrocentric values such as Ubuntu, collectivism, dignity, mutual respect, and community development, which prioritise helping others and enhancing collective well-being (Dhanpat et al., 2025). In contrast to conventional leadership models that prioritise power and control, servant leadership redefines authority as stewardship and regards serving followers as leaders' first obligation (Eva et al., 2019). This viewpoint underscores the growing recognition that sustainable organisational effectiveness comes from empowering individuals rather than imposing hierarchical control.

The antecedents of servant leadership primarily comprise leader characteristics that enable ethical and follower-centred leadership behaviours. South African research identifies personal leadership competence, humility, authenticity, empathy, ethical awareness, developmental orientation, and self-regulation as important precursors of servant leadership (Dhanpat et al., 2025). Personal leadership is a foundational antecedent because leaders who effectively manage their emotions, behaviours, and values are better equipped to empower others, demonstrate ethical conduct, and foster trusting leader–follower relationships. These antecedents are consistent with international servant leadership literature, which emphasises emotional maturity, humility, integrity, and genuine concern for followers as defining characteristics of servant leaders (Eva et al., 2019).

3.6.3 Outcomes of servant leadership

The outcomes associated with servant leadership have received increasing empirical support. Contemporary evidence indicates that servant leadership enhances employee engagement, psychological well-being, hope, optimism, collaboration, organisational citizenship behaviour, and psychological resources while reducing burnout and improving organisational performance (Dhanpat et al., 2025; Eva et al., 2019). Servant leadership also strengthens trust, psychological safety, and follower empowerment, creating work environments where employees are more willing to contribute innovative ideas, support colleagues, and demonstrate discretionary effort. Nevertheless, servant leadership has also attracted criticism.

Some scholars argue that its strong emphasis on serving followers may be difficult to sustain in highly competitive or crisis-driven organisational environments and that balancing follower needs with organisational performance objectives may present practical leadership challenges (Eva et al., 2019).

Despite these concerns, servant leadership remains one of the most influential contemporary leadership approaches for promoting ethical leadership, employee development, and sustainable organisational effectiveness.

3.6.4 Relationship among variables

Research by Susanto et al. (2024) has revealed that servant leadership positively affected employee engagement in international cargo expedition organisations and that training also had a positive impact. Theoretical contributions suggest that employee engagement can mediate the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance, and vice versa. This research is useful for the HR department. However, the research is limited in that it focuses only on employee performance and involvement in freight forwarding companies. Further research in other organisations is recommended.

According to Eva et al. (2019, p. 128), servant leaders tend to adopt a communal-sharing approach and a culture of serving others, while supporting followers in reaching their full potential, thereby empowering them to handle tasks and make decisions independently. They report the following benefits of servant leadership in the organisation (Eva et al., 2019, p. 128):

- Individual level – individual citizenship behaviours, improved task performance, creativity.
- Team level – team potency, improved team performance.
- Organisational level – improved customer satisfaction, return on investment.
- Long-term growth rather than a short-term focus for the benefit of internal and external stakeholders.
- Improved customer satisfaction, resulting in loyalty and repeat business.
- Increased revenue growth and higher stock prices.

Contemporary leadership research posits that organisational efficiency relies on the synergistic interaction between leadership and followership, rather than on leadership in isolation.

Effective leaders need committed, capable followers who demonstrate critical thinking, ethical judgement, and collective accountability to achieve organisational goals (Oc et al., 2023; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Strengthening both leadership and followership skills enables businesses to build a stronger leadership pipeline, foster cooperation, and bolster organisational resilience.

Furthermore, modern scholars argue that many organisational leadership failures stem not only from incompetent leaders but also from passive or disengaged followers. Thus, promoting constructive followership alongside servant leadership enhances ethical governance, collective accountability, and sustainable organisational success in increasingly complex circumstances.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 conceptualised leadership, addressing Research Aim 2 of the study: to conceptualise the construct of leadership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective. The chapter discussed different definitions, theories, and perspectives.

The chapter also discussed the human context and power dynamics, followed by leadership applications, antecedents, outcomes, and the relationships among variables. Thus, this chapter achieved Research Aim 2. Chapter 4 discusses the third variable: followership.

CHAPTER 4: FOLLOWERSHIP

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter conceptualises followership and examines it through a literature review. It addresses the definition of followership, its dimensions and styles, and theories and challenges in followership research. A summary of the literature review is provided at the end of the chapter. The chapter addresses Research Aim 3: conceptualising the followership construct and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

4.2 DEFINITION OF FOLLOWERSHIP

Researchers have defined followership, or followers, in various ways, reflecting a range of theoretical stances and conceptual approaches to followers' roles in organisations (Kelly, 1992; Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2018).

According to Kelley (1992, p. 12), followership refers to “people who know what to do without being told; the people act with intelligence, independence, courage and a strong sense of ethics”. This definition implies that followers engage in independent thought and action to fulfil organisational objectives.

Chaleff (2009) posits that courageous followership involves both the responsibility to support leaders in achieving organisational goals and the courage to challenge leaders constructively when their actions conflict with organisational values or ethical principles. This definition suggests that followership involves both supporting and challenging leaders.

According to Kellerman (2008), followers differ primarily in their levels of engagement and influence. This definition deals with engagement levels.

Sy (2010) posits that leaders own implicit cognitive schemas, or mental templates, that define effective and ineffective followers. Cognitive schemas or mental templates explain followership.

Malakyan (2014) conceptualised followership as part of a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between leaders and followers. Followership is a reciprocal and dynamic relationship.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) defined followership as the study of the characteristics, behaviours, and processes associated with individuals acting in relation to leaders within leadership contexts. This definition uses various variables to explain followership, including characteristics, behaviours, processes and context.

The researcher defines followership as the “ability to act autonomously and to demonstrate intellect, self-sufficiency, bravery, and a robust moral compass to meet organisational objectives”.

4.3 FOLLOWERSHIP THEORIES

Followership theories received more scholarly attention in the 1990s, moving away from conventional leader-centric viewpoints to acknowledge followers as active participants in leadership processes, organisational efficacy, and overall organisational performance (Kelley (1992), Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), Carsten et al. (2018), Matshoba-Ramuedzisi et al. (2022), Bastardoz and Adriaensen (2023), and Uhl-Bien et al. (2024). The followership theories discussed in this chapter include followership typologies, follower-centric, relational, role-based, constructionist, and implicit followership theories, which offer unique explanations of how followers affect organisational outcomes and leadership processes.

4.3.1 Followership typology theory

Kelley’s Followership dimensions and measurement instruments

i) Introduction

Empirical research by Carsten et al. (2010) and Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) supports Kelley’s model across organisational contexts. Studies have found that exemplary followers demonstrate higher organisational commitment, psychological empowerment, innovative behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour, employee engagement, and individual work performance than other follower types (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Nevertheless, critics argue that Kelley’s typology may oversimplify follower behaviour because individuals often move between styles depending on organisational culture, leadership quality, psychological safety, and contextual demands. Furthermore, the model primarily focuses on behavioural characteristics while giving less attention to relational, identity-based, and contextual influences that shape followership behaviour.

Despite these limitations, Kelley remains foundational to contemporary followership research and has informed the development of numerous followership measurement instruments. First, followership is explained in terms of organisational structure, in which one person is the leader, and another is the follower. This relates to followership typology in formal, hierarchical work environments characterised by formal attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes. Role-based classifications of followership behaviours (or styles) are the primary ones proposed by Kelley (2008) and Chaleff (2008). Typologies have included the behaviours, attitudes, or characteristics associated with followership. Kelley (1992) is one of the most influential and widely quoted contemporary theorists of followership.

ii) Kelley's Followership dimensions

Kelley identified the two dimensions that explain follower effectiveness: critical thinking and active engagement. Critical thinking focuses on analysing the information provided and thinking outside the box to develop possible solutions. In addition, these individuals actively engage in daily activities to ensure organisational goals are met.

Table 4.1 delineates the two behavioural characteristics of followership as outlined by Kelley (1992). The first dimension, independent critical thinking, denotes followers' capacity to assess information impartially, question assumptions constructively, engage in creative thought, and formulate suitable solutions to organisational issues. The second dimension, active engagement, denotes the extent to which followers voluntarily participate in organisational activities by demonstrating initiative, dedication, responsibility, and discretionary effort.

Table 4.1

Kelly's two dimensions of followership

FOLLOWERSHIP DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Independent critical thinking	The extent to which followers think independently, analyse situations objectively, question assumptions, and generate innovative solutions rather than accepting instructions uncritically (Kelley, 1992).
Active engagement (active participation)	The extent to which followers are actively involved in their work, demonstrate initiative, accept responsibility, and contribute voluntarily to achieving organisational objectives (Kelley, 1992).

Based on these two dimensions, Kelley (2008) identified the following styles of followership:

- *Conformist followers* tend to agree with everything the organisation's leaders say. They appear unmotivated and heavily reliant on the leader for direction or assistance.
- *Alienated followers* are more inclined to think negatively, be critical, and work independently, but they are also less likely to contribute positively to the company.
- *Pragmatic followers* are less likely to take sides on organisational matters. To thrive in a bureaucratic organisation, they follow the rules and refrain from defying authority.
- *Passive followers* require constant supervision, lack initiative, and develop a safety mindset.
- *Exemplary, successful, and star followers* tend to think independently and carry out their responsibilities with vigour and passion. Leaders and colleagues often regard these individuals as risk-takers, self-starters, and creative problem-solvers. They often take the initiative and help others by attending to their needs (Kelly, 2008). Exemplary followers contribute to the organisation's success by thinking independently and critically and having perspectives that may differ from those of the leaders. Research on understanding the nature and impact of the exemplary follower is increasing.

- **Reliability and validity of the SLQ**

Kelley (1992) remains foundational to contemporary followership research and has informed the development of numerous followership measurement instruments. This research advances organisational psychology and followership studies in several significant ways: it offers an exhaustive examination of Kelley's two fundamental followership constructs. It synthesises traditional and contemporary empirical evidence concerning active engagement and critical analysis. It rigorously assesses the advantages and drawbacks of Kelley's followership hypothesis.

Furthermore, it connects leadership and followership research from an industrial and organisational psychology perspective. It enhances debates on employee empowerment and involvement in both African and global workplaces. It underscores the ramifications for organisational development, team efficacy, and employee well-being. It identifies research gaps in the followership literature. It provides pragmatic suggestions for organisations aiming to cultivate exemplary followers.

The researcher will critically analyse the two fundamental constructs of Kelley's followership model—active involvement and independent critical thinking—and assess their theoretical foundations, organisational relevance, empirical validation, criticisms, and practical ramifications.

Chaleff (2008) identifies dimensions that followers can adopt to influence the leader's thinking and actions. He argues that leaders and followers use their roles to serve a common purpose. Table 4.2 presents Chaleff's (2009) followership model, which posits that follower conduct is influenced by two dimensions: the extent of support offered to the leader and the readiness to confront the leader when warranted. These parameters yield four forms of followership: resource, individualist, implementer, and partner.

Table 4.2

Chaleff's (2009) dimensions of followership

FOLLOWERSHIP STYLE	SUPPORT FOR THE LEADER	WILLINGNESS TO CHALLENGE THE LEADER
Resource	Low	Low
Individualist	Low	High
Implementer	High	Low
Partner	High	High

Carsten et al. (2018) identified three types of followers: passive, active, and proactive (see Table 4.3). Passive followers tend to be passive, taking orders and doing what they are told. Active followers approach the follower role proactively, expressing their own opinions and offering input when their leaders request it. Conversely, proactive followers view the follower role as more active, emphasising taking the initiative, offering feedback and advice, and challenging leaders when necessary. The focus is on influencing and challenging the leader's decisions.

Table 4.3

Carsten et al. (2018) types of followers

FOLLOWER TYPE	ROLE ORIENTATION	CHARACTERISTICS
Passive follower	Dependent and compliant	Receive instructions from leaders and perform assigned tasks with minimal initiative or independent input. Comply with directions and rely on leaders for guidance and decision-making.
Active follower	Participative and responsive	Participate in organisational activities, express their opinions, and provide suggestions when invited by leaders. Contribute to discussions and support organisational objectives while generally responding to leadership requests.
Proactive follower	Independent and influential	Take initiative, offer constructive feedback and advice, identify opportunities for improvement, and challenge leaders respectfully when necessary. View followership as an active process that contributes to organisational learning and effective decision-making.

Proponents contend that Kelley's typology provides significant explanatory power in comprehending employee behaviour and performance. Recent research shows that excellent followers exhibit greater psychological empowerment, proactive behaviour, and job success than passive followers (Oc et al., 2023). Inderjeet and Scheepers (2022) similarly discovered that a proactive follower orientation is a major predictor of voice behaviour and upward influence within organisations. This supports the view that followership is not a passive endeavour but an active, value-enhancing process.

Critics contend that typology theory is reductionist and excessively static. Kellerman (2008) asserts that followers may transition between categories based on context, organisational politics, or leader behaviour.

The model further simplifies intricate follower identities by presuming distinct behavioural classifications. Moreover, detractors contend that Kelley's theory is Western-centric and insufficiently considers collectivist societies, such as those in Africa, where communal identity may influence followership in distinct ways.Followers who feel psychologically safe are more likely to express constructive dissent and identify organisational risks before they escalate into major crises.

However, critics argue that courageous followership may expose employees to retaliation in organisations characterised by authoritarian leadership, low trust, or punitive organisational cultures. Consequently, Chaleff's theory (2009) assumes organisational environments that tolerate dissent and encourage ethical leadership. Chaleff's theory significantly advances followership scholarship by introducing ethics and moral courage into the leader–follower relationship.

It aligns closely with servant, authentic, and ethical leadership theories, emphasising mutual accountability rather than hierarchical obedience. Nevertheless, practical implementation depends heavily on organisational culture, leadership openness, and psychological safety, which can limit its effectiveness in highly bureaucratic or authoritarian organisations.

Chaleff (2009) introduced courageous followership theory, arguing that effective followers are not simply loyal supporters of leaders but ethical partners who contribute to organisational integrity. Chaleff proposed that followers share responsibility for organisational success and therefore have both the right and the obligation to challenge leaders whose decisions threaten organisational values, ethical standards, or long-term sustainability. His theory emerged largely in response to organisational scandals, highlighting that unethical leadership often persists because followers remain silent or fail to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

The theory identifies five dimensions of courageous followership. First, followers dare to assume responsibility, accepting ownership for organisational outcomes rather than waiting for managerial direction. Second, they possess the courage to serve, providing committed support to legitimate organisational goals. Third, they demonstrate the courage to challenge, respectfully questioning unethical or ineffective leadership decisions. Fourth, they show the courage to participate in transformation, actively supporting organisational change initiatives. Finally, they possess the courage to take moral action, including resigning or exposing wrongdoing when leaders consistently violate ethical principles.

These dimensions frame followership as an ethical, relational partnership rather than simple compliance. Research indicates that courageous followership contributes positively to ethical leadership, psychological safety, whistleblowing behaviour, organisational trust, and responsible governance (Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

4.3.2 Follower-centric theory

According to follower-centric theory, followers ultimately determine a leader's effectiveness. The primary objective is to understand the characteristics of followers that are linked to the leadership process, including their identity, motivation, and ideals, as well as the active roles they play in the dynamics between leaders and followers.

Leader–member exchange theory exemplifies follower-centric theory (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015, p. 641). One of the first theories to explain how supervisors and subordinates interact and relate to one another for the benefit of the organisation was leader–member exchange theory. The leaders divided subordinates into in-group and out-group categories.

Follower-centric theory posits that followers ultimately determine whether a leader is effective. It focuses on followers' attributes related to the leadership process, such as identity, motivation, and values, as well as their active roles in leader–follower dynamics. An example of a follower-centric theory is leader-member exchange theory (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015, p. 641).

Leader–member exchange theory was among the earliest theories to examine the mutual relationship between supervisors and subordinates for the organisation's benefit. The leaders categorise subordinates as either in-group or out-group. The in-group subordinates are those in the leader's inner circle who are trusted, receive special attention and privileges, and, in return, demonstrate behaviours that support and enable the leader to be effective in their role. The out-group receives less attention and privileges from the leader.

Erdogan and Bauer (2015, p. 641) argue that understanding the nature of the exchange relationship between leaders and their followers is crucial for several reasons. First, high-quality relationships are characterised by mutual respect, trust, and liking. Second, the nature of the partnership affects both personal and professional well-being. Third, the relationship extends beyond the leader–follower dynamic to include the leader's interactions with teams, coworkers, superiors, and workgroups. Understanding leadership from followers' perspective is often the primary goal of follower-centric leadership.

In follower-centric theory, followers are believed to influence leaders and the leadership process significantly. Theories such as social exchange theory, leader–member exchange, information processing, and social identity are also considered. Social exchange theory is the original model that explained interaction as a social and economic exchange. As a result, transactions are typically balanced. What individuals offer and receive in an exchange may be considered costs and rewards, respectively. Individuals tend to act differently when profits are at their highest. They ensure that no one in their group earns more money than they do, even as they work to further their interests. Social interaction theory posits that social interactions are influenced by the advantages of service exchange (Jahan & Kim, 2021).

Robbins et al. (2016, p. 452) later applied social exchange theory to leadership, specifically the leader–member exchange model. Table 4.4 outlines the fundamental tenets of leader–member exchange (LMX) theory, which posits that leadership efficacy depends on the quality of connections between leaders and individual followers, rather than solely on leader behaviour.

High-quality exchanges are defined by trust, mutual respect, and reciprocal support, leading to enhanced employee engagement, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and work performance. In contrast, low-quality exchanges are predominantly contractual and may restrict employees' access to information, assistance, and developmental possibilities. Despite strong empirical evidence for LMX theory, it has faced criticism for potentially perpetuating in-group and out-group divisions, which may compromise organisational fairness and inclusivity. Modern leadership practices prioritise establishing high-quality leader–member connections with all employees to foster equity, collaboration, and sustained organisational performance.

Table 4.4

Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory

DYADIC	DESCRIPTION
High-quality exchange (in-group)	Characterised by mutual trust, respect, loyalty, open communication, reciprocal support, and greater responsibility. Followers typically receive more developmental opportunities, autonomy, and leader support (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).
Low-quality exchange (out-group)	Low-quality exchange (out-group) Characterised by formal, contractual relationships limited to prescribed job responsibilities. Interaction is primarily based on organisational rules, with fewer opportunities for participation, trust, and development.
Leader behaviours	Develops relationships through trust, communication, delegation, coaching, support, and reciprocal exchanges with followers.
Follower behaviours	Demonstrates commitment, reliability, competence, trustworthiness, cooperation, and willingness to contribute beyond formal job requirements.

Adapted from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), Dulebohn et al. (2012), Martin et al. (2016), and Northouse (2023)

Leader–member exchange theory encourages leaders to establish in-groups and out-groups, as this is expected to lead to higher performance ratings, lower employee turnover, and greater job satisfaction among subordinates with in-group status. It emphasises the leader–follower relationship, as followers with positive relationships with their leaders typically perform better. The leader selects a small group of followers and maintains strong relationships with them while keeping weak relationships with most others.

According to Harwood (2020), social identity theory explains how individuals distinguish themselves by belonging to a particular group, and such membership evokes positive or negative emotion. Such individuals would behave and communicate in accordance with their inherent values regarding social group membership. Thus, individuals tend to view their social group positively, which may lead to intergroup prejudice and conflict. Followers are central because leaders must appeal to their self-image to be effective. In the follower-centric approach, follower characteristics and behaviours are essential for success; performance depends on the follower, and the follower influences the leader. Information processing theory focuses on how individuals perceive, interpret, store, and recall information to make decisions and to choose the appropriate behaviour. Zhang et al. (2021) argue that individuals use cognition to recognise patterns, assign meaning, and make decisions through learning, attribution, and judgement. Table 4.5 compares social identity theory as propounded by Turner et al. and Harwood, respectively.

Table 4.5

Comparison of social identity theory

COMPARISON CRITERION	TURNER ET AL. (SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY)	HARWOOD (2020)
Purpose	Explains how social identity develops through group membership and influences behaviour.	Explains how social identity shapes communication, emotions, and interpersonal relationships.
Primary focus	Group identity, social categorisation, and intergroup behaviour.	Identity, communication, media, and social interaction.
View of followers	Followers support leaders who represent the group's identity and values.	Followers respond positively to leaders who reinforce their self-concept and shared identity.
Leadership perspective	Leadership emerges through shared group identity and prototypical leadership.	Leadership effectiveness depends on recognising followers' identities and communicating effectively.
Contribution to leadership	Explains leader legitimacy, organisational identification, and follower commitment.	Explains how communication and identity strengthen leader–follower relationships.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) developed social identity theory (SIT). Turner et al. (1987) primarily highlight the development of social identities and their effect on behaviour, whereas Harwood demonstrates how these identities affect communication and social interaction. Harwood (2020) elaborates on Tajfel and Turner (1979) but does not present a distinct leadership philosophy. He augments social identity theory by emphasising the importance of communication, emotions, and identity in shaping interpersonal interactions and leadership effectiveness. These perspectives underscore that effective leadership depends on leaders' understanding of and expression of followers' collective identities, while fostering inclusive communication and cultivating strong organisational relationships.

The follower-centric perspective arose as a counter to leader-centric paradigms by highlighting the followers' perceptions, cognitions, and attributions in the formation of leadership. Meindl's (1995) "romance of leadership" theory serves as a fundamental basis, positing that followers frequently overemphasise the role of leaders in determining organisational success or failure. This viewpoint treats followers as active cognitive architects of leadership rather than passive recipients of influence. The strength of this theory lies in its recognition of followers' agency in constructing meaning.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) assert that followers frequently socially produce leadership legitimacy through attribution mechanisms. Recent studies indicate that followers' perceptions significantly affect trust, commitment, and evaluations of leaders' effectiveness (El Musleh, 2024). This substantiates the idea that leaders exist solely because of recognition and validation from their followers.

Despite its strengths, critics argue that follower-centric theory overemphasises perception at the expense of structural realities. Bligh (2011) contends that leadership may be reduced to a mere psychological illusion rather than a genuine process of influence. Furthermore, the theory inadequately elucidates how organisational systems, power dynamics, and institutional frameworks limit follower agency. Consequently, although it enhances leadership studies, it may diminish the significance of objective leadership competence.

4.3.3 Relational view of followership theory

Organisations and leaders who build positive working relationships with individuals and team members encourage a more collaborative, relational approach, which fosters mutual influence and growth. The emphasis is on how the leader and the follower can influence each other.

Decisions, influences, and interactions between leaders and followers are harmonic, reciprocal, and interchangeable. However, Malakyan (2014) asks whether it is possible to envision a workplace in which employees switch between leadership and follower roles and responsibilities according to their preferences, skills, and knowledge, thereby improving both individual and team productivity.

The relational perspective, significantly shaped by leader–member exchange theory and relational leadership theory, defines followership as a dynamic, co-created connection between leaders and followers. Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) assert that leadership and followership arise concurrently through social interaction rather than through formal roles.

This viewpoint moves beyond hierarchical assumptions and emphasises reciprocity, trust, and mutual influence. Its principal strength resides in its contextual sensitivity and authenticity.

Relational followership theory emerged from the broader relational leadership perspective, which argues that leadership and followership are socially co-created through interactions rather than residing solely in formal positions (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Unlike traditional approaches that portray followers as passive recipients of leadership influence, relational followership recognises followers as active organisational partners who contribute to decision-making, innovation, and organisational learning. Leadership is therefore viewed as an emergent property of social interactions, where influence flows bidirectionally between leaders and followers. This perspective aligns with complexity theory, social constructionism, and leader–member exchange theory, emphasising trust, communication, and collaboration as the foundation of effective organisational relationships.

The central assumption of relational followership is that leadership effectiveness depends on the quality of interpersonal relationships rather than the characteristics of individual leaders or followers. Followers contribute to leadership through knowledge sharing, constructive feedback, collaborative problem-solving, and adaptive decision-making. Organisations characterised by high-quality relational followership typically demonstrate greater psychological safety, employee engagement, innovation, and organisational resilience. Furthermore, relational followers actively negotiate roles with leaders, creating flexible organisational structures that can respond to dynamic environmental demands. (Velez & Neves, 2022).

Empirical studies demonstrate that relational followership positively predicts organisational commitment, knowledge sharing, innovation, psychological safety, and individual work performance (Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). However, critics argue that the theory is conceptually broad and difficult to operationalise because relational processes are highly dynamic and context-dependent. Despite these challenges, relational followership has become increasingly influential within industrial and organisational psychology because it reflects contemporary organisational realities characterised by teamwork, distributed expertise, and flatter organisational structures.

A recent study indicates that high-quality leader–follower interactions enhance employee engagement, resilience, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Carsten et al., 2024). The relational perspective is closely aligned with African Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasises interconnectivity, mutual respect, and collective humanity. In this context, followership transforms into a social and ethical endeavour rather than a solitary one. Critics contend that the relational perspective lacks sufficient differentiation from leadership theories such as leader–member exchange.

Matshoba-Ramuedzisi et al. (2022) note that, although relational theories acknowledge followers, they nonetheless emphasise leaders as the primary architects of relational excellence. This diminishes philosophy's authentic focus on its adherents. Critics argue that power disparities are often inadequately theorised, thereby masking exploitation or coercion in leader–follower relationships.

4.3.4 Role-based followership theory

Role-based followership theory conceptualises followership as a formal organisational role defined by expectations, responsibilities, authority relationships, and organisational structures. Followers perform prescribed duties while simultaneously influencing leadership effectiveness through collaboration, communication, and role fulfilment. This perspective aligns with role theory (Schneider & Bos, 2019), which argues that organisational behaviour results from socially defined role expectations. Role-based scholars argue that effective followership depends on role clarity, accountability, and mutual understanding between leaders and followers. Organisational performance improves when followers understand behavioural expectations, receive adequate support, and possess sufficient autonomy to perform their responsibilities effectively.

Leadership and followership, therefore, become complementary organisational roles rather than opposing constructs. Although role-based theories provide practical guidance for organisational design and performance management, critics argue that they inadequately explain informal influence, identity formation, and evolving leader–follower relationships. Modern organisations increasingly rely on distributed expertise, agile teams, and cross-functional collaboration, making rigid role definitions less applicable. Consequently, many scholars advocate for integrating role-based perspectives with relational and constructionist approaches. Kellerman (2007) broadened followership scholarship by arguing that followers differ primarily in their levels of engagement and influence rather than in personality characteristics or behavioural styles. She contended that followers are active participants in organisational systems and possess considerable power to influence leadership effectiveness. Unlike Kelley, who focuses on behavioural competencies, Kellerman emphasises the social and political roles followers occupy within organisations.

Kellerman (2008) identified five follower categories arranged along a continuum of engagement.

- *Isolates* are detached and disengaged from organisational activities.
- *Bystanders* observe events without becoming actively involved.
- *Participants* contribute selectively, depending on personal interests or organisational issues.
- *Activists* demonstrate strong commitment and actively influence organisational decisions.
- *Diehards* exhibit extreme commitment and are willing to make significant personal sacrifices in support of, or opposition to, organisational leadership.

Table 4.6 presents Kellerman's followership continuum.

Table 4.6

Kellerman's (2008) followership continuum

FOLLOWER CATEGORY	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	CHARACTERISTICS
Isolates	Very low	Isolates are detached from organisational activities and demonstrate minimal interest in leadership, organisational issues, or decision-making. They perform only the essential requirements of their roles and avoid involvement beyond formal responsibilities.
Bystanders	Low	Bystanders observe organisational events and leadership decisions but rarely intervene or express their opinions. Although aware of workplace issues, they remain passive and avoid taking a clear position.
Participants	Moderate	Participants engage selectively in organisational activities, supporting or opposing leaders depending on personal values, interests, or specific organisational issues.
Activists	High	Activists demonstrate a strong commitment to organisational goals or causes. They actively express opinions, influence decisions, support organisational initiatives, and challenge leadership when necessary.

FOLLOWER CATEGORY	LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	CHARACTERISTICS
Diehards	Very high	Diehards display unwavering commitment to their beliefs, organisational causes, or leaders. They are prepared to make considerable personal sacrifices to support or oppose leadership decisions and organisational direction.

Adapted from Kellerman (2008)

Kellerman (2008) reconceptualised followership by suggesting that followers vary by level of engagement rather than solely by their relationship with leaders. This model is a prominent modern framework for understanding follower engagement, as it portrays followers as active organisational participants whose actions substantially impact leadership effectiveness and organisational performance. The model is most beneficial when combined with relational and ethical followership theories that consider follower motivation, ethical duty, organisational environment, and leader–follower interactions.

This integration offers a more thorough understanding of followership in modern businesses defined by shared leadership, employee empowerment, and collaborative decision-making. These categories show that followers vary substantially in how much influence they exercise within organisations. Empirical studies suggest that follower engagement significantly influences organisational change, employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and leadership effectiveness (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Highly engaged followers often facilitate innovation and organisational learning, whereas disengaged followers contribute to resistance, turnover intentions, and reduced organisational performance.

However, critics argue that Kellerman's categories describe levels of participation rather than explaining why followers adopt different roles. The model therefore provides a useful descriptive framework but offers limited explanatory power regarding the psychological and contextual mechanisms underlying followership. Kellerman's (2007) role-based theory effectively demonstrates that followers are influential organisational actors rather than passive subordinates. Its strength lies in recognising varying degrees of follower engagement across organisational contexts. However, because the framework is descriptive rather than predictive, it benefits from integration with motivational and relational theories, such as self-determination theory, social exchange theory, and implicit followership theory.

According to Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2018), followership academics are recognising that anyone can exhibit both leadership and followership simultaneously, departing from the conventional perspective that regards leaders as immutable entities. These perspectives focus on how leadership relationships occur outside of formal roles or positions, in social situations, organisational settings, and informal groups.

Role-based followership theory examines how followers perform their duties within organisational hierarchies. It posits that followership is linked to formal frameworks and anticipated role behaviours. This theory analyses how subordinates assist, contest, or enhance leadership responsibilities. Carsten et al. (2010) assert that follower role orientation substantially affects organisational behaviour, varying from passive compliance to active collaboration.

Proponents argue that role-based theory has practical significance in formal organisations because it clarifies expectations and role obligations. It is especially beneficial in bureaucratic systems when authority and accountability are distinctly delineated. Recent research indicates that a proactive role orientation forecasts creativity and performance, particularly in knowledge-driven work settings (Oc et al., 2023). This illustrates the theory's predictive significance in organisational efficacy.

Critics contend that role-based theory is limited by hierarchy and may perpetuate unequal power dynamics. It presumes relatively static positions and may overlook dynamic movements in leadership and followership. In contemporary dynamic and interconnected organisations, where individuals often shift between leadership and followership, inflexible job assumptions may be outdated. Critics contend that it overlooks identity formation and emotional labour in followership.

4.3.5 Constructionist followership theory

In constructionist followership theory, followers are viewed as co-creators with leaders in the leadership process. Followership is viewed as a social process entwined with leadership. Therefore, leadership and followership are demonstrated in social and relational interactions between people. Constructionist followership theory emerged primarily through the work of Uhl-Bien and Carsten (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2018) expanded the followership understanding through the introduction of the terms “leader” and “follower”, which refer to an individual’s position, which is their rank, status, identity, or role. This implies a reciprocal link between followership and leadership.

Individuals occupies a specific position, and the leader or follower is perceived as stable. Nonetheless, the adjectives “leading” and “following” expand the definition by highlighting followership or leadership responsibilities, thereby giving the leadership construct greater adaptability and vitality. The leader’s and follower’s tasks and responsibilities should align more closely with the leader’s behaviours. As needed, followers and leaders can take turns in both roles.

According to Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2018), followership refers to the follower's impact on the leader’s results, relationships, relational outcomes, or outcomes related to the follower. Examples include the leader’s motivation, and the perceived support followers receive because of their role orientation. Follower performance and upward voice are examples of behavioural or followership consequences that may arise when followers process social and emotional information in response to a leader’s negative emotional expression. According to Uhl-Bien and Carsten (2018), followership examines the characteristics and effects of followers and following in the leadership process. This definition focuses on comprehending how the context, the leader, and the followers interact. Follower behaviour generally examines how followers perceive and interact with their leaders. Various ideas of followership are examined to provide additional insight into the topic.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) argue that leadership and followership are socially constructed through ongoing interpersonal interactions rather than fixed organisational positions. From this perspective, leadership emerges through reciprocal influence processes in which leaders and followers continuously negotiate roles, identities, and responsibilities. Individuals may simultaneously occupy leader and follower roles, depending on situational expertise, organisational context, and team dynamics. Table 4.7 presents Uhl-Bien and Carsten’s followership perspective.

Table 4.7

Uhl-Bien and Carsten's followership perspective

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Key proponents	Uhl-Bien and Carsten (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014)
Core assumption	Leadership and followership are co-constructed social processes in which leaders and followers jointly influence organisational outcomes.
Primary focus	Understanding follower roles, follower behaviours, and reciprocal leader–follower relationships.
View of leadership	Leadership is a shared, relational process rather than a function of formal authority or leader characteristics alone.
View of followers	Followers are active organisational partners who exercise judgement, influence leadership processes, and contribute to organisational effectiveness.
Leadership direction	Leadership influence flows downward, upward, and laterally across organisations, not only from leaders to followers.
Role of followers	Followers actively participate in decision-making, provide feedback, challenge leaders constructively, share responsibility, and contribute to organisational learning.

Uhl-Bien and Carsten's (2018) contribution constitutes a crucial advancement in modern followership research. By acknowledging leadership as a co-created relational process, this perspective enhanced the comprehension of how leaders and followers collaboratively contribute to organisational effectiveness. It emphasised the need to cultivate followership competencies alongside leadership competencies, acknowledging that organisational success depends on the abilities of both leaders and followers. Recent studies further develop this viewpoint by linking followership to employee engagement, psychological safety, servant leadership, and shared leadership, providing a more comprehensive explanation of organisational performance (Oc et al., 2023).

4.3.6 Implicit followership theory

Implicit followership theory (IFT) posits that leaders own implicit cognitive schemas, or mental templates, that define effective and ineffective followers (Sy, 2010). Cognitive representations shape leaders' interpretations of follower behaviour, performance assessments, the distribution of responsibility, and the development of employee relationships.

In contrast to conventional followership theories that prioritise observable follower behaviours, IFT centres on leaders' views of followers, acknowledging that leadership decisions are shaped by subjective cognitive processes rather than only by objective conduct. A key aspect of IFT is its expansion of cognitive leadership research by acknowledging that leadership effectiveness is partially contingent upon leaders' perceptions of their followers. According to Sy (2010), leaders embody both positive and negative follower archetypes. Positive prototypes encompass traits such as competence, enthusiasm, diligence, reliability, and collaboration, whereas negative prototypes are characterised by judgements of followers as passive, incompetent, insubordinate, or unmotivated. These implicit beliefs affect leaders' expectations and influence leader–member interactions, trust, delegation, and possibilities for employee development. Consequently, IFT explains why employees exhibiting similar behaviours may receive different assessments from different supervisors.

Table 4.8 presents Sy's implicit followership theory.

Table 4.8

Sy's (2010) implicit followership theory

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Theory	Implicit followership theory (IFT)
Key proponent	Sy (2010)
Core assumption	Individuals hold unconscious cognitive schemas (implicit beliefs) about followers' characteristics and behaviours. These mental prototypes influence how leaders perceive, evaluate, and interact with followers.
Primary focus	Cognitive perceptions of followers rather than actual follower behaviour.
Underlying perspective	Mental representations, expectations, and social categorisation influence leadership and followership.
Positive followership prototypes	Leaders may perceive followers as industrious, enthusiastic, reliable, competent, collaborative, and good organisational citizens (Sy, 2010).
Negative followership prototypes	Leaders may perceive followers as incompetent, unmotivated, insubordinate, passive, arrogant, or conforming without independent thought (Sy, 2010).

Adapted from Sy (2010)

Implicit followership theory has contributed significantly by showing that leadership is shaped not only by followers' actions but also by leaders' cognitive anticipations of followership. The idea emphasises the significance of acknowledging unconscious assumptions that affect leadership decisions, employee development, and organisational effectiveness. From the standpoint of industrial and organisational psychology, enhancing leaders' knowledge of implicit followership beliefs may lead to more equitable performance assessments, more inclusive leadership practices, and strengthened leader–follower relationships.

4.4 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FOLLOWERSHIP

Individuals become leaders or followers in organisational settings for various reasons, such as appointment, promotion, or being asked to act. Understanding why individuals remain in follower roles is necessary, even when they may have the opportunity to move into leadership roles. The evolution of followership theory reflects a significant shift from viewing followers as passive subordinates to recognising them as active partners in leadership and organisational success. The choice to remain a follower is increasingly recognised as a dynamic process shaped by psychological, relational, and organisational factors, rather than a mere passive acceptance of leadership.

Suda (2014) contends that individuals opt to remain followers when the perceived psychological and physical advantages of the follower position, including security, belonging, protection, and goal achievement, outweigh its associated costs. In contrast, when followers experience reduced autonomy, value misalignment, or dissatisfaction, they are more likely to withdraw, challenge leadership, or leave the organisation.

This viewpoint aligns with social exchange theory, which posits that employees consistently assess the equilibrium between organisational contributions and incentives, with positive reciprocal relationships enhancing commitment and discretionary effort (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Kahn (1990) asserts that employees are more inclined to engage physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their work when the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability exist. Additionally, Rousseau et al. (2018) posit that fulfilling mutual expectations between employees and employers enhances organisational commitment and retention.

Suda's (2014) theory, while insightful regarding the motivational foundations of followership, primarily focuses on rational cost-benefit analysis, which only partially explains why individuals remain followers.

4.4.1 Perspective on effective followership

Followership research indicates that leader–follower interactions, organisational culture, psychological safety, identity, power dynamics, and the wider organisational context influence follower conduct (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Followers assess not only material or psychological incentives but also trust, equity, inclusivity, collective objectives, and avenues for meaningful contributions to organisational success.

Behavioural ethical research suggests that subordinates may support leaders even as they acknowledge ethical dilemmas, especially when authority, organisational standards, or fear of adverse repercussions inhibit autonomous action (Milgram, 1974). Thus, modern researchers contend that effective followership involves not only loyalty and dedication but also ethical discernment, moral courage, and psychological safety, which empower followers to challenge wrongdoing without fear of retribution (Chaleff, 2009). The literature indicates that individuals remain followers because of the interplay among personal motivations, reciprocal social exchanges, ethical considerations, and organisational conditions that promote trust, engagement, and shared responsibility, reinforcing the notion that followership is an active, relational, and context-dependent factor in organisational effectiveness.

Together, these approaches show that effective followership encompasses behavioural competence, ethical responsibility, engagement, cognitive perceptions, and relational impact. Rather than offering conflicting explanations, these ideas offer diverse perspectives on followers' role in enhancing leadership effectiveness and organisational performance. Modern industrial and organisational psychology increasingly acknowledges that leadership development must be complemented by systematic followership development, highlighting the interconnected dynamics of leader–follower relationships in contemporary organisations.

4.4 SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVE

4.4.1 Societal context

Recent studies have expanded this perspective by showing that followership behaviours arise from dynamic interactions among individual traits, leader actions, organisational structures, and wider socio-cultural factors (Oc et al., 2023; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Thus, societal elements such as cultural values, social identity, status hierarchies, interpersonal relationships, and stereotypes shape followers' views of authority, readiness to engage in decision-making, and ability to exert constructive influence.

Modern followership research increasingly views followership as a dynamic, relational, and context-dependent process rather than a static, subservient one. Building on the relational perspective proposed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), contemporary research shows that followership behaviours arise from ongoing interactions among individual traits, leader actions, organisational frameworks, and the wider social context (Oc et al., 2023). This viewpoint acknowledges that followers actively shape leadership dynamics through their assessment, feedback, and influence on organisational decision-making, rather than simply reacting to leaders' commands.

Recent research indicates that societal and organisational circumstances substantially affect followers' perceptions and role enactments. Cultural values, social identity, status hierarchies, interpersonal relationships, and workplace stereotypes shape followers' impressions of authority, their willingness to voice dissent, and their readiness to engage in organisational decision-making (Haslam et al., 2020; Oc et al., 2023). Organisational cultures defined by psychological safety, inclusiveness, and trust are more inclined to foster constructive followership behaviours, including employee voice, ethical challenge, and collaborative problem-solving. In contrast, overly hierarchical or exclusionary settings may inhibit independent thought and promote passive adherence. These findings underscore that effective followership is co-determined by individual agency and the organisational and socio-cultural conditions in which leader–follower relationships evolve.

4.4.2 Type of Followers

Conventional organisational frameworks typically categorise followers into two primary groups: managers who have leadership roles and report to senior managers, and independent contributors who do not oversee others. This distinction, while indicative of formal organisational hierarchies, is insufficient in contemporary leadership and followership research, which argues that leadership and followership are not mutually exclusive but are enacted interchangeably based on organisational context and relationships (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Individuals often oscillate between leadership and followership when collaborating across teams, projects, and organisational hierarchies, suggesting that followership should be understood as a dynamic organisational role rather than a static position.

While differentiating between managerial followers and individual contributors can help explain formal organisational frameworks, this categorisation fails to capture the complexities of contemporary organisations characterised by cross-functional teams, knowledge work, agile structures, and shared leadership. Modern industrial and organisational psychology increasingly acknowledges that both managers and non-managerial personnel assume followership positions at various times, contingent upon the task, expertise, and organisational setting. Followership should be regarded as a behavioural and relational process rather than a mere position within an organisational hierarchy, with effective organisations investing in cultivating both leadership and followership competencies to improve collaboration, innovation, and organisational performance. (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

4.4.3 Societal Status

Leadership positions have historically been granted superior status, authority, and social acknowledgement compared to followership roles within businesses. This viewpoint reflects entrenched leader-centric beliefs in organisational theory, where leadership is often linked to prestige, influence, and decision-making power, while followership is seen as submissive or reliant (Ford & Harding, 2015). Mahadevan et al. (2023) argue that status is a crucial element of human social interaction because it signals the respect, recognition, and esteem individuals receive from others. They differentiate between social standing, which is granted through reputation and societal acknowledgement, and self-esteem, which reflects an individual's subjective assessment of personal value.

Their findings indicate that status significantly affects psychological outcomes, including self-esteem, emotions, motivation, and interpersonal behaviour, with implications for leadership and followership in organisational contexts.

This approach explains why individuals often seek leadership roles and why these positions are typically linked to greater organisational influence, career advancement, and status. Higher-rank positions typically afford greater access to organisational resources, decision-making power, and professional recognition, reinforcing the notion that leadership is intrinsically more esteemed than followership (Mahadevan et al., 2023). This status-based attitude has been attacked for reinforcing the fallacy that leadership is preferable to followership. Modern followership researchers contend that organisational efficacy relies on the synergistic contributions of both leaders and followers, rather than solely on hierarchical distinctions (Oc et al., 2023; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

According to Mahadevan et al. (2023, p. 12), status is a crucial aspect of human affairs. Social respect and appreciation are examples of reputational esteem, which determines this subset of rank. As a status indicator, self-esteem is more important, since it helps explain the relationship between status and these clinically relevant emotions.

4.4.4 Interpersonal interaction

Leaders and followers must engage more to achieve the desired results. Modern leadership research highlights that successful organisational performance relies on collaborative interactions between leaders and followers, rather than solely on leaders' unilateral impact. Faillo et al. (2016) empirically proved that cooperative outcomes improve when leaders foster involvement, solicit follower feedback, and facilitate open communication rather than employing authoritarian or directive methods. Their findings indicate that followers are more inclined to exert discretionary effort, share information, and collaborate to achieve organisational objectives when they view leaders as inclusive and responsive. This viewpoint aligns with participative and relational leadership models, which view leadership as a reciprocal process in which both leaders and followers collaboratively influence organisational outcomes.

4.4.5 Stereotypes

Follower stereotypes are prevalent in the workplace. Research on followership indicates a shift from conventional assumptions that depict leaders as the exclusive architects of organisational success, while followers are seen as passive recipients of influence. Contemporary scholarship defines leadership and followership as reciprocal, relational, and interdependent processes in which both parties enhance organisational effectiveness through shared influence, collaboration, and mutual accountability (Costello & Mantere, 2023; Oc et al., 2023). Notwithstanding this theoretical advancement, leader-centric assumptions persist across numerous organisational practices, underscoring the need for further research and organisational interventions that acknowledge followership as a crucial factor shaping employee engagement, ethical decision-making, innovation, and organisational performance.

4.5 EMPLOYMENT PERSPECTIVE

Various aspects of employment are essential for followers to understand so they can adjust and perform well in the organisation. These aspects include organisational structure, diversity management, motivation, relationships, workplace experience, the labour market, organisational politics, and the antecedents and outcomes of followership. This section discusses each aspect below.

4.5.1 Organisational Structure

The organisational structure establishes the formal framework that governs leadership and followership dynamics by delineating authority, responsibility, communication pathways, and decision-making responsibilities. Organisational structures not only define reporting connections but also shape collaboration, autonomy, and contributions to organisational goals among leaders and followers.

Rao et al. (2015) contend that organisational performance improves when organisational structures align with strategic objectives, facilitating effective coordination of activities, execution of operational decisions, and the cultivation of constructive workplace relationships. This viewpoint is pertinent in modern businesses, where organisational design is increasingly seen as a crucial facilitator of employee engagement, cooperation, and adaptable performance.

4.5.2 Diversity Management

The workplace is becoming increasingly diverse, necessitating a new approach to managing people. It is critical to consider the impact of leadership and teamwork at all levels. To address these challenges, however, greater power-sharing, decentralisation, and collaboration are necessary, given recent workplace changes and complications such as restructures, mergers, and acquisitions, which result in fewer resources and a broader range of control. To maintain harmony, organisations must address and resolve workplace interpersonal discrimination. According to Jones et al. (2017), subtle discrimination impairs organisational and employee performance. They also contend that everyone should be held accountable for addressing subtle prejudice because everyone contributes to it. Leaders and followers need to identify and address interpersonal discrimination in the workplace.

4.5.3 Motivation

Leaders must implement measures to motivate followers to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Simić et al. (2018) found that the leader–follower relationship is strongly and statistically significantly correlated with motivational elements, including reward systems, positive interpersonal interactions, opportunities for professional growth, and team spirit. Followers' motivation is influenced by how leaders use their power. Peyton (2019) found that followers’ perceptions of leaders’ use of hard power—such as rewards, coercion, and legitimacy—were linked to higher levels of suboptimal motivation. However, followers felt more optimally motivated when their leaders employed soft power, such as expert, referent, and informational power.

4.5.4 Relationship

A hierarchical relationship exists between the leader and follower, with the leader controlling the nature of the relationship. According to Lund (2019), autonomy tensions between the leader and follower lead to struggles over loyalty and line leadership, decision-making challenges, and frustration from an inability to prioritise and develop ideas. Feldman (2018) suggests that leadership tends to be more business-focused, leaving followers feeling disregarded and not authorised. Leaders should maintain their authority, which can hinder their ability to perform their roles effectively. Leaders should be encouraged to take the lead and ask followers for support when needed.

4.5.5 Workplace experience

Workplace experience encompasses understanding how people interact with and perceive the workplace, a crucial component of that experience. Ndoro and Martins (2019) emphasise several elements that are pertinent to work experience:

- Access to positions: Due to intense competition, finding a job may be difficult.
- Access to training and development: When it comes to training, organisations are prone to giving preference to leaders over followers.
- Access to promotions: Only those who are already performing comparable work may be eligible for promotions to the next level.
- Perceived unfair treatment: Followers may believe that leaders do not treat them fairly.
- People in follower roles: Professionals who are qualified in their field may be led by someone who is either more or less skilled than they are.
- Managers who hold leadership positions may act as both a leader and a follower.
- In the public sector, a bureaucratic strategy may be used.
- Followers in the private sector may feel ignored because the private sector is primarily concerned with making money.
- Followers in a small business: Depending on the nature of the enterprise, certain individuals may need to be both leaders and followers.

4.5.6 Labour Market

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) plays a crucial global role in advancing social equity and dignified employment by establishing labour standards, supporting member nations, and fostering collaboration among governments, employers, and employees. The ILO's 2025 report underscores that social justice is intricately linked to advancements in employment, labour rights, social protection, and inclusive economic growth. International labour standards, comprising Conventions, Protocols, and Recommendations, provide a crucial framework for guiding national labour policies and practices, while the ILO's oversight mechanisms assess the enforcement of ratified standards.

The State of Social Justice 2025 further affirms the enduring importance of decent work for sustainable development, reporting progress in reducing extreme poverty, working poverty, and child labour, while also addressing ongoing challenges in achieving fair labour-market conditions.

As a result, the ILO's present-day involvement goes beyond establishing worldwide labour standards, aiding social justice, quality employment, and broader labour-market progress. South Africa has an established system of organised labour in which trade unions play a vital role in representing workers and participating in labour relations and socioeconomic policymaking. Nevertheless, union membership fails to represent most of the workforce. The country's labour market includes several participants, especially the government, organised labour, organised business, and community entities. These stakeholders participate in social dialogue through institutions such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), which provides a formal platform for consultation, negotiation and consensus-building on significant labour and socioeconomic matters (NEDLAC, 2025).

4.5.7 Organisational Politics

Organisations represent social and political landscapes where people and groups pursue distinct interests and seek to shape decisions and outcomes. Therefore, organisational politics can alter interactions between leaders and followers and affect employee outcomes. Findings reveal that organisational politics can shape the interplay between leadership and followers' satisfaction and performance (Munyon et al., 2021).

In terms of followership, employees should not be considered merely passive beneficiaries of management control; recent followership scholarship recognises followers as dynamic participants in leadership processes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2022). Additionally, employees' ability to navigate and negotiate political environments may shape their experiences of workplace stressors, with meta-analytic data linking political competence to fewer occurrences of numerous stress-related outcomes (Summers et al., 2020). Hence, recognising the significance of organisational politics, power dynamics, and influence is essential for interpreting the relationship between leaders and followers and their impact on organisational operations.

Followership power dynamics recognise followers as active participants, not passive recipients of leadership influence. Contemporary followership theory asserts that followers influence leaders through knowledge, vocal participation, social networks, collaboration, and critical evaluation. Capable followers affect leaders' actions, shape company culture, and influence strategic outcomes. This perspective challenges the prior notion that leadership is the exclusive source of organisational power (Carsten et al., 2018; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

A secondary power dynamic in followership involves the mutual dependence between leaders and followers. Followers provide legitimacy, execution capacity, expertise, and feedback, while leaders offer guidance and coordination. This reciprocal relationship signifies that power circulates in multiple directions rather than merely descending. High-quality leader–member exchange relationships often foster trust, discretionary effort, and employee engagement; however, unequal power dynamics can lead to subtle disengagement and resistance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Oc & Bashshur, 2013). The third followership power dynamic involves constructive dissent and audacious followership. Modern businesses increasingly value followers who can respectfully challenge decisions, identify risks, and advocate for ethical norms.

Constructive followership reallocates power from mere obedience to responsible engagement and shared accountability. Organisational cultures characterised by strict hierarchies may inhibit upward communication and stifle follower influence. Thus, organisations gain advantages when psychological safety and inclusive leadership practices enable followers to exercise informed influence responsibly (Chaleff, 2009).

4.5.8 Antecedents of followership

Followership has increasingly become a purposeful concept rather than a passive extension of leadership. Modern followership research increasingly defines followership as an active, relational, and growing process, rather than a passive outcome of leadership. Early followership literature focused on follower behaviours; however, contemporary research acknowledges that effective followership arises from the interplay of individual, relational, and organisational factors that empower employees to enhance organisational effectiveness significantly (Oc et al., 2023; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). From the standpoint of industrial and organisational psychology, followership is recognised as a strategic asset that complements leadership and improves organisational performance through mutual influence between leaders and followers.

At the individual level, psychological resources serve as significant precursors to effective followership. Psychological capital, which includes hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, gives employees the confidence and adaptability to interact constructively with leaders, respond positively to organisational challenges, and maintain performance amid fluctuating work conditions (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Critical thinking and proactive role orientation empower followers to assess organisational issues independently, exercise sound judgement, and contribute constructively to decision-making. These traits align closely with Kelley's (1992) definition of outstanding followership, which highlights autonomous critical thinking and active participation as defining features of effective followers.

At the relational level, effective followership is promoted by high-quality leader–follower interactions defined by trust, mutual respect, open communication, and psychological safety. Research from South Africa shows that authentic leadership environments and follower agency jointly enhance employee engagement and performance, illustrating that followers are active participants in the organisation rather than passive recipients of leadership influence (du Plessis & Boshoff, 2018). This viewpoint aligns with leader–member exchange theory, which posits that reciprocal interactions between leaders and followers enhance commitment, collaboration, and organisational effectiveness (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Moreover, follower-centric viewpoints suggest that employees' perceptions of an effective follower's attributes affect their readiness to engage, take initiative, and contribute to organisational success (Sy, 2010).

Organisational antecedents significantly influence followership. Organisational cultures defined by inclusivity, psychological safety, ethical leadership, employee voice, and collaborative decision-making foster environments that promote constructive followership behaviours (Oc et al., 2023). In contrast, overly hierarchical environments, low trust, and limited participation may suppress follower initiative and encourage passive acquiescence. From the South African viewpoint, organisational transformation, diversity, and inclusive leadership significantly affect how employees demonstrate followership in multicultural environments. These findings reinforce the view that effective followership is embedded throughout organisational structures rather than confined to individual followers.

Despite these advances, the research has several limitations. Research on the antecedents of followership is significantly less advanced than research on the antecedents of leadership, resulting in a scarcity of proven theoretical models and quantitative tools (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Second, many studies emphasise positive psychological traits while largely neglecting structural constraints, such as organisational politics, power imbalances, and institutional culture, that may limit followers' agency.

Third, while the significance of follower development is increasingly acknowledged, leadership development programs still emphasise leader competences and allocate relatively little focus to systematically enhancing followership skills (Inderjeet & Scheepers, 2022). Therefore, experts advocate for organisations to implement integrated leadership–followership development frameworks that enhance both leader efficacy and follower proficiency.

The evidence indicates that the interplay of individual psychological resources, high-quality relationship interactions, and supportive organisational contexts influences effective followership. These factors support the modern view that organisational efficiency relies not only on proficient leaders but also on empowered followers with the confidence, competence, and organisational support needed to contribute actively to collective organisational objectives.

4.5.9 Outcomes of followership

Current followership research indicates that the benefits of effective followership surpass just adherence to leadership commands, influencing individual, team, and organisational performance. Initial followership theories regarded followers as proactive participants in organisational success via independent thought and active involvement (Kelley, 1992), whereas contemporary studies frame followership as a relational process that fosters employee engagement, innovation, organisational learning, and sustainable organisational performance (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Oc et al., 2023). From the standpoint of industrial and organisational psychology, successful followership is increasingly seen as a strategic organisational capability that enhances leadership and fosters organisational resilience and competitiveness.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that constructive followership correlates with various favourable organisational outcomes, such as increased employee engagement, enhanced organisational citizenship behaviour, amplified employee voice, heightened creativity, and improved psychological well-being (Oc et al., 2023). Individuals who show initiative, critical thinking, and constructive engagement are more likely to strengthen organisational adaptability, continuous improvement, and ethical decision-making, especially in knowledge-intensive and fast-evolving situations. These results align with relational leadership theories, which assert that organisational efficiency arises from reciprocal connections between leaders and followers, rather than only from leader influence (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Moreover, robust leader–follower relationships defined by trust, mutual respect, and transparent communication enhance follower engagement and foster superior organisational performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Martin et al., 2016).

Despite these advantages, followership outcomes are not consistently favourable. Organisations that emphasise uncritical conformity and obedience over constructive dissent may unwittingly stifle employee expression, innovation, and organisational learning. Such environments may perpetuate reliance on leaders, diminish critical thinking, and heighten the probability that unethical acts go unquestioned (Chaleff, 2009). Research on behavioural ethics indicates that employees may either remain silent or indifferent in the face of judgement errors when organisational cultures suppress criticism or lack psychological safety. Edmondson & Bransby (2023) posit that psychological safety is crucial for facilitating organisational learning and performance in ever-changing situations, especially in a world transformed by a worldwide pandemic.

Thus, followers' effectiveness depends not only on their talents but also on organisational environments that promote respectful dissent, ethical decision-making, and cooperative problem-solving. Recent studies on followership indicate that leaders’ perceptions and expectations of their followers influence whether and to what extent proactive followership occurs. Implicit followership theory posits that leaders’ cognitive perceptions of effective followership influence delegation, trust, developmental opportunities, and performance assessments (Sy, 2010). Leaders with favourable implicit followership prototypes are more inclined to promote initiative, employee expression, and collective accountability, whereas unfavourable impressions may impede follower agency and organisational learning.

Organisations should redefine followership as an independent, context-sensitive process in which employees use professional judgement, cooperate with leaders, and actively enhance organisational effectiveness. Enhancing both leadership and followership skills is crucial for bolstering employee engagement, ethical governance, innovation, and sustainable organisational performance.

4.5.10 Relationship amongst constructs

Inderjeet and Scheepers (2022) conducted a study that offers in-depth insights into followership practices and their impact on the leadership process. The study examined follower actions that can affect the leadership process, as well as passive follower behaviours. The findings indicate that followers' perceptions of the need to proactively identify difficulties (co-production orientation) are positively correlated with their inclination to express opinions on work-related matters. Followers' belief that their participation in decision-making is unnecessary correlates negatively with voice conduct. Contemporary research increasingly links followership to employee engagement and organisational performance, positioning followers as strategic contributors to organisational success. Rather than viewing engagement solely as a function of leadership behaviour, scholars argue that follower characteristics, including proactive behaviour, accountability, resilience, psychological empowerment, and critical thinking, directly influence engagement levels. This perspective aligns closely with the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which proposes that personal resources interact with organisational resources to enhance motivation and performance.

Employee engagement plays a significant role in enhancing organisational effectiveness. Ndoro and Martins (2019) investigated employee engagement levels at the organisational, team, and individual levels among employees at a higher education institution in South Africa. The findings indicate that team-level employee engagement was highest and individual-level engagement was lowest. To execute mission-aligned initiatives in higher education institutions, they suggest that specific staff engagement interventions are required. When disengaged employees leave the organisation, engaged employees are more likely to stay.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that exemplary followers report higher levels of employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, innovation, and individual work performance (Breevaart et al., 2016). Followership is a vital mechanism by which servant leadership influences organisational outcomes.

Kelley (1992) argued that excellent followers exhibit independent critical thinking and active participation, while Chaleff (2009) expanded this view by highlighting ethical courage and constructive dissent. Contemporary relational perspectives define followership as a co-created process in which leaders and followers collaboratively influence organisational effectiveness (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Effective followers do not merely execute leaders' decisions; instead, they exercise discernment, disseminate knowledge, challenge unsuitable judgements, and collaborate to address organisational challenges. Thus, servant leadership and effective followership are interdependent concepts. Servant leaders foster environments that promote follower engagement. In contrast, effective followers enhance leadership efficacy through initiative, accountability, and collective responsibility. Follower effectiveness is influenced by psychological safety, organisational fairness, trust, and leader–member interactions, suggesting that followership cannot be comprehended in isolation from its organisational context.

Employee engagement represents an important mediating mechanism linking servant leadership and followership with individual work performance. Kahn (1990) conceptualised engagement as the physical, cognitive, and emotional investment individuals make in their work roles. In contrast, Schaufeli et al. (2010) describe engagement as a positive work-related state characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Servant leaders enhance engagement by satisfying followers' psychological needs for meaningfulness, safety, and availability, while effective followers contribute to engagement through proactive participation, ownership, and collaborative problem-solving. The model further explains that leadership support, autonomy, feedback, and developmental opportunities function as job resources that strengthen employee engagement and improve performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Contemporary evidence consistently demonstrates that engaged employees exhibit higher levels of persistence, discretionary effort, organisational citizenship behaviour, creativity, and resilience, all of which contribute positively to individual work performance. Individual work performance represents the behavioural outcome of these interconnected organisational processes. Campbell (1990) conceptualised work performance as behaviours that contribute to organisational goals, while Koopmans et al. (2014) expanded this perspective by distinguishing between task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. Employees who experience servant leadership, demonstrate effective followership, and remain highly engaged are more likely to perform effectively because they possess the motivation, psychological resources, organisational support, and collaborative relationships required to achieve organisational objectives.

Furthermore, leader–member exchange theory suggests that high-quality leader–follower relationships characterised by trust and reciprocity further strengthen engagement and performance outcomes (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Martin et al., 2016).

Greater integration with servant leadership, employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, psychological capital, and work performance models will strengthen the theoretical framework.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 conceptualised leadership, addressing Research Aim 3: to conceptualise the construct of leadership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective. The chapter discussed different definitions, theories, and perspectives. The chapter also reviewed follower dimensions and styles, the psychology of followership, antecedents and outcomes of followership, and the relationships among variables. Thus, this chapter achieved Research Aim 3. Chapter 5 discusses the fourth variable: work performance.

CHAPTER 5: WORK PERFORMANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter conceptualises workplace work performance challenges. First, the chapter examines the underlying factors that influence work performance. Next, it addresses the impact of work performance. Finally, it presents theoretical perspectives from the literature and suggests ways to close the gaps. A summary of the literature review is provided at the end of the chapter.

This chapter addresses Research Aim 4: conceptualisation of the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING WORK PERFORMANCE

The concept of work performance has evolved considerably over the past century. Early management theorists, including Taylor (1911), viewed performance primarily in terms of productivity and efficiency, focusing on the quantity of output employees produced. During this period, managers measured performance using objective indicators such as production volume, speed, and labour efficiency. While these approaches improved industrial productivity, they largely ignored psychological, behavioural, and social factors that influence employee effectiveness.

The behavioural movement initiated by Campbell (1990), Murphy (1989), and Borman and Motowidlo (1997) transformed the field by recognising that performance consists of observable work behaviours rather than outcomes alone. Researchers increasingly acknowledged that teamwork, communication, organisational citizenship behaviours, and employee motivation significantly contribute to organisational success. This shift broadened performance management systems to include behavioural competencies alongside traditional productivity measures. Contemporary research further expands the concept of work performance by incorporating adaptability, innovation, resilience, digital competence, and employee well-being. Modern organisations operate in highly dynamic environments requiring employees to continuously learn, collaborate across virtual teams, and respond effectively to organisational change (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Consequently, multidimensional frameworks such as Koopmans' individual work performance model have become the dominant paradigm in organisational psychology.

5.3 DEFINITION OF WORK PERFORMANCE

Various definitions of work performance are presented below:

Koopmans et al. defined individual work performance as behaviours or actions relevant to organisational goals (Koopmans et al., 2014, p. 63). This definition suggests that individuals act and behave in a way to achieve organisational goals

The researcher defined work performance as “the things that the individuals do in the workplace to achieve the organisational objectives”. This definition is aligned with Koopmans et al.'s (2011) definition.

Campbell (1990 conceptualised individual work performance as behaviours or actions relevant to organisational goals that can be measured by everyone’s proficiency level (Campbell, 1990).

Murphy viewed job performance as a set of behaviours relevant to organisational goals and proposed evaluating performance across multiple behavioural dimensions rather than as a single global construct (Murphy, 1989).

Borman and Motowidlo conceptualised work performance as comprising task performance and contextual performance. (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

Campbell et al. conceptualised work performance as behaviour under an individual's control that contributes to organisational goals, proposing that performance is determined by declarative and procedural knowledge, as well as motivation (Campbell et al., 1993).

Viswesvaran and Ones argued that job performance is a multidimensional construct comprising several correlated behavioural dimensions that collectively represent overall work performance (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Rotundo et al. (2012) proposed that overall job performance comprises task performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and counterproductive work behaviour, with the relative importance of each depending on the specific job context (Rotundo et al., 2012).

Koopmans et al. conceptualised individual work performance as behaviours that contribute to organisational goals, operationalised through three behavioural dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour (Koopmans et al., 2014).

Over three decades of research, researchers have largely agreed that individual work performance is primarily a behavioural construct rather than an outcome construct. Campbell (1990) posited that performance encompasses activities that advance corporate objectives, differentiating it from organisational effectiveness. Murphy (1989) viewed performance as multidimensional behaviour, while Borman and Motowidlo (1997) expanded the construct by adding contextual performance alongside task performance. Modern scholars have expanded the concept by including adaptive performance and counterproductive work behaviour, acknowledging that contemporary organisational effectiveness relies on employees' technical proficiency, collaboration, adaptability, and the mitigation of detrimental workplace behaviours (Koopmans et al., 2011; Rotundo et al, 2012). Together, these concepts show the progression of work performance from a limited, task-oriented concept to an extensive, multidimensional behavioural framework aligned with modern industrial and organisational psychology.

Campbell (2012) defines work performance as “behaviours or actions relevant to the organisation’s goals” (p. 161). Viswesvaran and Ones (2000, p. 218) view work performance as the set of actions, behaviours, and outcomes employees engage in or bring about that are linked to and contribute to organisational goals. Koopmans et al. (2011) note that work performance is understood differently across fields, including management, occupational health and work, and organisational psychology. For example, management emphasises making an employee as productive as possible, and occupational health prevents productivity loss resulting from a particular disease or health impairment. In contrast, industrial and organisational psychologists focus on performance determinants such as work engagement, satisfaction, and personality.

The key elements of work performance include its multidimensional nature, its emphasis on behaviour rather than outcomes, and its alignment with organisational objectives. Some also define work performance, recognising that distinguishing between behaviour and results can be challenging. Koopmans (2015) adopted Campbell’s definition and defines job performance as an employee’s acts or behaviours, not the outcomes of those activities that are pertinent to the company’s objectives.

According to Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2019, p. 2), work performance can be operationalised using a range of criteria, from general ones such as effort, diligence, and flexibility to more specific ones, including formal and informal communication, attendance, and rule compliance. Objective measures of work productivity include counts of specific actions or outputs recorded in organisational records, as well as the number of days missed.

Subjective measures, on the other hand, include the number and calibre of work evaluations from peers, superiors, or employees. Although these approaches do not fully capture the complexity and variety of employee performance at work, they may still yield useful insights.

Koopmans et al. (2011) define individual work performance as employee behaviours or actions relevant to organisational goals that can be measured in terms of proficiency. In this study, the researcher defines work performance as the behaviours and actions that individuals exhibit in the workplace and that align with organisational goals. This encompasses how effectively employees carry out their core duties (task performance), enhance the work environment (contextual performance), and avoid actions that might negatively impact the organisation (counterproductive work behaviour).

5.4 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WORK PERFORMANCE

Early and modern performance theories are explained to illustrate developments in the concept and its application. Global performance focuses on the organisation's value for internal and external stakeholders, including shareholders, customers, employees, suppliers, and the broader community. Productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, economy, earning capacity, profitability, and competitiveness explain organisational performance.

5.4.1 Early theories of work performance

Early performance theories relate to financial and non-financial performance.

5.4.1.1 Financial performance

The financial performance theories discussed in this section include Resource-Based View (RBV), Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), and the Balanced Scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992; 1996). Each of the theories is explained below:

i) The Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991) posits that enduring financial success stems from organisational resources that are valuable, inimitable, non-substitutable, and unique. From this viewpoint, employee expertise, skills, and human capital are strategic assets that can drive better financial results through increased productivity, innovation, and competitive advantage. Thus, investments in employee skills and organisational assets are crucial links between workforce productivity and financial prosperity.

ii) Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)

Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) offers an additional theoretical viewpoint, positing that financial performance should not be regarded exclusively as the generation of shareholder wealth, but rather as the adept management of relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, investors, and society. In this context, employee performance indirectly influences financial results by enhancing service quality, customer satisfaction, innovation, and organisational reputation.

Freeman et al. (2021) argue that both RBV and stakeholder theory offer robust frameworks for tackling management challenges independently; however, they contend that their integration holds the greatest potential. The cohesive strategy can elucidate the rationale for a company's survival while fulfilling its commitments.

Empirical evidence reviewed by Capon et al. (1990) further demonstrates that a combination of strategic, organisational, and environmental factors, including market share, organisational growth, competitive positioning, and investment decisions, influences financial performance. Their meta-analysis indicates that financial performance is multidimensional and cannot be attributed exclusively to employee productivity, thereby supporting a system-oriented theoretical understanding of organisational financial success.

iii) Balanced Scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992; 1996)

The Balanced Scorecard proposes that financial performance is the ultimate organisational outcome, driven by improvements in customer satisfaction, internal business processes, and organisational learning and growth.

This perspective aligns with contemporary research in human resources and industrial psychology, which recognises that employee engagement, leadership, innovation and organisational capability serve as leading indicators of future financial performance. Rather than treating financial outcomes as isolated measures, the Balanced Scorecard positions them within a causal chain linking employee development and organisational capability to long-term financial sustainability. Consequently, contemporary research increasingly conceptualises financial work performance as an organisational outcome that emerges from the interaction among human, strategic and operational capabilities. Kaplan and Norton (1992).

5.4.1.2 Non-financial performance

Non-financial work performance refers to employee conduct and organisational achievements that foster effectiveness without direct monetary representation. The non-financial performance theories include Borman and Motowidlo (1993, 1997) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) Theory (Organ, 1988).

i) The theoretical research by Borman and Motowidlo (1993, 1997) offers the most compelling conceptual basis for grasping non-financial performance through the lens of contextual performance. Their proposition asserts that behaviours such as teamwork, aiding coworkers, organisational citizenship, initiative, adherence to organisational guidelines, and maintaining positive interpersonal relations bolster organisational effectiveness by enhancing the context for technical work. These discretionary behaviours build social capital that supports productivity, innovation, and organisational resilience, even if they are not immediately visible in financial measures.

ii) Another crucial theoretical lens is derived from Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) Theory, first articulated by Organ in 1988. Organ argued that staff members often engage in optional behaviours beyond their defined roles, contributing to organisational effectiveness without formal recognition in compensation structures.

These traits include altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, civility, and sportsmanship, all of which augment teamwork, collaboration, and the organisational climate.

Contemporary organisational psychology views these behaviours as key indicators of non-financial performance because they encourage knowledge sharing, foster organisational commitment, and enhance employee wellbeing, ultimately supporting long-term organisational sustainability despite lacking immediate financial returns. Organisations need to understand and encourage behaviours displayed by leaders and followers to improve performance.

5.4.1.3 Behavioural aspects of work performance

These viewpoints align with behavioural theories of job performance, which define performance as observable actions that contribute to organisational objectives rather than solely the results attained (Campbell, 1990). They align with Borman and Motowidlo's (1997) distinction between task performance, which encompasses essential work duties, and contextual performance, which includes interpersonal collaboration, leadership, and organisational citizenship that enhance the organisational environment. From the standpoint of industrial and organisational psychology, these models indicate that organisations ought to assess and cultivate the behaviours of both leaders and followers, as optimal organisational performance relies on technical proficiency, ethical behaviour, collaboration, leadership effectiveness, and constructive followership. Therefore, performance management systems must implement multidimensional behavioural frameworks that acknowledge the synergistic roles of leaders and followers in achieving sustainable organisational efficiency.

a. Campbell’s theory

Campbell's (1990) theory is widely regarded as pioneering work in modern research on work performance. Campbell's theory of work performance is a significant cornerstone of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, as it separates performance from its antecedent factors and outcome effects. According to Campbell (1990), job performance is characterised by behaviours individuals can manage that contribute, directly or indirectly, to the organisation's goals. Unlike productivity or organisational effectiveness, which are affected by contextual and environmental factors, performance primarily concerns the behaviours employees display in executing their work duties.

Campbell also argued that three closely related determinants shape individual performance: declarative knowledge (understanding necessary actions), procedural knowledge and skills (ability to carry out the task), and motivation (the inclination to apply effort).

Broader influences shape these factors, including personality, cognitive capacity, experience, organisational support, and training. Campbell's behavioural perspective marked a notable shift from earlier production-focused approaches by acknowledging that employees can possess the requisite knowledge and abilities yet exhibit varying performance levels because of motivational influences.

Subsequent enhancements by Campbell and Wiernik (2015) confirmed the behavioural aspect of performance while incorporating advancements from cognitive psychology, motivation theory, and competency studies.

Campbell and Wiernik's (2015) research established work performance as a multifaceted behavioural construct applicable across professions and organisational settings, thereby providing a solid theoretical basis for contemporary studies. Campbell initially identified eight comprehensive aspects of job performance that collectively capture the intricacies of employee behaviour across many occupational contexts. These characteristics include proficiency in job-specific tasks, competency in non-job-specific tasks, written and verbal communication, exhibiting effort, upholding personal discipline, enhancing peer and team performance, supervision or leadership, and management or administration. Instead of presuming that all professions necessitate the same behavioural attributes, Campbell contended that organisations ought to discern the specific combination of dimensions pertinent to a given position.

Campbell's framework emphasises that performance cannot be explained solely by employees' ability or intelligence; rather, it results from a complex interaction among competencies, motivation, and environmental conditions. This model has become one of the most influential behavioural theories underpinning contemporary performance management systems. Campbell's definition remains influential in organisational research, competency modelling, and HRM. Numerous subsequent researchers have built upon Campbell's behavioural conceptualisation, including Borman and Motowidlo (1997), Murphy (1989), Viswesvaran and Ones (2000), and Koopmans et al. (2011).

Contemporary studies continue to recognise Campbell's distinction between behaviour and outcomes as essential for developing valid measures of employee performance, as employees directly control behaviours. In contrast, external organisational factors may affect outcomes (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

Campbell posits that performance is multifaceted and influenced by three immediate factors: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skills, and motivation. These determinants interact to affect eight performance components: job-specific proficiency, communication, effort, discipline, teamwork, supervision, and management (Sonnentag & Frese, 2012). A significant advantage of Campbell's theory is its behavioural accuracy. Campbell's theory (2012, p. 164) proposes an eight-factor model to explain job performance factors across all jobs. The eight factors include job-specific technical skills; non-specific skills; written and oral communication; demonstrating effort; maintaining personal discipline; facilitating peer and team performance; supervisory or leadership roles; and managerial and administrative performance.

Table 5.1 summarises Campbell's eight-factor theory of job performance.

Table 5.1

Campbell's eight-factor theory of job performance

PERFORMANCE FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
1. Job-specific technical proficiency	Performance of technical activities unique to a particular occupation or job.
2. Non-job-specific task proficiency	Performance of activities that are not unique to one job but contribute to organisational functioning, such as mentoring or assisting colleagues.
3. Written and oral communication	Communicating information effectively through formal and informal verbal and written interactions with stakeholders.
4. Demonstrating effort	Maintaining persistence, commitment, motivation, and extra effort during routine and demanding work situations.
5. Maintaining personal discipline	Adhering to organisational rules, ethical standards, attendance requirements, and responsible workplace behaviour.
6. Facilitating peer and team performance	Supporting colleagues through coaching, mentoring, collaboration, role modelling, and knowledge sharing.

PERFORMANCE FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
7. Supervision and leadership	Providing direction, guidance, motivation, performance feedback, and support to subordinates.
8. Management and administration	Planning, organising, coordinating resources, monitoring progress, setting goals, and responding strategically to organisational demands.

Adapted from Campbell (2012) and Campbell and Wiernik (2015)

Campbell's performance theory distinguishes performance from outcomes and prevents interference from contextual variables, such as market volatility or technology malfunctions. This renders it theoretically sound for performance evaluation systems. Campbell's concept offers a universal taxonomy relevant to various occupations, enhancing its generalisability. Recent empirical research consistently corroborates Campbell's framework. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) confirm that knowledge, skill, and drive are fundamental predictors of performance across many occupations.

Moreover, Ployhart et al. (2023) discovered substantial evidence for multidimensional performance frameworks, particularly in intricate knowledge-based tasks. Critics contend that Campbell's theory is excessively individualistic. It prioritises internal factors while undervaluing external and relational impacts, including organisational culture, leadership, and social capital.

Hesketh and Neal (1999) criticise the approach for overlooking situational restrictions. This omission reduces explanatory power in modern workplaces defined by hybrid work, AI integration, and collaborative systems. The eight-factor structure may be difficult to operationalise empirically because characteristics overlap across functions. Therefore, although Campbell provides a robust basic theory, it may prove inadequate in dynamic sociotechnical contexts.

b. Murphy's theory

Murphy (1989) conceptualised work performance as the collection of behaviours that employees demonstrate over time while fulfilling organisational roles and responsibilities. Unlike earlier approaches that focused mainly on productivity outcomes, Murphy argued that performance should include multiple behavioural domains beyond formal job descriptions.

Murphy's (1989) definition acknowledged that effective employees contribute not only through task completion but also through interpersonal relationships, organisational citizenship, and responsible workplace conduct.

Murphy (1994) identified four aspects of work performance. Murphy (1994) introduced this four-dimensional concept in Dimensions of Job Performance. Murphy defined work performance as a multifaceted behavioural construct comprising task-oriented behaviours, interpersonal behaviours, downtime behaviours, and destructive or hazardous behaviours. This paradigm built upon his previous research (Murphy, 1989) by acknowledging that performance encompasses characteristics that either promote or obstruct organisational effectiveness.

First, task-oriented behaviours include the primary duties associated with a person's employment. Second, interpersonal-oriented behaviours are demonstrated in every interaction with coworkers. Both task-related and non-task-related ones are possible. Third, whether at work or off-site, downtime behaviours are the activities employees engage in during their spare time. Off-site downtime behaviours become work performance issues only when they subsequently affect performance, such as through absenteeism. The fourth dimension covers risky or destructive behaviours.

Table 5.2 summarises Murphy's (1994) four-dimensional model of work performance.

Table 5.2

Murphy's (1994) four-dimensional model of work performance

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	CONTRIBUTION TO INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE
1. **Task-oriented behaviours**	Behaviours directly associated with the technical duties and responsibilities specified in an employee's job. These activities contribute directly to accomplishing organisational goals.	Represents employees' ability to perform their core job responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	CONTRIBUTION TO INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE
2. Interpersonally oriented behaviours	Behaviours demonstrated during interactions with supervisors, colleagues, customers, and other stakeholders. These behaviours may be task-related or social in nature.	Promotes teamwork, communication, cooperation, conflict management, and positive workplace relationships.
3. Downtime behaviours	Activities undertaken during periods when employees are not directly engaged in work tasks, either within or outside the workplace. These behaviours matter when they affect work performance, such as absenteeism, lateness, fatigue, or reduced readiness for work.	Recognises that non-work activities may indirectly influence employee productivity, attendance, and work readiness.
4. Destructive or hazardous behaviours	Behaviours that undermine organisational effectiveness, including absenteeism, rule violations, unsafe work practices, workplace conflict, misconduct, and other counterproductive actions.	Highlights behaviours that reduce organisational productivity, increase organisational risk, and negatively affect workplace functioning.
5. Downtime behaviours	Activities undertaken during periods when employees are not directly engaged in work tasks, either within or outside the workplace. These behaviours matter when they affect work performance, such as absenteeism, lateness, fatigue, or reduced readiness for work.	Recognises that non-work activities may indirectly influence employee productivity, attendance, and work readiness.

PERFORMANCE DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	CONTRIBUTION TO INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE
6. Destructive or hazardous behaviours	Behaviours that undermine organisational effectiveness, including absenteeism, rule violations, unsafe work practices, workplace conflict, misconduct, and other counterproductive actions.	Highlights behaviours that reduce organisational productivity, increase organisational risk, and negatively affect workplace functioning.

Adapted from Murphy (1994).

Murphy proposed that work performance evolves across different stages of employment. His framework laid the foundation for later multidimensional performance models, including those proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1997), Campbell (1990), and Koopmans et al. (2011).

Murphy's emphasis on behavioural dimensions continues to inform organisational performance appraisal systems and competency frameworks used across public and private sectors. Murphy's contribution is in acknowledging that performance encompasses more than mere productive actions. In contrast to Campbell, Murphy recognises "negative performance" (e.g., sabotage, absenteeism, workplace deviance), demonstrating a more accurate comprehension of workplace behaviour. The model is especially significant, as it incorporates the social dimension of performance. Interpersonal skills, including cooperation and emotional management, are becoming increasingly essential in service and knowledge economies.

Salgado et al. (2022) corroborate Murphy's assertion that interpersonal skills forecast team efficacy and innovation. Murphy's theory is commended for incorporating counterproductive work behaviour well ahead of its mainstream acceptance in organisational psychology.

This renders it pertinent to research on burnout, toxic leadership, and disengagement. Notwithstanding its merits, Murphy's hypothesis has significant drawbacks. Critics contend that the categories are conceptually expansive and lack the structural precision inherent in Campbell's theory. For example, "downtime behaviour" remains inadequately defined and is difficult to quantify accurately. Koopmans et al. (2014) contend that Murphy's dimensions exhibit diminished psychometric precision for modern performance assessment.

Another critique is that Murphy's model may over-pathologise employees' conduct by treating downtime or informal socialisation as potentially relevant to performance (Koopmans et al., 2014). In contemporary corporate behaviour, informal contacts frequently enhance creativity and psychological safety. Consequently, Murphy's approach broadens the performance debate while compromising measurement precision.

c. Koopmans' theory

Koopmans et al. (2011) substantially enhanced work performance theory by amalgamating prior conceptualisations into an extensive, multidimensional framework encompassing task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. Unlike earlier models that focused mainly on technical task execution (Campbell, 1990) or contextual behaviours (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997), Koopmans et al. recognised that effective employee performance in contemporary organisations also depends on adaptability and on preventing behaviours that undermine organisational effectiveness. This thorough perspective encapsulates the realities of knowledge-centric, technology-oriented, and rapidly evolving work environments.

Koopmans et al. (2014) integrate previous models developed by Campbell and Borman and Motowidlo, recognising that contemporary organisations require employees to adapt consistently to technical, organisational, and environmental transformations. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) argue that adaptability has become a crucial element of work performance, as fluid organisational contexts require employees to adjust their behaviours, develop new skills, and effectively address changing job requirements. These developments show the shift from behavioural frameworks to cohesive, multidimensional theories that offer a more comprehensive understanding of employee performance.

Koopmans et al. (2011, 2014) established the individual work performance model to consolidate and streamline existing performance theories. The model specifies three dimensions: task execution, contextual, and counterproductive work behaviour. This theory integrates Campbell's behavioural specificity with Murphy's broader inclusivity into a more concise framework. Its most significant contribution is measurement. Koopmans et al. developed validated psychometric instruments to evaluate IWP, making the concept extremely useful in empirical research. It is especially beneficial in HR analytics, employee engagement research, and occupational health investigations. Recent studies strongly support the model.

According to Koopmans et al. (2014), individual performance is a multifaceted construct, viewed through the lenses of process and result. Task, contextual, and adaptive performance are further separated. These performance dimensions can be distinguished both cognitively and practically, and they differ in their causes and effects. Since individual performance is a key factor in significant organisational decisions, performance monitoring is essential.

This conceptual framework identified four aspects of IWP in a systematic review (Koopmans et al., 2011), namely task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive behaviour.

i) imensions of work performance

- Task performance refers to the primary job responsibilities delegated to employees. Job knowledge encompasses quantity, quality, correctness, neatness, planning and organisation, decision-making, administration, problem-solving, oral and written communication, resource monitoring and control, and current knowledge (Koopmans et al., 2011). Contextual performance refers to employees' behaviours that support the social, psychological, and organisational environment in which they carry out their main activities. (Koopmans et al., 2011). These behaviours include effort, initiative, attention to duty, excitement, resourcefulness, motivation, dedication, persistence, proactivity, inventiveness, interaction with people and their assistance, communication, civility, interpersonal connections, and organisational commitment.
- Adaptive performance refers to an individual’s ability to adjust to changes in their work environment or job role.
- It involves adapting plans and objectives to the circumstances, generating creative new ideas, acquiring new tasks and technologies, understanding other people and cultures, being adaptable and receptive, demonstrating resilience, conducting rapid analysis, remaining composed, and acting appropriately (Koopmans et al., 2011).
- Counterproductive work behaviour is viewed as harmful to the organisation’s health. Off-task behaviour, presenteeism, excessive breaks, absenteeism, inaccurate task performance, tardiness, accidents, gossiping or insulting coworkers, confrontations or arguments with coworkers, abuse of privileges, theft, disrespect for safety, aggressiveness, and substance abuse are all included (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Table 5.3 summarises the dimensions of work performance by Koopmans et al. (2011).

Table 5.3

Koopmans et al. (2011) dimensions of work performance

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURS	CONTRIBUTION TO WORK PERFORMANCE
Task performance	Behaviours directly related to the technical core of a job and the successful execution of prescribed duties and responsibilities.	Job knowledge, quality and quantity of work, accuracy, planning and organising, decision-making, problem-solving, administration, oral and written communication, and resource monitoring and control.	Enables employees to achieve job objectives efficiently and contributes directly to organisational productivity and effectiveness.
Contextual performance	Discretionary behaviours that support the social, psychological, and organisational environment in which task performance occurs.	Initiative, persistence, motivation, dedication, enthusiasm, cooperation, helping colleagues, organisational commitment, interpersonal communication, civility, and teamwork.	Strengthens organisational climate, collaboration, employee engagement, and organisational citizenship, thereby supporting overall organisational effectiveness.
Adaptive performance	The ability to adjust effectively to changing work demands, technologies, organisational environments, and unexpected situations.	Learning new technologies, adapting work plans, solving novel problems, creativity, resilience, flexibility, cultural awareness, emotional stability, and responding appropriately to change.	Improves organisational agility, innovation, resilience, and employees' ability to perform effectively in dynamic work environments.

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURS	CONTRIBUTION TO WORK PERFORMANCE
Counterproductive work behaviour	Voluntary behaviours that harm the organisation, its employees, or organisational objectives.	Absenteeism, presenteeism, excessive breaks, lateness, poor-quality work, safety violations, theft, workplace aggression, interpersonal conflict, substance abuse, gossip, and misuse of organisational resources.	Reduces productivity, increases organisational costs, undermines teamwork, and negatively affects organisational performance and employee well-being.

Adapted from Koopmans et al. (2011)

The Koopmans et al. model has been criticised for its descriptive rather than explanatory nature. Unlike Campbell's theory, it does not explain why performance varies; it only classifies it. This diminishes its theoretical profundity. Critics, including Sonnentag et al. (2022), argue that it serves more as a measurement framework than a causal theory. Moreover, its reliance on self-report instruments introduces social desirability bias, particularly when evaluating unproductive behaviours. Consequently, the Koopmans et al. model provides practical utility but lacks theoretical depth.

Pradhan and Jena (2017, p. 6) developed a patriarchal model of work performance consisting of task, contextual, and adaptive performance. Task performance focuses on job-related behaviours, such as the responsibilities, knowledge, and skills required to complete the job. Contextual performance focuses on behaviours that help others to adapt to their jobs. Individuals are expected to perform in particular ways, such as being cooperative, even if those behaviours are not specified in job descriptions. Adaptive performance involves adapting to the job.

5.5 MEASUREMENT OF WORK PERFORMANCE

The IWPQ has demonstrated strong psychometric properties across numerous occupational groups and countries, making it well suited to organisational research and evidence-based HRM (Koopmans et al., 2014).

It proposes that employee performance comprises four interrelated behavioural dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

5.5.1 Task performance

Task performance refers to how effectively employees perform activities formally recognised as part of their job descriptions and that contribute directly to the organisation's technical core (Koopmans et al., 2011). This includes behaviours such as accurately completing assigned duties, meeting quality standards, achieving work objectives, applying professional knowledge, and managing work responsibilities efficiently. Task performance reflects the employee's technical competence, expertise, and ability to fulfil formal organisational expectations. Unlike productivity measures that focus solely on outputs, task performance emphasises the quality and proficiency of employee behaviours.

Several factors influence task performance, including knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, job resources, and organisational support. According to Campbell (1990), declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and motivation collectively determine employees' ability to perform job-specific tasks successfully. Contemporary research similarly demonstrates that servant leadership, employee engagement, and psychological empowerment positively predict task performance, as engaged employees invest greater cognitive, emotional, and physical energy in their work. Employees with high task performance consistently achieve organisational objectives while maintaining quality and efficiency.

Dalal et al (2020) indicate that task performance remains the strongest predictor of individual productivity and organisational effectiveness across occupational settings. However, scholars increasingly argue that task performance alone is insufficient for evaluating employee effectiveness because modern organisations require employees to demonstrate adaptability, teamwork, and innovation. Consequently, Koopmans' framework integrates task performance with contextual, adaptive, and counterproductive dimensions to provide a more comprehensive assessment of employee contributions.

5.5.2 Contextual performance

Contextual performance refers to voluntary behaviours that contribute to the organisational, social, and psychological environment in which technical work is performed (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Koopmans et al., 2011). These behaviours extend beyond formal job descriptions and include helping colleagues, demonstrating organisational citizenship, volunteering for additional responsibilities, cooperating with supervisors, supporting organisational initiatives, and promoting positive workplace relationships. Contextual performance strengthens organisational functioning by building collaboration, trust, and cohesion. Unlike task performance, contextual performance is discretionary rather than formally prescribed. Employees are not contractually obligated to engage in many contextual behaviours; instead, these actions reflect intrinsic motivation, organisational commitment, and positive psychological states.

Roberts (2021) noted that research consistently shows servant leadership encourages contextual performance by fostering trust, empowerment, ethical behaviour, and employee well-being. Similarly, highly engaged employees willingly exceed minimum job requirements by supporting colleagues, sharing knowledge, and contributing to organisational improvement initiatives. Contemporary organisations increasingly value contextual performance because teamwork, collaboration, and knowledge sharing are essential for organisational competitiveness. Globalisation, cross-functional teamwork, and digital collaboration require employees to communicate effectively, build relationships, and contribute positively to organisational culture. Consequently, contextual performance has become a critical indicator of employee effectiveness within knowledge-intensive and service-oriented organisations.

5.5.3 Adaptive performance

Adaptive performance refers to employees' ability to adjust effectively to changing work demands, technologies, organisational structures, customer expectations, and environmental uncertainty (Koopmans et al., 2011; Pulakos et al., 2015). This dimension has become increasingly important in contemporary workplaces characterised by digital transformation, AI, remote work, and continuous organisational change. Adaptive employees embrace new technologies, acquire new competencies, solve unfamiliar problems, and remain resilient under changing conditions.

Adaptive performance encompasses several behavioural capabilities, including learning new skills, handling emergencies, responding effectively to change, managing uncertainty, demonstrating resilience, and maintaining effectiveness during organisational transformation. Employees who perform adaptively exhibit flexibility, creativity, emotional intelligence, and learning agility. Research grounded in the JD-R theory indicates that engaged employees with access to adequate organisational resources are more likely to demonstrate adaptive performance, as they experience greater psychological resilience and intrinsic motivation.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of adaptive performance, as employees worldwide were required to transition rapidly to remote work, digital communication platforms, and new organisational processes (Weible et al., 2020). Organisations increasingly seek employees capable of continuous learning and innovation, making adaptive performance one of the fastest-growing dimensions of contemporary work performance research. Consequently, adaptive performance represents a critical competitive capability for organisations operating in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments.

5.5.4 Counterproductive work behaviour

Counterproductive work behaviour refers to intentional employee behaviours that harm organisational effectiveness, organisational resources, or colleagues' well-being (Koopmans et al., 2011). Unlike the previous three positive performance dimensions, counterproductive work behaviour represents behaviours that reduce organisational productivity, damage interpersonal relationships, and increase organisational costs. Examples include absenteeism, lateness, workplace aggression, bullying, theft, sabotage, misuse of organisational resources, withholding effort, and deliberate violations of organisational procedures. Koopmans et al. recognised that evaluating only positive employee behaviours provides an incomplete understanding of work performance. Employees may achieve high levels of task performance while simultaneously engaging in behaviours that undermine organisational functioning.

Consequently, including counterproductive work behaviour provides a more balanced and comprehensive assessment of employee effectiveness. Kayani and Alasan (2021) Research indicates that counterproductive work behaviours are influenced by poor leadership, organisational injustice, burnout, low engagement, breaches of the psychological contract, and toxic workplace cultures. Servant leadership and employee engagement have consistently been associated with lower levels of counterproductive work behaviour.

Ethical leaders create psychologically safe environments characterised by fairness, trust, and organisational support, thereby reducing employees' motivation to engage in harmful behaviours.

Similarly, engaged employees feel more emotionally attached to their organisations and are therefore less likely to engage in absenteeism, withdrawal, or workplace deviance. Measuring counterproductive work behaviour alongside positive behavioural dimensions enables organisations to identify developmental needs and implement targeted interventions to improve organisational performance.

A recent study evaluating the Koopmans et al. model found that the IWP framework demonstrates cross-cultural reliability and validity across several sectors. It also validated its efficacy in South African organisational settings, especially for analysing engagement–performance correlations. Another advantage is its adaptation to contemporary work environments. Its clear inclusion of contextual performance and counterproductive work conduct aligns with the realities of remote work, where self-regulation and citizenship practices are paramount.

5.6 PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVES

This section covers several performance perspectives, including national, organisational, HR, and individual perspectives.

5.6.1 Performance from a national perspective

Recent global research indicates that national competitiveness relies on the interplay of governmental efficiency, corporate efficacy, infrastructure, and economic success, rather than solely on financial metrics. The IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2025 identifies government efficiency as a crucial factor in long-term national competitiveness, highlighting that nimble public institutions, effective governance, innovation, and institutional resilience help nations better navigate economic volatility and social challenges.

Despite South Africa's strengths in financial markets and institutional capacity, the 2025 report underscores ongoing structural challenges, including unemployment, infrastructure constraints, public debt, and governance effectiveness, that hinder economic growth and organisational productivity. These findings underscore that sustainable national success

requires cohesive improvements in public-sector leadership, organisational capabilities, personnel performance, and institutional effectiveness, rather than discrete financial adjustments.

Government is primarily concerned with national performance. Government is primarily concerned with national performance. According to Abhayawansa et al (2021), Government performance extends beyond achieving departmental targets to encompass national competitiveness, sustainable economic growth, effective governance, and the creation of public value. Various legislative frameworks, such as the Employment Equity Act, guide organisational and employee performance across government departments. These frameworks recognise both the financial and non-financial dimensions of performance and provide directives and guidelines for implementing performance management systems across departments.

5.6.2 Work performance from an organisational perspective

Performance management has similarly transitioned from periodic performance appraisal to ongoing performance development. Cappelli and Tavis (2016) argued that many organisations have abandoned conventional annual performance evaluations because they often fail to address rapidly evolving job roles, project-oriented tasks, and shifting organisational priorities. Organisations are increasingly prioritising frequent performance discussions, coaching, ongoing feedback, and employee development over relying solely on annual evaluations. Recent evidence supports this shift, showing that continuous performance management improves goal clarity, employee growth, organisational adaptability, and engagement, especially in hybrid and knowledge-intensive work settings. Organisations are reconfiguring performance management systems to deliver consistent developmental feedback while aligning individual performance with organisational strategy, enhancing both employee capability and organisational performance.

5.6.3 Work performance from a human resources perspective

Performance measurement considers the degree of work specificity needed as well as the variation among raters. Most scholars and professionals have faith in job performance measures; the distinction lies in who completes them – peers, superiors, employees, or subordinates. In recent decades, researchers have used different metrics to quantify job performance (Campbell, 1990; Viswesvaran et al., 1996).

For example, researchers have evaluated work performance using rating scales, job knowledge examinations, practical job samples, and archival data (Campbell, 1990).

The most measured job performance indicators include peer and supervisor performance ratings (Viswesvaran et al., 1996). “Objective” criteria, such as production records and sales numbers, are frequently demanded.

Job analysis has been used extensively to identify the elements measured in work performance. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) assert that work performance is a multifaceted concept with multiple manifestations. While these manifestations may vary from one job to another, the construct's dimensions may be universal. For instance, although communication can be used in a variety of contexts, its expression may differ by job, with specific behaviours identified, possibly through a job analysis.

The evaluation of work performance characteristics has depended mainly on raters’ subjective assessments or objective counts of specific actions or outputs kept in organisational records. One standard method for assessing performance is performance management.

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According to Roul et al. (2024), the digital revolution of HRM has shifted the HR function from administrative support to a strategic business partner that directly enhances organisational performance. Modern HR technologies, such as AI, cloud-based human resource information systems (HRIS), employee self-service platforms, and workforce analytics, automate routine administrative tasks, allowing HR professionals to concentrate on strategic priorities like talent management, workforce planning, employee development, and organisational capability Digital HR solutions boost decision-making, improve operational efficiency, and facilitate evidence-based human resource practices by producing timely, data-driven insights that bolster organisational performance.

Recent research advises that technology should enhance, not supplant, professional judgement, especially in critical HR functions like recruitment, performance management, and employee relations, where transparency, fairness, and ethical oversight are paramount (Stone et al., 2024; International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2025).

Training and development programs are essential human resource strategies that improve employees' knowledge, skills, competences, and job performance. Modern HRM acknowledges that staff development enhances not only individual performance but also organisational adaptation, creativity, and sustained competitiveness (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2020).

As a result, organisations are increasingly incorporating training into performance management systems to identify competency gaps, support ongoing learning, and strengthen staff capabilities. Mohangi & Nyika (2023) posit that performance appraisal remains an essential component of organisational governance and human resource decision-making. Objective, well-documented performance data supports recruiting, promotion, compensation, succession planning, and employee development while reducing the risk of inconsistent or biased employment decisions. Modern human resource researchers advocate that businesses uphold transparent performance standards, standardised evaluation processes, and evidence-based documentation to ensure procedural fairness, legal defensibility, and accountability. Rather than abolishing performance assessments, businesses are progressively reconfiguring them to prioritise ongoing feedback, employee development, and evidence-based decision-making, while adhering to employment legislation and organisational governance standards.

The performance management system guides the process followed in assessing performance in the workplace. According to Ramawickrama et al. (2017), the learning process and other long-term changes are the two elements that contribute to an individual’s performance variability over time. It also reflects brief shifts in performance. Furthermore, job performance is a subjective concept that varies by individual perspective.

In the South African public sector, a formal framework regulates employee performance to enhance accountability, service delivery, and organisational effectiveness. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA, 2018) mandates a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) for both Senior Management Service (SMS) and non-SMS employees. For SMS members, performance assessment is based on three interconnected elements: individual employee performance, organisational performance as evaluated against the department's Annual Performance Plan (APP), and the Auditor-General's conclusions and audit opinion. This comprehensive approach reflects the view that senior managers should be evaluated not only on personal accomplishments but also on their contributions to departmental strategic goals, programme results, and effective governance. Thus, performance management in the public sector transcends individual accountability to include organisational performance and the generation of public value (DPSA, 2018).

The PMDS underscores the methodical management of performance for non-SMS employees through performance agreements, ongoing monitoring, formal evaluations, and regular assessments (DPSA, 2018). These methods aim to match individual responsibilities with organisational aims while fostering fairness, transparency, and developmental feedback.

5.6.4 Performance from an individual perspective

Sonnentag and Frese (2012) introduced three complementary viewpoints for comprehending individual job performance: the individual differences perspective, the situational perspective, and the performance regulation perspective. This framework acknowledges that work performance is shaped by the interplay among individual traits, work environments, and self-regulatory mechanisms, rather than by a single factor. The individual differences perspective deals with individual differences. For example, individuals' capacities, including personality, cognitive ability, motivation, and professional experience, may affect job performance. Additionally, some performance improvement programmes, such as exploring specific experiences and training programmes, enable individuals to enhance their job performance.

The situational perspective examines environmental factors that stimulate, support, or hinder performance. Naseer et al. (2020) argue that Job characteristics, role stressors, and situational constraints can all affect an individual's job performance. Given the dynamic nature of job performance, organisations can implement new job-design activities. The performance regulation perspective focuses on the performance process and conceptualises it as an active process. However, this perspective considers organisational-level activities to enhance job performance, such as goal setting, training, job design, behaviour modification, improving the action process, and feedback interventions. In addition, job performance can be improved by identifying its dynamic nature (Sonnentag & Frese, 2012).

Recent studies indicate that psychological capital, learning agility, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and digital competence are increasingly vital factors influencing performance in contemporary workplaces marked by technological advancements and hybrid work models (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). These findings indicate that organisations should invest in ongoing learning, coaching, and personnel development to build the competencies needed for sustainable performance.

5.6.5 Antecedents of work performance

At the individual level, employee competence, cognitive capacity, self-efficacy, motivation, psychological capital, and employee engagement are significant precursors of work performance.

Campbell et al. (1993) argued that performance is influenced by declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and motivation, whereas Bandura (1997) showed that employees with higher self-efficacy are more likely to persevere in the face of challenges, acquire new skills, and achieve exceptional performance. Recent studies indicate that psychological capital, which includes hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, improves employee adaptation, tenacity, and performance by bolstering psychological resources (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Employee engagement enhances performance by augmenting individuals' physical, cognitive, and emotional commitment to their job tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Job characteristics significantly influence work performance. The Job Characteristics Model posits that skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and promote performance by fostering meaningful and motivating work experiences (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Current evidence supports this view, showing that role clarity, performance feedback, learning opportunities, and job autonomy enhance employee engagement and performance, especially in knowledge-intensive and hybrid work settings (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In contrast, an excessive workload, unclear roles, and limited resources diminish employees' ability to function successfully and heighten the risk of burnout.

At the organisational level, leadership, organisational culture, perceived organisational support, equity, and resource accessibility are widely recognised as precursors to job performance. JD–R theory posits that job resources, such as supportive leadership, social support, autonomy, coaching, and developmental opportunities, boost employee motivation and performance while mitigating the adverse effects of excessive job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Social exchange theory asserts that employees who recognise organisational support, procedural justice, and equitable treatment are more inclined to reciprocate with increased commitment, engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and work performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). High-quality leader–member interactions, defined by trust, mutual respect, and consistent feedback, have been linked to enhanced individual performance and organisational effectiveness (Martin et al., 2016).

From a South African perspective, contextual factors such as organisational transformation, diversity and inclusion, skills shortages, economic volatility, and evolving work habits also affect job performance (Madikizela, 2022). These contextual conditions require organisations to balance performance demands with employee well-being, psychological safety, and equitable access to developmental opportunities. Employees are more likely to show higher levels of task and contextual performance when organisational contexts foster inclusivity, trust, meaningful engagement, and effective leadership. Conversely, unequal treatment, restricted career advancement, ineffective leadership, and insufficient organisational support may reduce motivation, discretionary effort, and sustained performance.

5.6.6 Outcomes of work performance

The results of individual work performance affect not only organisational productivity but also employee well-being, team efficacy, organisational sustainability, and social advancement. Modern industrial and organisational psychology defines job performance as a multifaceted construct that produces results at the individual, team, organisational, and societal levels. Elevated levels of task, contextual, and adaptive performance are consistently linked to enhanced employee engagement, career advancement, innovation, organisational citizenship behaviour, customer satisfaction, and organisational efficacy. Conversely, subpar performance correlates with absenteeism, turnover intentions, burnout, diminished psychological well-being, and counterproductive work behaviours (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Koopmans et al., 2014).

At both the team and organisational levels, work performance enhances cooperation, innovation, service quality, organisational resilience, and sustained competitive advantage. Bailey et al. (2017) contend that employee performance must be evaluated at several levels, encompassing individual job performance, extra-role or contextual performance, and organisational outcomes.

Pradhan and Jena (2017) illustrated that good work performance encompasses not only technical skills but also teamwork, organisational commitment, interpersonal relationships, and discretionary behaviours that enhance organisational effectiveness. These findings align with social exchange theory, which posits that employees reciprocate supportive organisational practices by showing greater commitment, organisational citizenship conduct, and performance.

A recent study highlights the significance of employee voice, innovation, and psychologically secure work settings as both consequences and enablers of sustained performance. Organisations that promote open communication, cooperation, and involvement are more inclined to cultivate innovative work practices, organisational learning, and ongoing improvement.

Psychological safety allows employees to express ideas, report mistakes, and question unproductive procedures without fear of repercussions, therefore enhancing both individual and organisational performance (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). The findings indicate that modern success should be recognised not merely as achieving established goals but also as employees' ability to enhance organisational adaptability, learning, and creativity.

Interpersonal interactions significantly influence performance outcomes. While workplace conflict and inadequate interpersonal interactions can diminish employee effectiveness, supportive communication, mutual trust, cooperation, equitable treatment, and information sharing foster collaboration and enhance both individual and team performance (Idowu et al., 2017). Similarly, followership research indicates that active involvement and constructive participation correlate positively with work performance, whereas proactive followers enhance team dynamics and organisational efficacy (Novikov, 2016). These findings support the view that job performance is inherently relational and arises from interactions among people, leaders, and the organisation—systems rather than individual effort alone.

Work performance outcomes in South Africa extend beyond organisational productivity, influencing both individual and societal outcomes. Higher job performance correlates with greater engagement, employability, innovation, career progression, and organisational sustainability, whereas lower performance fosters burnout, disengagement, turnover intentions, and diminished psychological well-being (Maake et al., 2021). Significantly, South African evidence demonstrates that employee voice and innovation-supportive climates enhance inventive work behaviour, suggesting that performance outcomes increasingly rely on businesses fostering cultures that promote participation over conformity.

Work performance should be understood as a socio-organisational competence resulting from interactions among structural conditions, employee agency, and institutional settings.

Future studies in South Africa should shift from performance measurement to analysing sustainable performance ecosystems encompassing wellness, inclusivity, and organisational effectiveness (Botha & Steyn, 2022). Performance outcomes include organisational, team, and individual-level outcomes. The individual focus is on task, extra-role, and counterproductive performance. (Bailey et al., 2017, p. 40).

Novikov (2016, p. 21) found differences in job and workgroup performance between exemplary and pragmatist followers. The results also show correlations between active engagement in individual and job and workgroup performance, and between the critical thinking dimension of followership and job performance. The study found no statistically significant correlation between critical thinking and workgroup performance. These results suggest the need for future empirical research on followership styles and dimensions, as well as their relationship to job and organisational performance.

5.7 INTEGRATION OF LITERATURE

This section covers two areas: biographical differences and the relationships between the research constructs.

5.7.1 Biographical differences

This study considered various biographical information, namely gender, age, education, experience, and race.

5.7.1.1 Gender

Gender emerged as an influential factor in leadership and followership, affecting employment opportunities and employee engagement. According to Pace & Sciotto (2021), gender differences exist in engagement constructs such as job security, career development, work–life balance, and well-being. Male employees have consistently demonstrated higher engagement scores than female employees. However, women face challenges such as the glass ceiling, career development stereotyping, physical and mental abuse, and an inadequate feminine working environment, affecting their engagement.

Generally, women are expected to occupy follower roles rather than leader roles. According to Kubu (2018), women in leadership roles might be perceived as less suited for these roles. When complying with leader-role expectations, they were evaluated less favourably than men. The incongruity between the female gender role and the leader role might decrease in the future. However, even when the leader role does not incorporate feminine characteristics, female leaders still face the consequences of role conflict. Kubu (2018) focused on females as followers and leaders. Rink et al. (2019) examined gender differences in how much leaders' perceptions of successor potential are influenced by interpersonal fit.

The results showed that male leaders emphasise social similarities and fit when selecting prospective successors, a key contributor to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. This suggests that males were more likely than females to see other males as successors. Recommendations to advance women should recognise the value of gender equity for the entire workforce and adopt a more systematic and inclusive HR approach. In addition, organisations should provide developmental and networking opportunities to all junior employees and hold upper management accountable for their sponsorship activities and the resulting career advancement opportunities afforded to specific followers (Rink et al., 2019).

Servant leadership is closely linked to feminine leadership traits, including empathy, nurturing, and active listening. This has prompted several experts to contend that women may inherently exhibit servant leadership traits. Nonetheless, essentialist interpretations have faced criticism for perpetuating prejudices. Current gender research indicates that servant leadership effectiveness depends on behavioural competence rather than gender. Recent research indicates that both male and female executives may successfully implement servant leadership to enhance engagement and performance outcomes (Adnan et al, 2025).

Yu and Feng (2024) clarify that expectations affect followers' behaviour regarding followership and job performance. Women often engage in collaborative followership, while men typically display more assertive or autonomous behaviours. These differences influence performance evaluations and often introduce bias into performance appraisal systems. Recent evidence suggests that women generally outperform in contextual performance, although men often obtain better results in task-related metrics, underscoring enduring organisational gender norms. Thus, gender remains a significant, though increasingly flexible, determinant of workplace behaviour.

5.7.1.2 Age

A growing body of research has explored the impact of age on leadership and followership perspectives. Employers and entrepreneurs must attract and retain individuals across generations by understanding their employees' talents and interactions with others (Pandita, 2022). Leadership studies often report a leader's age. Often, these studies involve leaders self-assessing their styles, rather than studies in which followers rate their leaders.

However, several extensive sample studies exist in which followers rated leadership. The overall findings of this body of literature seem almost stereotypical. Older leaders tend to be rated higher on leadership dimensions such as being calm, conservative, considerate, cooperative, and deferential to authority. Younger leaders tend to be rated higher for being energetic, exciting, and friendly, but they tend to emphasise short-term results, focus on production, and be somewhat self-focused.

Trenerry et al. (2021) argue that, at the individual level, factors such as gender, age, personality, education, job type/tasks, and experience/skill levels are likely to play a role in digital transformation outcomes. These outcomes include job satisfaction, productivity, and task performance, as well as work-related well-being, stress, organisational commitment, and turnover. An employee's age significantly affects individual work performance. The relationship between age and employee engagement is intricate, encompassing aspects of servant leadership, followership, and job performance. Senior employees often show greater engagement because of career stability, emotional maturity, and stronger organisational commitment. Millennial and Gen Z employees often emphasise autonomy, a sense of significance, and opportunities for advancement, which may influence engagement differently.

Recent findings from South Africa indicate that engagement increases with age, a pattern attributed to enhanced emotional regulation and resilience (Maake, 2025). In servant leadership environments, senior leaders may exhibit stronger servant behaviours because of their accumulated expertise and interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, emerging leaders are progressively embracing servant leadership to address evolving workplace demands for empathy and collaboration. Critics warn against age stereotypes, arguing that leadership effectiveness depends more on adaptation than on chronological age.

Research indicates that servant leadership enhances involvement across age groups; however, generational inclinations diminish its efficacy (Dalain, 2023). Age influences learning agility, technological adaptability, and role maturity in relation to followership and job performance. Junior employees may perform better in innovation-focused roles, while senior employees often excel in consistency and organisational citizenship behaviours. Intergenerational teams flourish when roles are assigned according to individual strengths. Thus, age diversity can enhance performance when managed effectively.

5.7.1.3 Education

Level of education emerged as an important factor influencing the experiences of both leaders and followers. (Ha-Vikström & Takala, 2018) identified education as one of the most extensively studied predictor variables, supported by numerous meta-analyses. Few studies have reported associations between education and leadership. These studies generally indicate that effective leadership behaviours also increase with education.

Education is related to the relationship between employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance. Educational attainment affects employee engagement by establishing expectations for development, independence, and purposeful work. Employees with advanced education often pursue developmental opportunities and may become disengaged when their roles do not fully utilise their skills. In contrast, lower educational attainment may be associated with higher task dedication but reduced strategic engagement. Recent studies in South Africa indicate a favourable correlation between education and engagement, particularly in contexts where performance systems incentivise competence (Maake, 2025).

Servant leadership is particularly effective among highly educated individuals, as it promotes empowerment and autonomy. Informed followers often respond well to collaborative decision-making. Critics contend that servant leadership may be less effective in technologically advanced settings where expertise-driven leadership is preferred over relational leadership. Recent evidence suggests that servant leadership improves engagement and innovation among educated knowledge workers (Dalain, 2023).

Education influences the calibre of followership and the efficacy of work performance. Enhanced educational attainment correlates with astute followership, proactive problem-solving, and adaptable performance.

However, overqualification may reduce motivation and increase turnover intentions. Thus, the correlation between education and performance is non-linear and dependent on the congruence between individual capabilities and job demands.

5.7.1.4 Experience

Experience plays a significant role in determining work performance. Guzzo et al. (2022) report a positive correlation between tenure and unit performance. In addition, they emphasise that organisations with full-time employment that build tenure are advantaged over competitors opting for part-time or contract workforces, even when those may have many years of work experience. This implies that limited experience reduces performance.

Professional experience often improves engagement by increasing knowledge, confidence, and role clarity. Experienced employees generally have more organisational embeddedness; yet prolonged tenure without advancement may reduce engagement. Research shows that tenure positively correlates with engagement until stagnation sets in. Experience enhances coping mechanisms in reaction to increased job demands. Servant leadership is particularly important for experienced workers, as it emphasises trust, recognition, and developmental support. Leaders who acknowledge staff competencies can enhance reciprocal commitment. However, experienced personnel may resist servant leadership if they perceive it as lacking decisiveness.

5.7.1.5 Race

Individuals may be treated differently because of racial differences. Wyper (2014) notes that racism is, in some instances, ignored or denied, while in others, individuals are absolved of responsibility based on their race. Furthermore, racism often intersects with other forms of oppression, including those related to religion, class, sexual orientation, and disability, reflecting the complex nature of human identity. Race is therefore a significant biographical variable in organisational behaviour research, as it influences employees' experiences, access to opportunities, and attitudes of inclusion. Studies have also shown that racial identity significantly affects employee engagement, particularly in historically unequal labour markets such as South Africa.

Employees from historically marginalised racial groups frequently indicate lower engagement levels in environments characterised by inadequate organisational justice, representation, and inclusivity. This corresponds with social identity theory, which posits that group affiliation influences emotional and cognitive engagement in work. Recent research by Gallup (2025) indicates that inclusion and a sense of belonging are increasingly associated with higher engagement across diverse settings.

From a servant leadership perspective, race affects how leadership behaviours are perceived and received. Servant leaders exhibiting fairness, empathy, and cultural intelligence can alleviate racial tensions and promote psychological safety.

Recent empirical research demonstrates that servant leadership improves employee trust and engagement among many ethnic groups; however, contextual variables such as institutional racism may diminish these effects (Hu, 2025). Race influences power dynamics and role expectations concerning followership and work performance. Employees from minority groups may demonstrate passive followership when organisational environments suppress vocal expression. In contrast, inclusive racial environments enhance proactive followership and task performance. Research on career mobility indicates that racial inequities continue to exist in promotions and performance recognition, especially for Black professionals, despite equivalent qualifications (Achananuparp et al., 2025).

5.7.2 Relationship between constructs

5.7.2.1 Employee engagement

Employee engagement is a crucial determinant of the organisation’s competitive advantage. Pandita (2022) examined how these factors influence employee performance and well-being in the workplace. Recognised factors influencing engagement include communication, work–life balance, and leadership. Moreover, employee participation is part of the organisation’s culture. Employee engagement emphasises ongoing learning, enhancement, and proactive measures. Consequently, companies must diligently endeavour to meet employee expectations and cultivate an environment that emphasises employee performance, thereby influencing the organisation's overall performance (Pandita, 2022).

Rana et al. (2019) explored the relationship between engagement and higher-level performance outcomes. The findings indicate that sustaining and increasing employee engagement enhances employee performance and overall business performance, yielding a more robust competitive advantage. Rana et al. (2019, p. 28) assert that engaged personnel are more likely to perform better than their disengaged counterparts, resulting in enhanced organisational growth and success. This happens as individuals strive to stay engaged, build strong working relationships, and perform at a high level.

Consequently, higher engagement levels increase employees' capacity to improve performance and cultivate dedication, loyalty, productivity, and sustainability. Furthermore, sustaining and strengthening employee engagement improves performance and strengthens competitive advantage.

According to Rana et al. (2019), the literature confirming the link between engagement and performance remains limited. Consequently, they advocated additional research to investigate the correlation between employee engagement and employee performance. Subsequent studies may offer multiple interpretations of the correlation between engagement and several dimensions of performance, encompassing task, contextual, and counterproductive performance. The investigation could also determine whether engagement influences all types of work performance, including task, contextual, and counterproductive performance, or if engaged employees tend to prioritise in-role and extra-role task components.

Bhardwaj and Kalia (2021) examined the effects of employee engagement and organisational culture variables on employees' contextual and task performance. They found a positive relationship between job performance and employee engagement, with employee engagement having a greater impact on task performance than on contextual performance. Although leadership and followership are often treated as distinct fields of study, research suggests that they complement each other.

Grey and Purdy (2018) found that diverse stakeholders must collaborate to address multiple concerns and interests while confronting complex challenges. The evaluation of leaders, managers, and followers indicated that followers can influence leaders' behaviours and elicit desirable responses. The organisation gains from the interaction between leaders and followers to fulfil the demand and supply of leadership. Understanding the context of followership and the functions of followers is crucial to mitigating crises in global leadership.

Suda (2014) contends that individuals choose to be followers for material advantages, such as financial gain and security, and remain if psychological benefits, such as congruence with the organisation's objectives and agenda, are met. Followers are expected to stay within the organisation until they become disenchanted or leave. The leader elects to fulfil that function as long as their requirements are met and may step down when they are no longer met. Giambattista (2018) asserts that organisations must cultivate an environment that enables followers to identify their leaders' issues and implicit demands. At the same time, leaders can understand the challenges inherent in the adherence process.

Leaders may improve followership by articulating the idea and its attributes within modern corporate culture and comprehending its impact on behaviours and attitudes. Followership must be cultivated and developed in a manner analogous to leadership.

5.7.2.2 Servant leadership

Servant leadership offers a relational view of leadership, emphasising that leaders' fundamental duty is to serve their followers and that organisational efficiency arises from reciprocal connections between leaders and followers. Since Greenleaf's foundational work, servant leadership has been defined as a methodology that emphasises followers' growth, well-being, empowerment, and development, facilitating their meaningful contribution to corporate objectives (Greenleaf, 1977). Current academic discourse suggests that servant leadership fosters stronger leader–follower relationships defined by trust, empowerment, psychological safety, and shared responsibility, thereby improving employee engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and individual performance (Eva et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2021). Servant leadership views influence not as the exercise of authority but as a process that empowers followers to achieve their potential while fostering collaboration and shared accountability.

Chaurasia and Shukla (2014) examined the relationship between leader–member interchange and work-role performance via the dynamic process of employee engagement. The study elucidates the significance of leadership in fostering employee engagement and enhancing role performance. Chaurashia and Shukla (2014) present a subjective effectiveness metric that encompasses diverse behaviours across three tiers, each comprising three sub-dimensions. The individual level encompasses task performance, individual task adaptability, and proactivity. Conversely, the team level encompasses member competence, adaptability,

and initiative. Finally, the organisational level encompasses member proficiency, flexibility, and organisational proactivity.

Studies have investigated the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. Hashim et al. (2019) established a favourable correlation between many aspects of servant leadership, such as wisdom, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping, and employee performance and commitment. Saleem et al. (2020) investigated the mechanism via which servant leadership enhances organisational performance. Research indicates that servant leadership enhances the organisation's sustainable success.

Their findings show that servant leadership strongly predicts affective trust, organisational citizenship practices, and subordinate job performance. Affective trust mediates the effect of servant leadership on task performance and partially mediates its impact on subordinates' organisational citizenship behaviour. Kadarusman and Bunyamin (2021) demonstrate that servant leadership directly impacts job performance. Trust and knowledge sharing mediate the influence between servant leadership and work performance, exhibiting a complete mediation effect. A serving leadership increases employee trust in leaders and organisations and stimulates a knowledge-sharing culture that enhances employee job performance.

5.7.2.3 Followership

Research has examined the relationship between followership and work performance. Widianto and Wilderom (2022) discovered that leaders and followers who utilise their emotions effectively enhance follower work performance. Followers' fulfilment of their psychological needs facilitated this bond. Followers' constructive use of emotions was directly linked to job performance, suggesting partial mediation. The literature illustrates the connections between employee engagement, servant leadership, and followership. This corpus of literature informs the subsequent theoretical model of work performance.

The relationship between leadership and followership is increasingly perceived as a mutually reinforcing, interdependent dynamic rather than a hierarchical, unidirectional process. Recent research underscores that optimal organisational performance results from the interaction between leadership actions and followership characteristics, especially within the contexts of leader–member interchange and implicit leadership–followership theories. Recent empirical data suggest that a synergistic relationship between leadership and followership enhances corporate civic behaviour, work engagement, and job success (Liu, 2023).

Three fundamental mechanisms explain the beneficial correlation between leadership and followership (Velez & Neves, 2022). First, mutual impact: leadership influences follower behaviour (e.g., empowering leadership promotes active engagement), while followers affect leadership efficacy through feedback, involvement, and opposition. This aligns with relational leadership theory, in which both participants collaboratively generate outcomes. Second, complementary functions in effective leadership require corresponding followership styles. Leaders who promote autonomy and participation are more effective when followers demonstrate independent thinking and proactive involvement.

Third, cognitive alignment (i.e., congruence between implicit leadership theory and implicit followership theory) is essential. Shared mental models of effective leadership and followership enhance leader−follower relational quality and improve organisational performance (Hesmert & Vogel, 2023).

In conclusion, the positive correlation between leadership and followership is best understood as a dynamic, co-constructed system in which both parties influence organisational effectiveness. Incorporating active involvement, autonomy, and critical thinking in followership amplifies leadership effectiveness, whereas adaptive leadership cultivates exemplary followership. Organisational success is maximised when leadership and followership function in synergistic harmony.

5.8 PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL OF WORK PERFORMANCE

The theoretical model of work performance presented below is based on the four key constructs identified in the literature: employee engagement, leadership, followership, and individual work performance. The model incorporates various dimensions of these four variables and provides the study's conceptual foundation. Current evidence reinforces the importance of this model.

Research related to employee engagement:
Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023) conducted a meta-analysis of 174 studies. They found an overall correlation of r = .37 linking employee engagement to work performance, as well as favourable associations between components of engagement such as vigour, devotion, and absorption and work performance. Crucially, their assessment covered both task and contextual performance, indicating that engagement matters beyond employees' execution of official job functions Lu et al (2024)

Research related to leadership broadly and servant leadership in particular

Bonini et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis examining the correlation between leadership and adaptive performance, revealing a notable positive association (r = .37). The authors inferred that leadership is an organisational variable that affects employees' ability to meet ever-shifting work demands. This conclusion is particularly relevant to the current paradigm of job performance, as adaptive performance has grown in importance in organisational contexts shaped by technical, economic, and operational shifts.

The systematic literature analysis by Lu et al (2023) explored the link between servant leadership and outcomes at the team and organisational levels, showing the growing servant-leadership evidence based beyond individual employee impacts.

Research related to Followership

Integrating followership is therefore essential to establish a more balanced paradigm of organisational influence. Rather than assuming performance is influenced exclusively by leaders' behaviours, followership allows the model to recognise employees' input in the leadership relationship.

This is consistent with the earlier theoretical work of Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), who conceptualised followership as an important component of the leadership process. The particularly valuable because it demonstrates empirically that follower-related perceptions and characteristics can be associated with work performance.

Thus, integrating followership and leadership yields a more thorough theoretical framework of the relational process that influences employee performance within organisations. It also offers an opportunity to examine whether employee empowerment and involvement strengthen the influence of leadership and employee engagement.

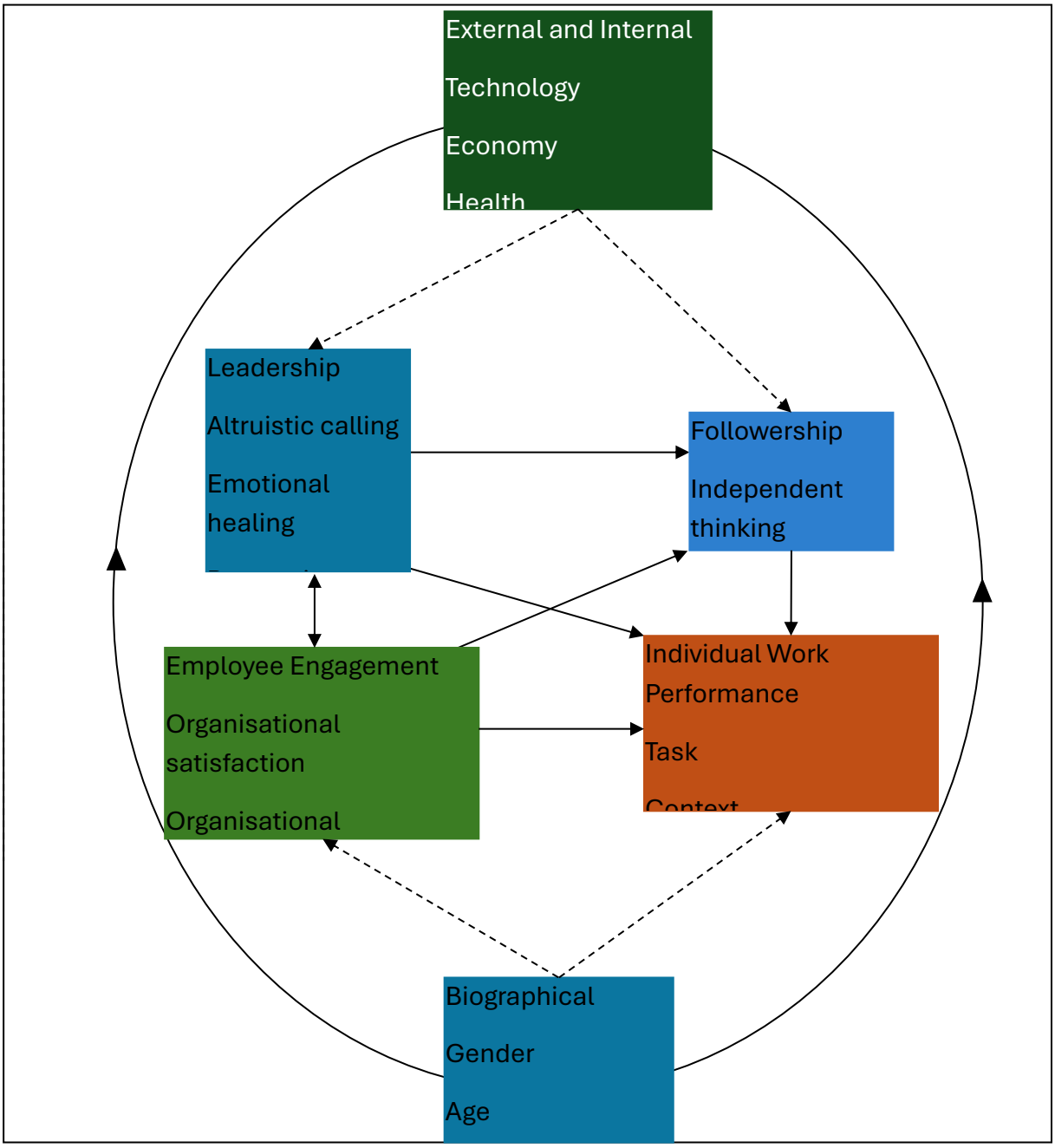
Incorporating work performance is crucial because it establishes the benchmark for evaluating the explanatory value of the other constructs. The theoretical model established by Koopmans et al. remains relevant, as it defines individual work performance as a multidimensional construct encompassing task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Recent studies on participation and leadership underscore the enduring significance of this comprehensive viewpoint. Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023) found significant correlations between engagement and job performance, while Bonini et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of adaptive performance in leadership performance.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the proposed theoretical model.

Figure 5.1

Proposed theoretical model of work performance



The model is based on the idea that employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance inform work performance. The definitions and dimensions of each variable are explained next. First, Nienaber and Martins (2015, p. 405) define employee engagement as employees who are fully absorbed and enthusiastic about their work, taking positive action to further the organisation's reputation and interests. This study adopts this definition, explaining the multifaceted and complex construct of employee engagement in the workplace. Servant leadership is characterised by a leader who sees themselves as a servant first and demonstrates key characteristics, including an altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, organisational stewardship, and wisdom (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Followership influences the relationship between leaders and followers, supporting a goal, purpose, or mission that reflects the mutual intention of both leaders and followers (Kelley, 1992). Koopmans (2015) refers to individual work performance as the employee's behaviours or actions, rather than the results of these behaviours relevant to the organisation's goals.

Table 5.4 presents the dimensions considered.

Table 5.4

Variables and dimensions related to the performance model

	DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION	RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE
Employee engagement	Organisational satisfaction Organisational commitment Immediate manager Strategy and implementation	A general feeling of job satisfaction Commitment to the organisation Effectiveness of managerial tasks Develop new ideas and take initiative	Employee engagement improves organisational performance (Martins & Nienaber, 2014, p. 486).

	DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION	RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE
Servant leadership	Altruistic calling Emotional healing Persuasive mapping: Wisdom Organisational stewardship	Desire to make a positive difference Fostering spiritual recovery Sound reasoning and mental frameworks Knowledge and utility Prepare an organisation to make a positive contribution	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) argue that servant leadership operates at all levels, from the individual to society.
Followership	Conformist Alienated Pragmatist Passive Star/effective/ exemplary	Agree with everything that the leaders say Adverse, critical, and independent Not taking a stance on issues An attitude of staying safe Independent and critical thinkers	Star/effective/exemplary followers show initiative and facilitate the needs of others (Kelley, 2008).
Individual work performance	Task Contextual Adaptive Counterproductive	Central job tasks The organisational, social, and psychological environment Adapting to changes Harmful to the well-being	Koopmans (2011) focuses on the organisation's goals and multidimensional work performance.

The table presents the researcher's theoretical model tested in the research. The model focuses on the relationship between employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and individual work performance.

5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 5 conceptualised leadership, addressing Research Aim 4 of the study: to conceptualise the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective. The chapter discussed different definitions, theories, and perspectives. The chapter also reviewed work performance dimensions and styles, antecedents and outcomes of work performance, and the relationships among variables. Thus, this chapter achieved Research Aim 4. Chapter 6 discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The general aim of this research was to develop a model of employee engagement (organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational strategy and implementation, immediate manager; leadership (servant leadership), altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship, and followership (active engagement and independent critical thinking) for work performance across levels in South African organisations. The secondary aim was to understand the relationship between biographical variables (gender, age, and job grade) and research variables (employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance.

This chapter focused on research methodology and design, the population and sampling, data collection and statistical analyses. The chapter concludes with results and findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The following specific research aims were developed for the empirical study:

- **Research Aim 1:** To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 2:** To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 3:** To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 4**: To determine the relationship between work performance and its dimensions within a South African perspective.
- **Research Aim 5:** To determine differences between biographical groups in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.
- **Research Aim 6:** To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 7:** To develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

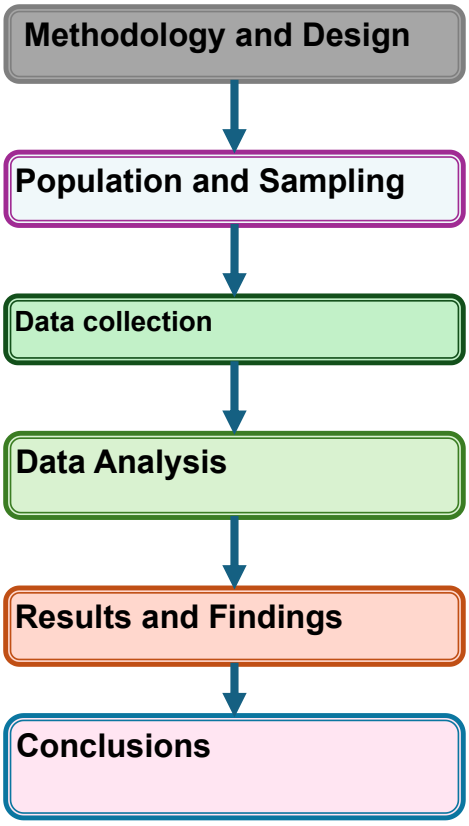
6.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

The process outlines the steps followed in conducting this research: methodology and design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, research results and findings, and conclusions and recommendations.

Figure 6.1 presents the research process flowchart.

Figure 6.1

Research methodology



The figure highlights the 6-step process.

6.2.1 Step 1: Methodology and design

Research methodology refers to the systematic structure that governs the entire research undertaking, encompassing the selection of an appropriate philosophical orientation, study design, data collection protocols, sampling methods, measurement instruments, and data analysis strategies (Rahi, 2017).

Creswell et al (2023) assert that research methodology includes the philosophical foundations that support research, the overarching research strategy, the research framework, and the techniques utilised to produce and evaluate evidence.

Saunders et al. (2019) assert that methodological choices must be informed by research philosophy and the theory development strategy, ensuring alignment among the research questions, aims, and analytical approaches. As a result, a robust research technique improves the credibility, validity, reliability, and transparency of scientific exploration, enabling researchers to yield discoveries that are both theoretically substantial and empirically sound.

Methodology describes the coherent framework and rationale that governs the selection and utilisation of research approaches. It goes beyond a method by clarifying the fundamental assumptions underpinning the researcher's methodological choices. Methodology provides the logical foundation linking the researcher's philosophical orientation to the research design and the procedures used to generate and assess evidence. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define this relationship as the interaction of philosophical premises, investigative tactics, and distinct research methodologies.

Methodology requires attention to validity, reliability, objectivity, transparency, and ethical integrity. A quantitative technique must provide enough information for a subsequent researcher to understand how constructs were operationalised, how participants were selected, how data were generated, and what conclusions were drawn. This promotes reproducibility and supports thorough scrutiny of the evidence.

Quantitative research methodology is primarily based on positivist and post-positivist frameworks, which hold that reality can be objectively assessed and elucidated through empirical observation and statistical analysis. The main objective of quantitative research is to investigate the relationships among quantifiable variables, evaluate theoretical claims and hypotheses, and generate results that can be extrapolated to a specific population.

Creswell & Creswell (2023, p) explain that quantitative research involves collecting numerical data using systematic methods, followed by statistical analyses to identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships.

Saunders et al. (2019) assert that the quantitative approach suits research aimed at clarifying phenomena through objective measurement and statistical analysis, while ensuring researcher detachment from participants. Thus, quantitative research offers a robust structure for corroborating theoretical frameworks, evaluating the strength of associations between constructs, and producing data that is both dependable and reproducible across various organisational settings. This methodological framework is especially appropriate for organisational behaviour research, where connections between psychological and behavioural dimensions require objective assessment and empirical verification.

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches are widely used. Antwi and Hamza (2015, p. 223) identify the differences between qualitative and quantitative research, as illustrated in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.1

Differences between qualitative and quantitative research

QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
Focuses on testing the theory.	Utilises the theory to inform the research design.
Makes assumptions based on theories and concepts, and uses deductive and logical reasoning.	Starts with the data, builds up to a descriptive theory, and uses inductive logic or both inductive and deductive logic.
Generalises findings.	Gains a deeper understanding of a phenomenon.
Collects evidence of validity and reliability.	Aims to establish validity and reliability.
Maintains objectivity.	Based on the researcher's experience.

(Wright et al., 2016)

The positivist approach of this study aligns well with quantitative research, as it focuses on quantifying constructs, analysing relationships among variables, testing hypotheses, discerning statistically significant differences, and assessing explanatory models. A positivist quantitative investigation generally follows a deductive approach: established theories guide the formulation of propositions or hypotheses, constructs are operationalised as quantifiable

variables, data are systematically collected from a suitable sample, and statistical methods are employed to assess the empirical findings.

A survey was employed to gather data online from a variety of South African organisations.

Rather than focusing solely on data collection and analysis tools, research methodology explains the rationale for selecting specific methods to address distinct research questions and achieve a study's goals.

Research design can therefore be conceptualised as the point at which philosophical positioning, theoretical reasoning, and empirical procedures come together into a coherent strategy for generating credible knowledge.

Research design is a crucial element of the research process, as it establishes the intellectual and methodological framework for examining a research issue. It deals with the logical connections among the research problem, research questions, theoretical assertions, philosophical assumptions, data needs, analytical methods, and interpretation of results.

In this light, the design serves as a plan that empowers the researcher to advance methodically from identifying a research challenge to formulating and assessing evidence. Creswell & Creswell (2018) assert that research design is fundamentally intertwined with philosophical premises, the nature of the research inquiry, the methodological approach, and the processes implemented for data collection and analysis. As a result, a valid study design requires a harmonious relationship between the researcher's aims, assumptions about reality and knowledge, and the methodological techniques used to address the research problems.

Consequently, research design should be regarded as a matter of coherence rather than merely a technique. Research design is considered methodologically robust when its philosophical foundation, research approach, strategic framework, sampling procedures, measurement tools, data collection methods, and analytical approaches are logically aligned. Alignment is crucial in social and behavioural studies, as abstract concepts such as employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance are generally not directly observable and must be defined conceptually and operationalised through relevant indicators.

In modern research, positivism is more accurately understood as a framework grounded in beliefs about objective reality, empirical observation, systematic measurement, hypothesis testing, and the pursuit of explanatory relationships. Park et al. (2020) explicitly characterise positivism as congruent with hypothetico-deductive thinking, the operationalisation of variables, quantitative methodologies, and the empirical validation of hypotheses. Methodological choices should follow from the nature of the research problem and the assumptions about reality and knowledge.

6.2.2 Step 2: Population and sampling

The researcher identified the study population and sample. The population is the larger group exhibiting traits pertinent to the research issue, while the sampling frame provides a discernible list from which participants were chosen (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A database of professional employees may therefore provide a well-defined, readily available sampling frame, especially when the research examines organisational variables such as employee engagement, leadership, followership, and individual job performance. Utilising a database of professional employees as the sample for a quantitative study is methodologically sound when the database aligns directly with the population to which the researcher aims to extrapolate the results.

The availability of identifiable employees also facilitated systematic sample selection and the application of non-probability techniques, thereby strengthening the methodological basis for statistical inference. Importantly, the database contained sufficient information to establish participants. The motivation for using the database was strong within the African context, where obtaining comprehensive sampling frames for specific occupational groups presented methodological challenges. Research methodology literature concerning African settings recognised that the availability and quality of sampling frames influenced the representativeness of survey research. Harris (2024), for example, identified the availability of an appropriate sampling frame as an important challenge in data-limited contexts.

Therefore, a complete database of professional employees provided a viable, well-supported approach to identifying constituents of a specifically defined study group, provided the database was sufficiently detailed, current, and aligned with the inclusion criteria. The South African employees represent the population, and the employees in the database represent the sample. The database must not be perceived as a comprehensive representation of all African professionals.

The population should be specifically limited by the geographical, occupational, organisational, and demographic features encompassed by the database. This distinction was significant because the validity of generalisation depended on the association.

Another rationale relates to the requirements of quantitative sampling and statistical generalisation. A clearly delineated database allows the researcher to determine the population size and calculate an adequate sample size using statistical or power-analysis methods. The researcher should use probability or non-probability sampling techniques. The sample is beneficial when the professional demographic varies significantly by factors such as job level, gender, age, industry, or geographic area, as it improves the representation of key subgroups in the final sample. Research in South Africa indicates that employee databases can serve as sampling frames for organisational survey studies, using employee lists from these databases to identify potential respondents.

The researcher used self-assessment questionnaires rather than interviews because the study aimed to derive standardised quantitative evaluations of latent psychological variables from a sample of individuals. Self-assessment instruments allowed all respondents to answer uniform questions using standardised response scales, improving measurement coherence, reducing interviewer effects, and facilitating statistical procedures, including reliability testing, exploratory and confirmatory analysis, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, conducting interviews would have been significantly more resource-demanding and challenging because of travel constraints, social distancing mandates, and access limitations within organisations. Electronic self-assessments provided participants with greater anonymity and flexibility, reducing evaluation anxiety and encouraging more honest feedback on engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

Although self-report instruments may be vulnerable to common method variance and social desirability bias, these drawbacks are widely recognised in behavioural research and were mitigated by employing validated measurement tools, ensuring anonymity, and utilising appropriate statistical techniques. In summary, self-assessment questionnaires constituted the most suitable, pragmatic, and methodologically sound approach for data collection in a large-scale quantitative research study conducted amidst the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2022; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Reliability and validity

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), validity focuses on the theoretical conceptualisation and operationalisation of research measurement. Verwey et al. (2012) view validity as the extent to which the researcher focuses on what they claim to research. Drost (2011) discusses three types of validity considered in this study: content, face, and construct validity, which reflect internal validity and external validity, as discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.8.3. According to Mouton and Marais (1996), data reliability is influenced by the researcher, participants, measurement instruments, and research context.

Reliability refers to the instrument's ability to yield consistent findings (Verwey et al., 2012). Reliability, according to Drost (2011), refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated with a different sample and using different instruments that assess the same construct. Random measurement errors impact data from behavioural research investigations. The correlation coefficient, which measures the relationship between two or more variables that measure the same component, is one way to estimate reliability. In behavioural research, researchers estimate test reliability using internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The test-retest correlation examines scores from identical surveys administered on different dates. Both sessions were expected to yield consistent outcomes.

The research method refers to the procedures used to collect and analyse data to achieve specific goals. These strategies help scholars understand human behaviour. This study used survey research as its research method. According to Ponto (2015), the goal of survey research is to collect information quickly to describe the characteristics of a large sample. Personal and demographic characteristics are reflected in the survey data.

An online survey collects data on a range of topics from a specific population or group and documents individuals' demographic characteristics. According to Ponto (2015), survey research has evolved into a more exacting method of investigation. To ensure a high-quality research process and results, scientifically proven procedures specify what to disseminate, how to disseminate it, when to start the survey, and how to follow up with non-respondents. Rahi (2017) focused on survey research objectives, sampling procedures, data collection tools, and survey administration techniques.

According to Gürbüz (2017), survey research employs a variety of data collection techniques, with questionnaires and interviews being the most popular. Questionnaires typically contain items that represent the research goals and are administered to individuals. Researchers do not manipulate, intervene, or control variables. Survey research focuses on collecting, recording, and analysing data from which researchers can draw conclusions and make inferences.

Rahi (2017, p. 2) states that the research technique entails collecting and analysing data with a specific goal in mind. In this study, data were collected using a survey. The goals of the quantitative technique were to quantify social processes, collect and analyse numerical data, and extrapolate the findings. Franzese and Luliano (2019) explain that correlational research examines the relationship between two or more variables. The respondents completed online surveys measuring employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. The following section describes the study's reliability and validity.

According to Kandel (2020), quantitative data analysis primarily focuses on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Standardised assessments, questionnaires, and standardised observation instruments are used to gather the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to generalise sample results to populations.

Quantitative researchers use statistics, such as correlations, relative frequencies, or differences between means, to indicate links between variables after measuring them in a sample. Their main priority is to test hypotheses. The current study used a quantitative approach and tested hypotheses based on underlying assumptions.

The researcher used assessment instruments validated by numerous researchers and commonly used. Drost (2011), for instance, deemed translation, face, content, contemporaneous, predictive, convergent, and discriminant validity necessary.

Criterion-related validity is the degree of agreement, typically determined by correlation, between a test measure and one or more external criteria.

Concurrent validity is the capacity of a test to forecast a current event.

Predictive validity is the capacity of a test to forecast future outcomes.

Convergent validity occurs when both measures and manipulations of the same construct are evaluated,

Divergent validity occurs when measures and manipulations of related but conceptually distinct constructs are evaluated.

External validity refers to the ability to generalise the findings to other individuals, settings, and time periods.

Discriminant validity is demonstrated when two measures intended to measure distinct constructs show no correlation. Discriminant validity is demonstrated when the absolute value of the correlation between measures, after correcting for measurement error, is sufficiently low to indicate that the measures represent distinct constructs (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022). The data collection will be presented next.

6.2.3 Step 3: Data collection

Data collection involved data administration, cleaning, and processing in preparation for analysis. A survey instrument was used and included biographical and research variables (employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance).

The research was conducted ethically to protect the respondents and the integrity of the data. The HPCSA provided ethical guidelines, which served as the foundation for this study. Before conducting the research, the researcher received approval from the University of South Africa's Ethics Committee (ethical clearance number: 2021_CEMS/IOP_002; see Annexure B). Ethics committees oversee the data collection tools used in scientific research, especially when human subjects are involved, and provide an ethical basis for studies. In this way, an institution's observance of the rights of those involved in research increases the ethical sensitivity of studies in the social sciences. In this study, we provided consent forms to potential respondents. They completed the consent form and questionnaire and submitted them online after deciding to take part in the study. The respondents could stop completing the survey at any time. Moreover, we kept the collected data confidential. To preserve their identities, the respondents did not disclose any personal information, including their first and last names. Additionally, the results were centred on patterns rather than specific answers.

6.2.3.1 Measuring Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of 119 items: 8 biographical questions, 30 items for employee engagement, 23 items for servant leadership, 40 items for followership, and 18 items for work performance. The survey was long, and fatigue concerns may have affected the response rate. The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections, the first section being the biographical information and then the four measuring instruments, namely the South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015); Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); Kelley Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) Kelley (1992) and Individual Work Performance (IWP) Koopmans et al 2011. The different measuring instruments are discussed below:

i) Servant South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015

South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015) was used to assess employee engagement.

Rationale: Nienaber and Martins (2015) developed the SAEES. It assesses employee engagement using strategy and implementation, customer service, team level, immediate manager, and organisational satisfaction and commitment. This study excluded customer service and the team-level aspects, as they were not relevant to the current study.

Description: The SAEES is a self-report measure comprising 50 items that assess individual, team, and organisational engagement (Nienaber & Martins, 2015). This study used a 30-item self-report instrument relevant to the area of inquiry.

The SAEES were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher engagement, while lower ratings indicate lower engagement – a three-layered approach that explains the complexity of workplace engagement.

The dimensions covered at the three levels of engagement are (Nienaber & Martins, 2015):

- Individual – trait, state, and behavioural characteristics.
- Team – focus on work design, leadership, and trust.

- Organisational – emphasis on vision, mission, goals, and strategy.

Administration, scoring, and interpretation: The SAEES is a self-report measure, administered online in this study. We followed the standardised scoring and interpretation guidelines.

Validity and reliability of the SAEES: Previous studies reported acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the SAEES, ranging from 0.895 to 0.951 (Martins & Ledimo, 2016; Nienaber & Martins, 2015). In the present study, SAEES reliability ranged from 0.86 to 0.95. Gallant and Martins (2018) confirmed the instrument's reliability and validity, indicating that invariance could be expected across racial groups within South African institutions.

ii) Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006)

Rationale: Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) developed the SLQ to evaluate servant leadership using the following criteria: organisational stewardship, wisdom, altruistic calling, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping.

Description: The SLQ is a self-report measure with 23 items that evaluate five different variables. According to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), servant leadership is a leadership ideology that prioritises service to others over self-interest.

Servant leadership is evident at various levels within modern organisations. The servant leader, according to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305), serves at all levels, from the individual to the societal level, as explained below:

- At the individual level, the leader is motivated to serve.
- At the interpersonal level, the follower benefits from the leader.
- At the group level, the leader attends to the requirements of the members of the group.
- At the organisational level, the leader gets the group ready to serve the community.
- At the societal level, the leader leaves a legacy that advances society.

Administration, scoring, and interpretation: The SLQ is a 23-item online self-report test questionnaire. The established scoring and interpretation rules were adhered to. The SLQ is a valid and reliable measure. According to Barbuto and Hayden (2011), the Cronbach's alpha values of the sub-scales ranged from 0.82 to 0.92.

After validating the SLQ on a sample from South Africa, Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) found that the five dimensions aligned well with the measurement model and that the subscales exhibited high reliability. The authors recommend repeating the study in both the public and private sectors to see whether it yields comparable results.

iii) Kelley Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) (Kelley, 1992)

The PSQ is the original questionnaire Kelley developed to assess followership and consists of 40 questions. It is a self-report measure in which the participant assesses themselves at two levels: how they see themselves and how they perceive the manager sees them. The researcher chose this questionnaire because it measures the two original dimensions of followership: active engagement and independent critical thinking.

Rationale: Kelley (1992) developed the PSQ. It assesses behavioural dimensions, namely active versus passive engagement and independent versus dependent critical thinking. Although the shorter version, consisting of 20 items, has been widely used in research, the current study used the longer version, consisting of 40 items, to gain deeper insights into followership within the South African context.

Description: The PSQ is a report measure consisting of 40 items assessing followership styles based on two behavioural dimensions and the follower styles adopted by followers. Kelley developed a widely used questionnaire to measure followership and validated it in various countries.

Administration, scoring, and interpretation: This 40-item online self-report test is administered and scored online. The authors followed guidelines for consistent interpretation and scoring.

Validity and reliability: Kelley (1992). The original article described the questionnaire as a useful tool for distinguishing followership styles rather than a rigorously established psychometric scale. Following validation enquiries, the evaluation has prioritised assessing its dependability, factor structure, and construct validity rather than detailing its initial item-creation method (Gatti et al., 2014; Ribbat et al., 2021).

iv. Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans, 2015)

Koopmans et al. (2015) developed validated psychometric instruments to evaluate individual work performance.

Rationale: Koopmans et al (2015) created the IWPQ. It has three components: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive performance.

Description: According to Koopmans et al (2015), the IWPQ is a self-report assessment with 18 items on three different scales: task, contextual, and counterproductive performance. Task performance focuses on an individual's ability to carry out their responsibilities competently.

Contextual performance describes activities that support the organisation at the organisational, social, and psychological levels. Counterproductive work behaviour refers to actions that may jeopardise the organisation's well-being.

Campbell and Wiernik (2015, p. 48) view individual work performance as people's actions and goals. Such activities align with the organisation's goals and form part of the job description. Thus, performance directly facilitates the achievement of the organisation's goals.

Administration, scoring, and interpretation: The IWPQ was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (seldom) to 5 (always).

Validity and reliability of the IWPQ: Koopmans et al. (2014, p. 160) improved the IWPQ's targeting by adding items to the scales. Compared with the earlier version, the revised version more accurately assesses employees across all skill levels, better differentiates between employees within each performance level, and is more sensitive to changes in individual work performance. Furthermore, Dåderman et al. (2020, p. 23) used a pilot group of managers in Sweden to validate the IWPQ. Before deploying the instrument, they advise, however, that it be tested on a broader sample of managers, including diverse groupings of blue- and white-collar employees. They were likewise interested in finding connections with relevant constructs such as work engagement or emotional intelligence. The following section describes the sampling techniques used in the study.

6.2.3.2 Administration of the data collection measures

The researcher adopted a quantitative research approach and contracted a specialised survey organisation, iFeedback, to distribute the electronic questionnaire to respondents through its established database. This approach was adopted because it provided an efficient, methodical, and ethically appropriate framework for reaching a widely dispersed demographic during the COVID-19 pandemic, when rigorous health protocols and organisational limitations greatly restricted direct research interactions.

iFeedback maintained a comprehensive database of employed individuals across diverse industries, professions, and organisational levels, giving the researcher access to participants who met the study's inclusion criteria. The electronic distribution of the survey enabled uniform administration of the questionnaire, reduced data-gathering inaccuracies, expedited data acquisition, and improved the dataset's comprehensiveness.

Using a well-established survey organisation is an appropriate approach to data collection in quantitative research, as it helps obtain a sufficiently large sample for statistical scrutiny while maintaining consistent data-collection procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Saunders et al., 2019).

The decision to engage the iFeedback platform was reinforced by the ethical mandates governing research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the study began, the researcher received consent from the University's Research Ethics Committee, which assessed and approved the employment of the survey organisation and its participant database. The ethics committee was pleased that the survey organisation conformed to accepted ethical guidelines for voluntary participation, informed consent, participant anonymity, confidentiality, and the secure storage of research data.

The iFeedback platform facilitated voluntary access to the questionnaire, enabled participants to review the information sheet, submit informed consent electronically, and withdraw from the study without penalty. These ethical measures were particularly significant during the pandemic, as they ensured participant safety while allowing the researcher to advance the study without risking the health of respondents or researchers. As a result, using the survey organisation demonstrated methodological rigour and alignment with internationally endorsed ethical guidelines for human participant research (American Psychological Association, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The collected data underwent cleaning and processing, which is discussed next

6.2.3.3 Data cleaning and processing

The data cleaning process required ensuring that the questionnaires were fully completed and error-free; any that did not meet these criteria were subsequently eliminated.

6.6 STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the sample characteristics and the variables under investigation. Next, a reliability analysis, including Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), was conducted to assess measurement quality.

Construct validity is evaluated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA), CFA, average variance extracted (AVE), convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Marsh et al, 2020). After the measurement model is satisfactorily validated, the proposed hypotheses are tested, and the structural relationships among constructs are evaluated using SEM or other appropriate multivariate statistical techniques (Kline, 2023). By providing evidence of the theoretical model’s adequacy, model-fit indices enhance confidence in the validity of the empirical findings. This phase illustrates the methodological robustness expected in quantitative research.

Quantitative researchers measure, examine, and comprehend social reality through quantitative data analysis. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Following data collection, the results were analysed statistically. Descriptive and inferential statistics are the two primary categories of statistics covered in this study. The data were analysed using SPSS. The statistical tests and analyses included EFA, CFA, SEM, ANOVA, correlation analysis, and t-tests. The following chapter (Chapter 7) presents the research findings.

6.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is the division of statistics that is dedicated to the organisation, summarisation, presentation, and description of the characteristics of a dataset without deriving conclusions beyond the observed data.

Before conducting more sophisticated statistical analyses, descriptive statistics provide a succinct numerical and graphical representation of research findings, enabling researchers to understand the distribution, central tendency, and variability of variables (Janczyk & Pfister, 2023). Descriptive statistics often include measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, medians, modes, standard deviations, variances, ranges, skewness, and kurtosis, as well as graphical displays such as histograms, boxplots, and bar charts. By using these descriptive measures, researchers can identify data quality issues such as outliers, missing values, and deviations from statistical assumptions, providing a comprehensive overview of sample characteristics.

Descriptive statistics primarily convert large quantities of quantitative data into meaningful information that can be interpreted effectively. Researchers use descriptive statistics to summarise responses to survey items, describe demographic characteristics, and assess the overall distribution of research variables before conducting inferential analyses (Pallant, 2020). Dispersion measures describe variability around the average, while measures of central tendency indicate the typical value observed within the sample. Furthermore, descriptive statistics are particularly crucial when selecting appropriate inferential procedures, as they help evaluate the normality assumption using skewness and kurtosis. Accurate descriptive analysis, a critical preliminary step, thereby supports the validity and robustness of subsequent statistical analyses.

Descriptive statistics structure and summarise the research findings (Kern, 2013, p. 1). To assess and characterise the sample, the frequencies and percentages of the biographical data were calculated (Kern, 2013, p. 5). Table 6.2 provides an overview of descriptive statistics.

Table 6.2

Summary of descriptive statistics

TYPE	DEFINITION	REASON
Mean	The average score of the observed values of the variables	Describes the responses with the average value
Median	Arranging all values in order and determining the halfway point	Determines the middle value among all values
Mode	Most frequent value	Describes the most common value
Standard deviation	The average difference from the mean	Provides an indicator of the spread
Range	The value of the difference between the maximum and minimum score	General indicator of the spread
Skewness	The degree to which the distribution deviates from normality	Indicator of the shape of the distribution
Kurtosis	The peakedness of the distribution	Indicator of the shape of the distribution
Frequencies	How often the variable scores repeat themselves	Distribution of how many times each value occurs
Percentages	Frequency converted into a percentage	Standardised value of the number of times a value occurs

(Bassan-Cincinatus & Sheffet, 2016, p. 144; Guetterman, 2019, p. 12)

6.6.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics is a division of statistical analysis that enables researchers to draw inferences about a population using data from a representative sample. Unlike descriptive statistics, which condense actual data, inferential statistics extend beyond the sample to estimate population parameters and assess theoretical claims using probability theory (Field, 2018). The essential principle of inferential statistics is that a thoughtfully selected sample mirrors the attributes of the target population, allowing researchers to formulate statistically sound generalisations. In positivist and quantitative research paradigms, inferential statistics is crucial, as it supports objective hypothesis testing, parameter estimation, and the analysis of correlations between variables while accounting for sampling error (Hair et al., 2022).

Statistical significance, confidence intervals, and effect sizes are essential inferential concepts that help researchers assess whether reported results reflect true population effects rather than random fluctuations. The main objective of inferential statistics is to facilitate evidence-based decision-making by assessing whether the relationships, differences, or effects observed in a sample are statistically significant and relevant to the larger population. Inferential statistical methods encompass hypothesis testing, confidence interval estimation, correlation and regression analyses, ANOVA, chi-square tests, and SEM, among other techniques (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023). These analytical methods allow scholars to assess theoretical frameworks, investigate causal connections, and quantify the strength and direction of associations among variables.

Based on the data obtained, inferential statistics were used to conclude the population (Kern, 2013). The findings from the ANOVA, SEM, correlations, and factor analysis are presented. Inferential statistics extend beyond the observed data to address specific issues posed prior to the study (Kern, 2013). Inferential statistics detect any size difference. They either fail to distinguish or recognise traits that vary sufficiently between groups. Individual variations are apparent (Kern, 2013). It provides specific numerical responses to predefined questions and infers likely patterns in the key data. To achieve sufficient statistical power for comparison, inferential statistics are used to categorise individuals specifically.

6.6.2.1 Factor analysis

Factor analysis was conducted using both CFA and EFA. Factor analysis determines the appropriate number of factors to describe the variance–covariance among items, according to Kyriazos and Poga-Kyriazou (2023). The EFA and CFA represent the relationships of an item set through a smaller factor set. EFA is a data-driven method that does not require any preconceptions. To specify and assess the model, CFA needs a solid conceptual or empirical basis.

6.6.2.2 Analysis of variance

According to Guetterman (2019), ANOVA compares the equality of means from two or more study groups. A primary outcome measure was used to determine if groups assigned to one of three interventions differ significantly from one another. The ANOVA results are reported with an F-statistic and p-value, or with a confidence interval (CI), to indicate whether groups differ significantly.

To determine whether group means differ, the researcher used either a t-test or ANOVA. ANOVA was used for three or more groups, while the t-test was used for two groups. By comparing two group means, the t-test determines whether differences are likely due to chance or systematic effects, indicating a statistically significant difference. Both the independent-samples t-test and the paired-samples t-test are frequently used. The former compares the means of two unrelated groups, such as a treatment group compared with a control group, while the latter compares the means of related groups (Guetterman, 2019).

6.6.2.3 Correlations

According to Franzese and Luliano (2019), correlations enable an analysis of the degree of association between variables. The primary objective is to determine whether these factors are interrelated. It is essential to determine whether a relationship exists and, if so, whether it is positive or negative.

Correlation shows if the values of two variables tend to change together systematically. The following are the three general results of correlational analysis: 1) the two variables rise and fall simultaneously; 2) the values of one variable decline when the values of the other do; and 3) there is no apparent systematic relationship between the two variables. These conclusions are reached using the correlation coefficient (r) and the associated p-value or confidence interval (CI) (Franzese & Luliano, 2019). To assess their linkages, this study examined the relationships among the four variables—engagement, leadership, followership, and individual work performance. Regression analysis was used to predict one variable from another. Regression analysis is a statistical technique that helps assess the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent or predictor variables (Gogtay et al., 2017, p. 52). It enables the researcher to forecast and make predictions by clarifying how changes in the independent variable affect the dependent variable. Assume, for instance, that a dependent variable (Y) is predicted from an independent variable (X). Simple linear regression provides an equation for a line that shows one value in relation to another.

The four study variables, namely engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, were analysed using regression to determine which best predicts performance. Table 6.3 below provides an overview of the study's inferential statistics.

T**able 6.3**

Summary of inferential statistics

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	REASON
t-test	Comparing groups to examine whether the means between two groups are statistically significant	Differences between the two groups
Analysis of variance	Comparing groups to examine whether the means among three or more groups are statistically significant	Differences between three groups or more
Correlation	Examining whether there is a relationship or association between two or more variables	The strength and direction of the relationships
Regression	Examining how one or more variables predict another variable	Identify the most important variables and how they influence each other

(Guetterman, 2019, p. 12)

6.6.2.4 Model development

The three stages involved in model development are EFA, CFA, and SEM.

i) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique that analyses many variables to uncover the fundamental factor structure of observed data when the measurement instrument's dimensionality is ambiguous or lacks empirical substantiation. The primary aim of EFA is to reduce many observed variables to a smaller set of latent factors by examining their interrelationships. Unlike confirmatory techniques, EFA does not constrain the analysis with a fixed factor structure; instead, it lets the data reveal the number and type of factors.

Hair et al. (2022) clarify that EFA helps researchers examine construct validity by revealing groups of closely related items that embody common latent constructs. Field (2018) asserts that EFA is a vital preliminary step in scale development and instrument validation, as it assesses whether questionnaire items effectively measure the intended theoretical constructs. Thus, EFA is essential for verifying the psychometric soundness of measurement instruments before engaging in more complex confirmatory analyses. In the current research, Exploratory

Factor Analysis was utilised to investigate the underlying dimensionality of the measurement scales for employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and job performance. Before performing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), it is essential to evaluate the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis by utilising the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Hair et al. (2022) suggest that a KMO value of 0.60 or above, along with a statistically significant Bartlett's Test ($p < .05$), indicates the correlation matrix is suitable for factor analysis.

Additionally, items exhibiting significant factor loadings, typically 0.50 or higher, are preserved as they indicate a substantial correlation with their corresponding latent constructs, while items with weak loadings or cross-loadings may be eliminated to enhance construct validity (Hair et al., 2022; Field, 2018). Using EFA enhances the construct validity of the measurement model by confirming that the observed variables adequately capture the theoretical dimensions of employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance before confirmatory statistical analyses.

ii) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

After establishing a viable exploratory factor structure, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is performed to statistically determine whether the observed data correspond to the hypothesised measurement model informed by theory and prior empirical findings. Unlike EFA, which examines the latent framework without constraints, CFA requires the researcher to predefine the associations between observable indicators and their corresponding latent constructs. According to Brown (2015), CFA is a theory-based statistical approach utilised to evaluate construct validity by determining if empirical data align with the specified measurement model.

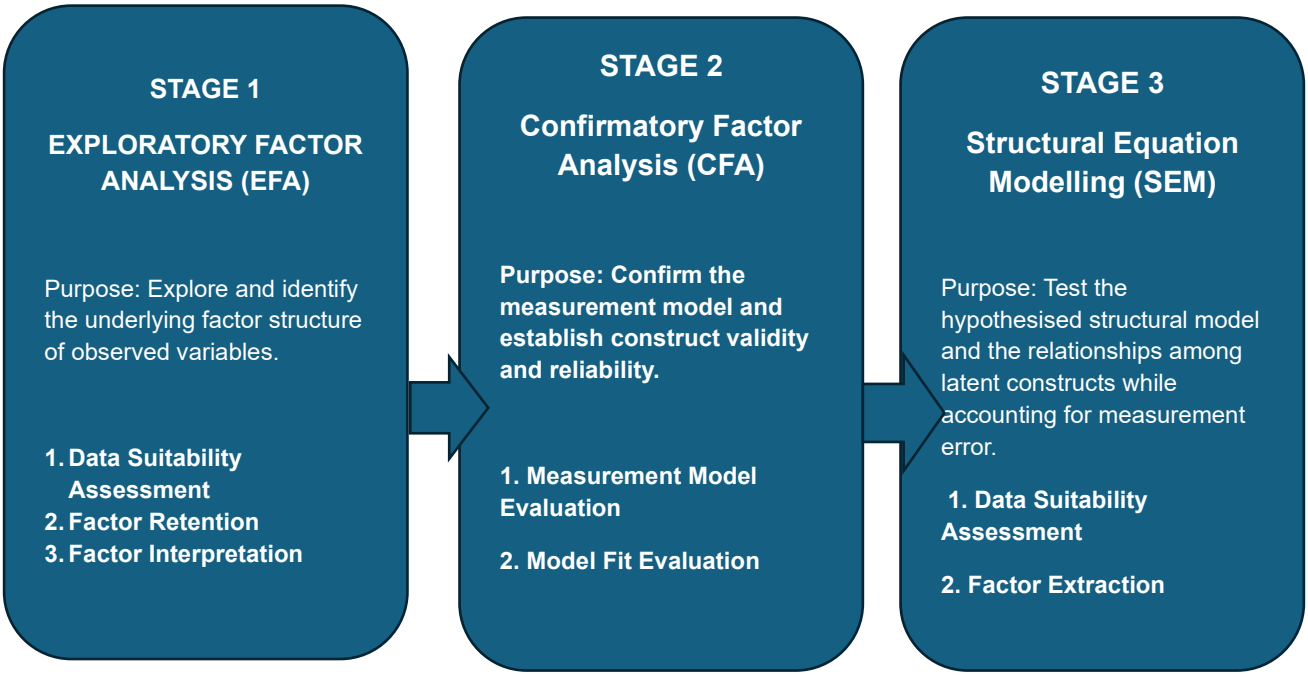
Kline (2023) also notes that CFA provides robust evidence of convergent and discriminant validity while accounting for measurement error, improving the accuracy and reliability of latent construct assessment. Thus, CFA is an essential phase in the current research, as it verifies whether the established measurement scales for employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance accurately reflect their intended theoretical constructs prior to analysing the structural relationships among these constructs using Structural Equation Modelling.

iii) Structural Equation Model

Kline (2011) outlines the stages involved in SEM. First, the model must be articulated by presenting the hypotheses as a structural equation model. In addition, the model must be evaluated for identification. At this stage, a model is deemed theoretically achievable if the program can generate a single estimate of every model parameter. Third, indicators are determined (constructs are operationalised), and the data is collected, organised, and scrutinised. The fourth stage requires using SEM software to estimate the model. This stage requires appraising model fit (if deficient, move to Step 5), interpreting parameter values, and examining equivalent or nearly identical models (if present, progress to Step 6). Fifth, adjust the model (return to Step 4 if the initial model shows poor fit). Ultimately, the findings are specified, with the analysis detailed comprehensively and accurately in written reports.
The diagram below illustrates these three stages of model development (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2

The three stages of model development



Adapted from Kline (2011)

6.7 STEP 5: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Finally, the empirical findings are synthesised and connected to the original research questions, hypotheses, and theoretical framework. Interpretation includes analysing the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of the findings within the broader body of knowledge, as well as reporting statistical significance. According to Dodge et al (2019), the researcher critically contrasts the results with those of previous studies, elucidates consistencies and inconsistencies, identifies the study's contributions to theory and practice, acknowledges methodological limitations, and suggests recommendations for future researchers, policymakers, and organisations.

The study's original contribution to knowledge should be elucidated in the conclusion, which should also clearly demonstrate how the research objectives were achieved. This phase indicates the capacity to produce evidence-based recommendations that enhance professional practice and academic understanding, as well as critical thinking and scholarly synthesis.

This section discusses both theoretical and empirical results. The research conclusion forms part of the theoretical results. The researcher's observations are organised and summarised using descriptive statistics, which were included in the empirical findings. The study considered subjects, events, traits, and dissemination methods and metrics. The findings are based on data analysis aligned with the research questions and the study's aim. The research questions guided the presentation of the study's findings under pertinent topics.

Morrison and McCutcheon (2017) report the following conclusions that are crucial for making wise decisions:

- When a minimal number of participants is required, the model can be tested, depending on the models under consideration.
- At least one alternative model makes sense considering current theory or pertinent empirical findings.
- Make the structural model visible. The model explains all measured variables' psychometric characteristics (such as Cronbach's alpha and 95% CIs, or, ideally, omega), along with evidence of content and construct validity.

- Missing data mechanisms are generally classified into three categories: Missing Completely at Random (MCAR), Missing at Random (MAR), and Missing Not at Random (MNAR) (Little & Rubin, 2019). Researchers need to specify the percentage of missing data and whether it is MCAR, MAR, or MNAR.
- Researchers must clearly outline the decision-making process and the steps taken to correct missing data.
- For each measured metric, univariate and multivariate normality evaluations are provided.
- The maximum likelihood estimate is the default estimate method used to create all SEMs.
- It is necessary to identify the program, including the version, that was used to analyse the data.
- Full CFA information, including full SEM details about the structural model, should be provided for each measurement model and their relationship to the indicator and composite reliabilities, following the recommended two-step procedure. The AVE indicates convergent validity for each latent factor.
- According to the test developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), the discriminant validity of latent variables is provided.
- Included are all standard loadings from latent to manifest variables (reflective models).
- There are reported fit indices that show overall fit.
- Every post-hoc model adjustment has a convincing justification.
- The size impact on the final model must be described.

6.8 STEP 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this section concludes and suggests further research. The findings are based on the theoretical and empirical connections between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Additionally, the study describes the consequences of variations across different biographical groups, specifically regarding followership, leadership, employee engagement, and work performance.

This study had various limitations. The hypotheses apply only to the selected research topic. Because the study collected quantitative data, it could not provide a thorough qualitative interpretation of the results. Furthermore, because the dataset included only certain South African organisations, the findings may not apply to all organisations in South Africa.

Recommendations are made for additional research. The chapter also presents research implications for practitioners of organisational and industrial psychology.

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on understanding how the research was conducted. First, it described the quantitative research strategy, emphasising the definition, data collection and analysis techniques, their integration, and the presentation of results. Second, the research process outlined the methodology, assessment instruments, data collection and analysis, and the ethical review that supported the study. The next chapter focuses on the results and findings.

CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the empirical results and findings. First, it presents the research aims and hypotheses and the sample's biographical data. Second, it presents measurement instruments and descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, it presents the model development using factor analysis.
The chapter concludes with a summary of the empirical results.

This chapter addresses Research Aim 7: To develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance across levels in South African organisations.

7.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

The study aimed to develop a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership and their relationship to work performance across levels in South African organisations.

The following empirical research aims were formulated to achieve the overall aim:

- **Research Aim 1**: To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 2**: To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 3:** To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 4**: To determine the relationship between work performance and its dimensions within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 5**: To determine differences between biographical variables (age, gender, and job level) in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 6:** To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance in relation to biographical variables within South African organisations.

- **Research Aim 7:** To develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

In addition, the hypotheses of the study were formulated as follows:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and work performance.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between leadership and work performance.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between followership and work performance.
- H4: There is a significant relationship between work performance and its dimensions.
- H5: There are significant differences between biographical variables (gender, age and job level) in relation to employee engagement, servant leadership, followership and individual work performance, and these contribute significantly to the development of an integrated model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance.
- H6: There is an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.
- H7: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, and can an empirical model be developed to explain the relationships among employee engagement, leadership, followership and individual work performance?

7.3 Data Cleaning

An initial sample size of 466 participants completed the survey. Data cleaning involved checking that questionnaires were fully completed and error-free; incomplete or erroneous questionnaires were discarded. Missing values analysis indicated that 68 questionnaires contained many missing values; additionally, 5 questionnaires were unusable due to unengaged or careless responses. No duplicate cases were found for any variable. The final sample size was 393 respondents.

7.4 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE STUDY RESPONDENTS

A final sample size of 393 participants completed the online survey. Respondents were employees across levels in South African organisations, aged 21 to 65. Permanent employees were considered.

Biographical data showed that more respondents held leadership and managerial roles than lower-level roles. This distribution may be partially explained by the features of the survey organisation's professional database and the greater accessibility of leadership development resources for managerial staff. Those in managerial and leadership roles tend to engage more in organisational surveys, as they often participate in professional growth initiatives, executive training programs, and leadership networks that use self-evaluation instruments for leadership and performance development.

Although the overrepresentation of leaders may limit the broader applicability of the findings to other occupational levels, it does not jeopardise the internal validity of the relationships analysed. Quantitative explanatory research focuses on uncovering statistically significant links between variables rather than ensuring complete demographic equivalence (Lim, 2025). Provided sufficient diversity is present within the measured variables, and the assumptions of the statistical analyses hold, valid inferences about the links between employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance remain. The skewed sample should therefore be regarded as a contextual constraint linked to data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar demographic disparities have been documented in organisational surveys executed via online professional panels, especially when leadership and organisational behaviour are the central areas of inquiry (Hair et al., 2022; Saunders et al., 2019).

Table 7.1 presents the biographical data of the study respondents, along with subsequent figures for specific variables. A brief explanation of the results is also provided.

Table 7.1

Biographical data of study respondents

Variable		
Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Men	211	53.7%
Women	181	46.1%
Not specified	1	0.3%
Not specified	1	0.3%

Variable		
Age (years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18–30	9	2.3%
31–40	52	13.2%
41–50	117	29.8%
51–64	214	54.5%
Not specified	1	0.3%
Race	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Black	118	30.0%
Coloured	22	5.6%
Indian	21	5.3%
White	231	58.8%
Not specified	1	0.3%
Job grade	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Employee	66	16.8%
Supervisor	29	7.4%
Manager	91	23.2%
Senior management	95	24.2%
Top management	111	28.2%
Not specified	1	0.3%
Type of employment	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Contractor	10	2.5%
Part-time	6	1.5%
Full-time	372	94.7%
Not specified	5	1.3%
Years of service	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
0–1 year	3	0.8%
2–3 years	8	2.0%
4–5 years	19	4.8%
6–10 years	47	12.0%
11 years and longer	316	80.4%
Not specified	0	0

Variable		
Highest qualification	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Std 7–8 | Gr 9–10	1	0.3%
Std 9–10 | Gr 11–12	14	3.6%
Certificate	22	5.6%
Diploma	72	18.3%
Undergraduate degree	63	16.0%
Postgraduate degree	220	56.0%
Not specified	1	0.3%
Industry | Economic sector	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry & Fishing	16	4.1%
Mining & Quarrying	11	2.8%
Manufacturing	57	14.5%
Electricity, Gas, Water Supply	10	2.5%
Construction	29	7.4%
Wholesale/Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles/Motor-Cycles/Personal Household Goods; Hotels/Restaurants; etc.	48	12.2%
Financial Intermediation Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	70	17.8%
Community, Social & Personal Services	88	22.4%
Private Households; Exterritorial Organisations, Representatives of Foreign Governments & Other Activities	27	6.9%
Not specified	37	9.4%

Figure 7.1 illustrates the distribution of respondents by gender. Most of the 393 respondents were male (53.7%; n = 211), while 46.1% (n = 181) were female. One (0.3%) respondent did not specify their gender. In summary, the sample consisted mostly of male respondents.

Figure 7.1

Respondent distribution according to gender

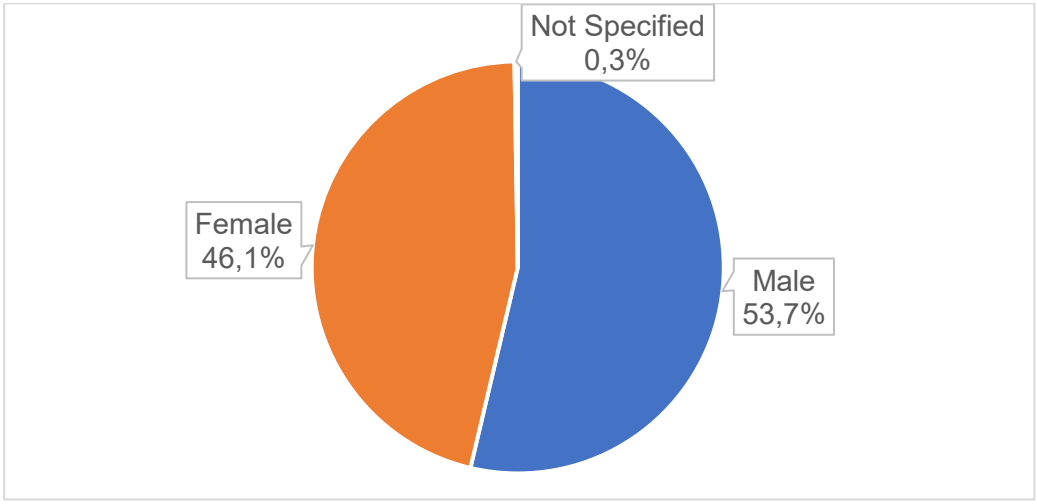


Figure 7.2 graphically illustrates the distribution of respondents according to age. A significant proportion of respondents fell within the 51–64-year age category (n = 214; 54.5%). Furthermore, 29.8% (n =117) were 41–50 years old, 13.2% (n = 52) were 31–40 years old, and 2.3% (n = 9) were 18–30 years old. One (0.3%) respondent did not specify their age. Most respondents were in the older categories, aged 41- 64 years. This profile shows an ageing workforce, which calls for succession planning to prepare the next generation of leaders.

Figure 7.2

Respondent distribution according to age

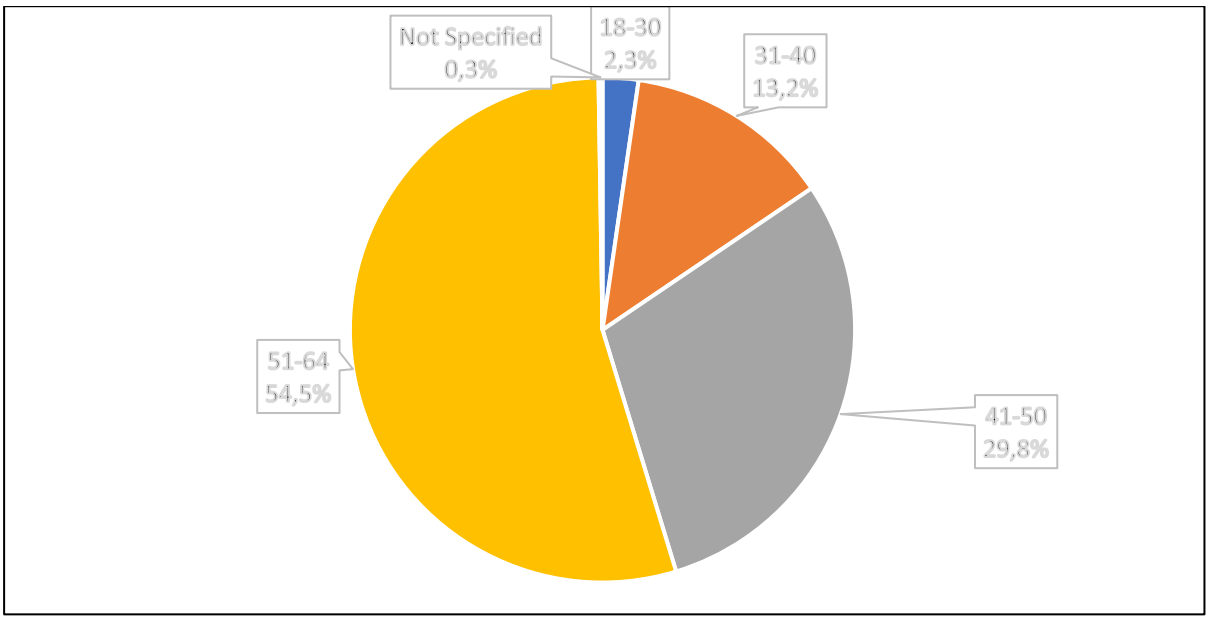


Figure 7.3 graphically illustrates the distribution of respondents according to race. The respondents represented the White, Black, Coloured, and Indian racial groups. More than half of the respondents identified as White (n = 231; 58.8%) and nearly a third identified as Black (n = 118; 30%). The Coloured and Indian racial groups were minorities in the sample, with 5.6% (n = 22) Coloured and 5.3% (n = 21) Indian. One (0.3%) respondent did not specify their race. Most respondents were White, followed by Black.

Figure 7.3

Respondent distribution according to race

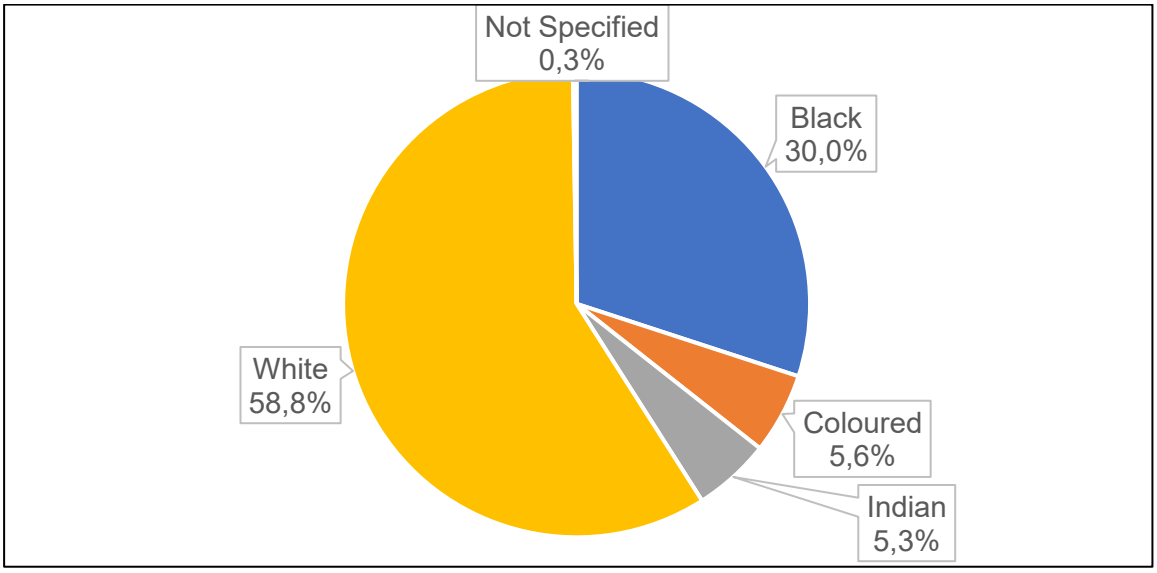


Figure 7.4 graphically illustrates the distribution of respondents according to job grade. The management level accounted for the most significant proportion of the sample, with 28.2% (n = 111) at the top-management level, 24.2% (n = 95) at the senior management level, and 23.2% (n = 91) at the management level. Employees accounted for a minority (16.8%), followed by supervisors (7.4%). The results show that most respondents were managers. The high representation of managers may be attributed to the availability of resources for online participation.

Figure 7.4

Respondent distribution according to job grade

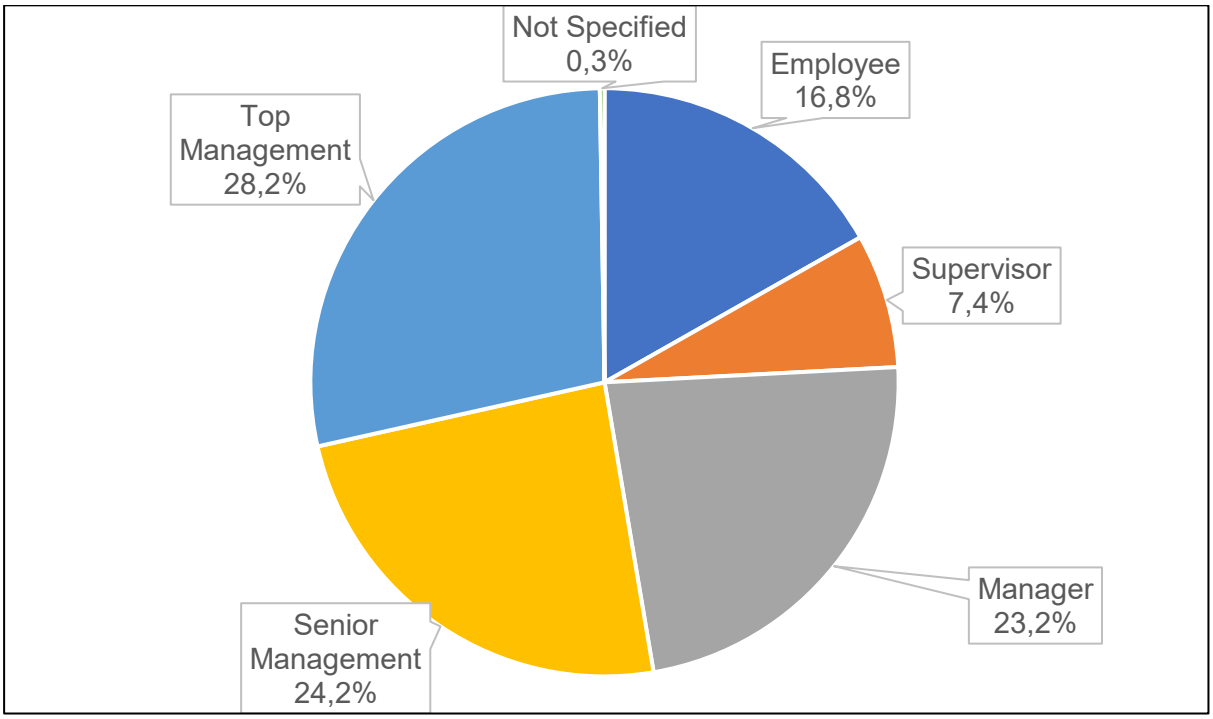


Figure 7.5 graphically illustrates the distribution of respondents according to type of employment. The majority of the respondents were full-time employees (94.7%), 1.5% were part-time employees, and 2.5% were contractors. Overall, most respondents were employed full-time.

Figure 7.5

Respondent distribution according to type of employment

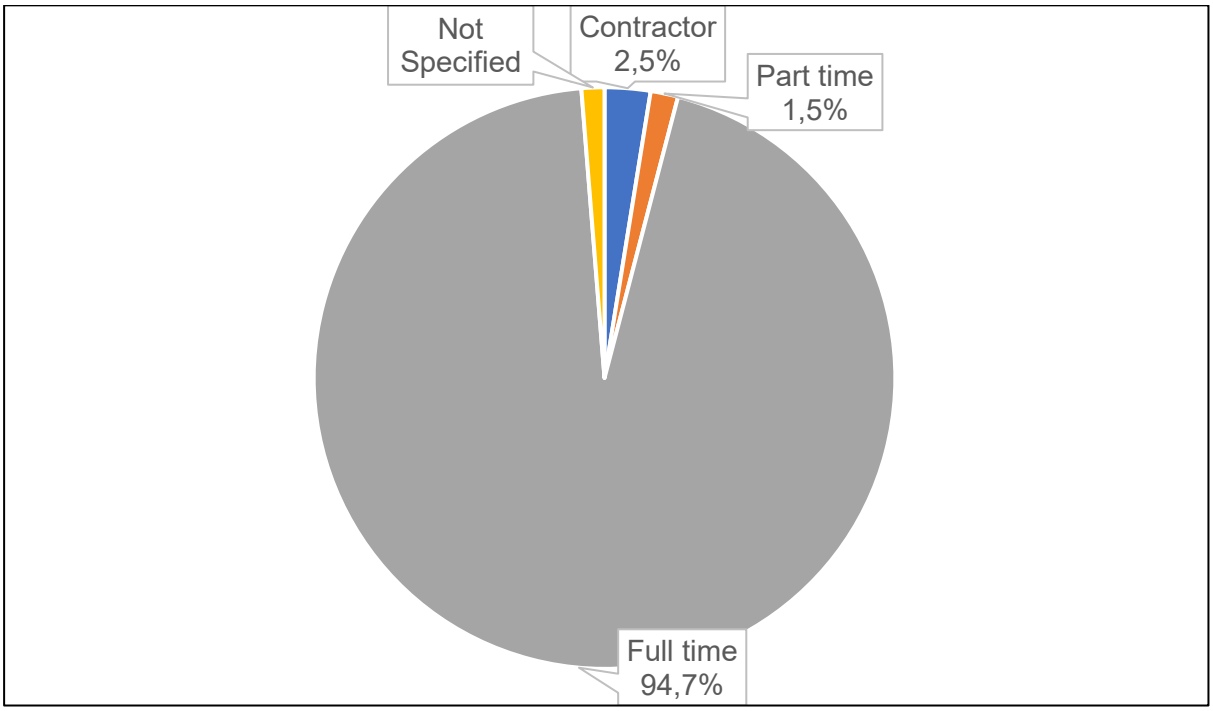


Figure 7.6 graphically illustrates the distribution of respondents according to years of service. The majority of the respondents had served 11 years or more (80.4%), with 12% having served for 6–10 years, 4.8% for 4–5 years, and 2% for 2–3 years. Overall, most of the sample had 11 years or more of service. This correlates with the age and job level of employees at managerial levels.

Figure 7.6

Respondent distribution according to years of service

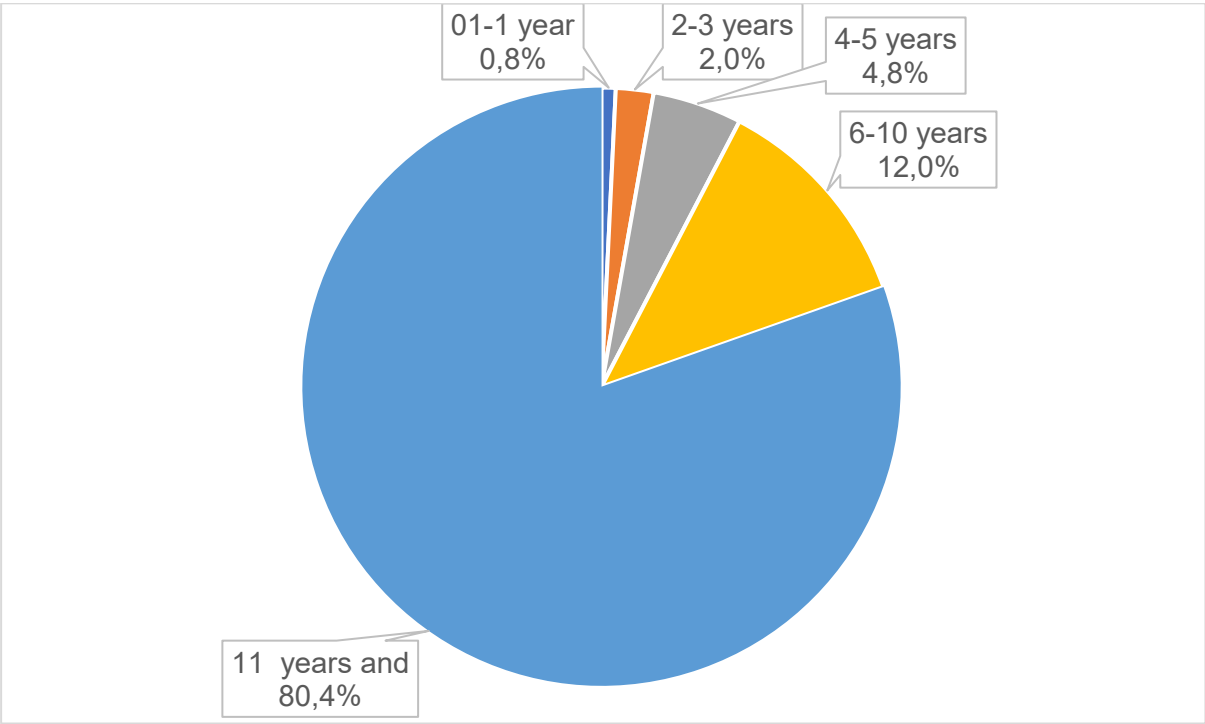
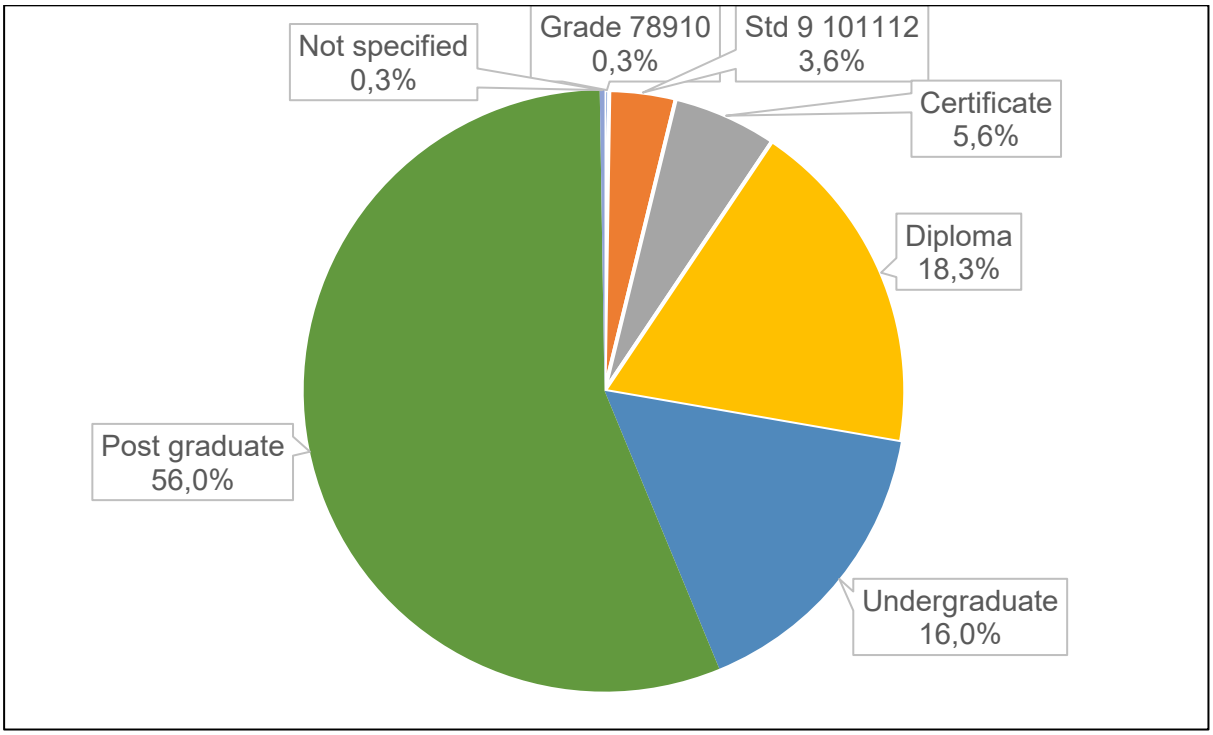


Figure 7.7 illustrates the distribution of respondents by highest qualification obtained. The largest proportion of respondents (56.0%) had a postgraduate qualification, followed by a diploma (18.3%) and an undergraduate qualification (16.0%). Overall, the majority of the respondents had a postgraduate qualification. Most people at managerial level require a degree or postgraduate qualification as a minimum requirement for their job.

Figure 7.7

Respondent distribution according to the highest qualification obtained



The next section is the measuring instruments.

7.5 MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT ITEMS AND CONSTRUCTS

This section presents the descriptive statistics results for all scales and sub-scales. The research used four assessment tools: the SAEES, SLQ, PSQ, and IWPQ.

7.5.1 South African Employee Engagement Scale (SAEES) (Nienaber & Martins, 2015)

The SAEES measures employee engagement, encompassing the following dimensions: organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, strategy and implementation, and immediate manager. The SAEES measures the following sub-scales:

- Organisational satisfaction [SAEES_OS]
- Organisational commitment [SAEES_OC]
- Strategy and implementation [SAEES_SI]
- Immediate manager [SAEES_IM]

7.5.2 Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006)

The SLQ measures leadership across the following dimensions: altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organisational stewardship. The SLQ measures the following sub-scales:

- Altruistic calling [SLQ_AC]
- Emotional healing [SLQ_EH]
- Wisdom [SLQ_W]
- Persuasive mapping [SLQ_PM]
- Organisational stewardship [SLQ_OS]

7.5.3 Personal Styles Questionnaire (PSQ) Kelley (1992)

The PSQ measures followership and comprises the following dimensions: independent thinking and active engagement. The PSQ measures the following sub-scales:

- Independent thinking [PSQ_Y_IT]
- Active-engagement [PSQ_Y_AE

7.5.4 Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans, 2015)

The IWPQ measures work performance dimensions, including task, contextual, and counterproductive performance. The IWPQ measures the following sub-scales:

- Task performance [IWPQ_TP]
- Contextual performance [IWPQ_CPerf]
- Counterproductive [IWPQ_ CProd]

7.6 MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Exploratory factor analysis, CFA, and SEM were the three stages involved in the model development process. EFA was used to investigate the structure of the variable factors. CFA was used to evaluate and validate the variable factor structure. Finally, SEM tested the theoretical model against the data.

7.5.1 Exploratory factor analysis

7.5.1.1 Common method variance

The EFA was conducted for all the constructs. If a substantial amount of common method variance is present, then either (a) a single factor will emerge from a factor analysis or (b) one general factor will account for most of the covariance among the measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). One way to determine this is to run an EFA in which all items are forced into a single factor and constrained, with no rotation (Podsakoff et al., 2003). If the factor explains more than 50% of the variance, common method bias may be present (Eichhorn, 2014). The 50% threshold is commonly accepted in the scientific community, but it is not a fixed rule. Using this method, the SLQ (31.407%), PSQ (33.362%), and IWPQ (44.262%) were below 50%, whereas the SAEES (53.297) was slightly above 50%.

Using this rule, all instruments scored below the 50% threshold except the SAEES, which scored 53%. Since this was not noticeably above 50%, it was not considered an issue. It was concluded that the common method of variance of <50% is unlikely to pose a potential threat to the research findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Another way to test whether a set of observed variables aligns with a hypothesised factor structure in CFA is to enter all items into a single latent factor. If the model fit is poor, then it supports the argument that common method variance is not a serious threat to the validity of the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This method was applied, and the results indicated that none of the instruments came even close to a good fit (see Table 7.2). Therefore, common method variance was not considered a problem, given the guidelines in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.2

Fit indices for measuring common method variance

SAEES		**SLQ**		**PSQ**		**IWPQ**	
p-value	0	p-value	0	p-value	0	p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	7.29	CMIN/df	7.312	CMIN/df	3.258	CMIN/df	7.364
GFI	0.442	GFI	0.556	GFI	0.699	GFI	0.64
AGFI	0.359	AGFI	0.467	AGFI	0.647	AGFI	0.55
NFI	0.607	NFI	0.443	NFI	0.696	NFI	0.65
TLI	0.614	TLI	0.423	TLI	0.745	TLI	0.64
CFI	0.64	CFI	0.475	CFI	0.766	CFI	0.68
RMSEA	0.161	RMSEA	0.162	RMSEA	0.097	RMSEA	0.162
SRMR	0.1002	SRMR	0.1283	SRMR	0.096	SRMR	0.115

Table 7.3

Acceptable values for fit indices

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT
p-value	>0.05	
CMIN/df	3–5	<3
GFI	>0.90	>0.95
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95
NFI	>0.90	>0.95
TLI	>0.90	>0.95
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08

7.5.1.2 Exploratory factor analysis for the SAEES

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the SAEES. There are three approaches to EFA factor extraction (Pallant, 2016): Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue rule >1), the scree test, and Horn's parallel analysis. This study used principal axis factoring with direct oblimin rotation. Loadings larger than 0.4 are usually regarded as meaningful, although in the matrices below, values between 0.3 and 0.4 are also included to aid interpretation. Table 7.4 displays the results of the KMO and Bartlett's test for the SAEES.

Table 7.4

KMO and Bartlett's test results: SAEES

KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.940
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	4588.579
	df	435
	Sig.	<0.001

For the SAEES, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.940, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$). The KMO score of 0.940 exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.6, indicating that the sampling was adequate for factor analysis.

Communalities show the initial (expected) versus extracted values, which are the actual values. Values above 0.6 are acceptable. Items with values below this may prove problematic.

Table 7.5 presents the percentage of variance explained by each factor as well as the cumulative variance.

Table 7.5

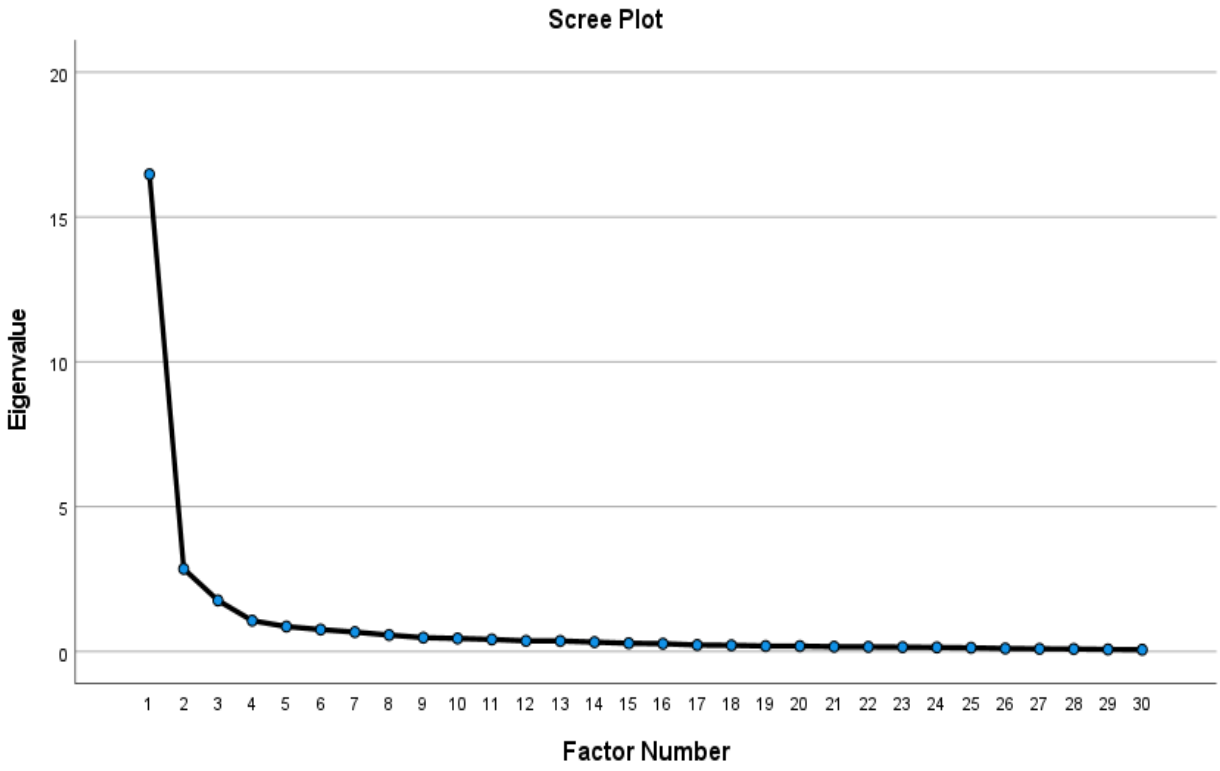
Eigenvalues and total variance explained: SAEES

FACTOR	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	16.478	54.928	54.928	16.191	53.970	53.970
2	2.855	9.518	64.446	2.567	8.556	62.526
3	1.765	5.885	70.330	1.480	4.932	67.458
4	1.067	3.555	73.886	0.788	2.625	70.083

The Kaiser criterion identified four factors, accounting for 70.08% of the variance in the data. These eigenvalues are also presented in the scree plot below (Figure 7.8) and suggest that three factors may be extracted; however, a powerful first factor is also evident, which could indicate a unidimensional result.

Figure 7.8

Scree plot: SAEES



The above scree plot identifies three factors, while Horn's parallel analysis suggests a three-factor model.

A four-factor solution was explored, since the instrument has four theoretical factors. The pattern matrix is reported below (Table 7.6) and confirms the instrument's theoretical structure, with the exception of Item 6, which did not load meaningfully on any factor. Although there were two cross-loadings, these were smaller than 0.4.

Table 7.6

Pattern matrix: SAEES

PATTERN MATRIX				
ITEM	**FACTOR**			
[SAEES.18] In our organisation, employees are encouraged to develop ideas to improve work procedures and methods	0.871	2	3	4
[SAEES.20] Initiative is encouraged in the organisation	0.869			
[SAEES.21] Risk-taking is encouraged in the organisation	0.780			

PATTERN MATRIX			
ITEM	**FACTOR**		
[SAEES.13] The organisational leadership gives employees a clear picture of the direction the organisation is headed	0.715		
[SAEES.23] Our top management communicates the vision and mission to us	0.711		
[SAEES.19] The organisation has a stimulating environment	0.701		
[SAEES.16] In my organisation individual employees are involved in implementing the strategy of the organisation	0.692		
[SAEES.22] The way we do things around here encourages high performance	0.659		
[SAEES.17] In our organisation individual employees accept accountability for their performance	0.607		
[SAEES.14] The organisation vision for the future is inspiring	0.535		
[SAEES.3] My job inspires me		-0.876	
[SAEES.12] I enjoy my work		-0.865	
[SAEES.1] At my work I feel bursting with energy		-0.864	
[SAEES.2] At my job I feel strong and vigorous		-0.821	
[SAEES.4] I feel positive about my work		-0.792	
[SAEES.5] I feel my work is fulfilling		-0.697	
[SAEES.15] My job is meaningful to me		-0.503	
[SAEES.29] My immediate manager gives me regular feedback that helps me to improve my performance			-0.934
[SAEES.28] I have the support from my immediate manager to do my job effectively			-0.810
[SAEES.25] My immediate manager does a good job of 'managing the work' – that is making appropriate work assignments, scheduling the work, setting priorities, etc.			-0.798
[SAEES.26] I trust my immediate manager			-0.751

PATTERN MATRIX			
ITEM	**FACTOR**		
[SAEES.30] I am satisfied with the way that my work performance is evaluated		-0.704	
[SAEES.24] My immediate manager inspires people in my business unit		-0.702	
[SAEES.27] My immediate manager trusts me		-0.673	-0.313
[SAEES.8] I am proud to work for this organisation			-0.634
[SAEES.7] I feel committed to the organisation			-0.624
[SAEES.11] I am excited by our vision and mission			-0.556
[SAEES.10] My personal values are in line with organisational values	0.338		-0.537
[SAEES.9] I will encourage my friends to join the organisation			-0.489
[SAEES.6] I am positive about my future in the organisation			
Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation.a			
a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.			

Although one item did not show a notable loading in the four-factor EFA, the item was retained because of its theoretical pertinence and contribution to content inclusivity. The non-loading factor-analytic performance was evident and was treated as a matter requiring further validation by CFA, rather than an adequate basis for automatic elimination (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012; Watkins, 2018).

7.5.1.3 Exploratory factor analysis for the SLQ

Table 7.7 shows the results of the KMO and Bartlett's test for the SLQ.

Table 7.7

KMO and Bartlett's test results: SLQ

KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.866
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	1867.103
	Df	253
	Sig.	0.001

KMO measures sampling adequacy, and the Bartlett test of sphericity is subsequently explained. The KMO results above indicate a score of 0.866, above the recommended 0.6. The Bartlett test of sphericity is significant, and the results suggest that the sampling was adequate to proceed with factor analysis. All communalities exceeded the 0.3 threshold.

Table 7.8 displays the eigenvalues and total variance explained for the SLQ.

Table 7.8

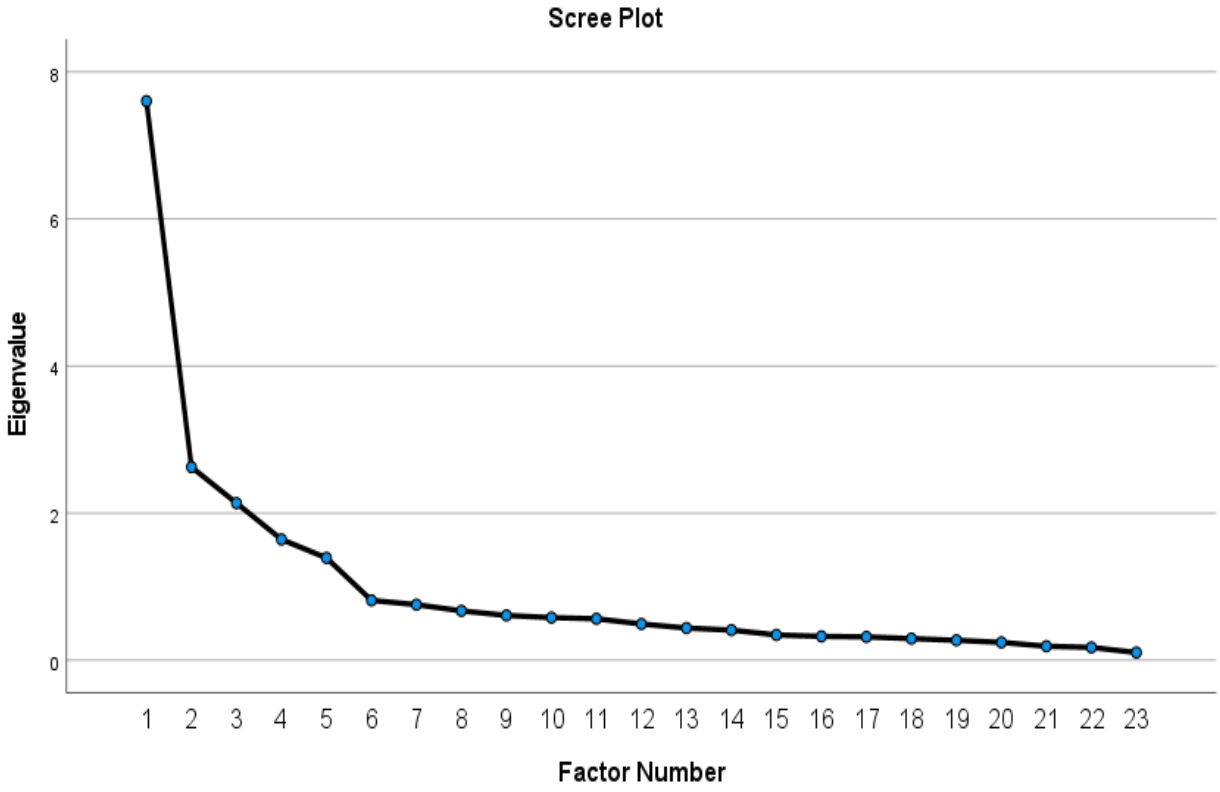
Eigenvalues and total variance explained: SLQ

FACTOR	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.604	33.061	33.061	7.218	31.384	31.384
2	2.626	11.419	44.479	2.235	9.719	41.103
3	2.137	9.292	53.771	1.751	7.614	48.717
4	1.643	7.143	60.914	1.276	5.548	54.266
5	1.392	6.051	66.965	0.982	4.267	58.533

The eigenvalues suggest that five factors can be extracted in the SLQ, explaining 58.53% of the variance in the results. Figure 7.9 displays the scree plot for the SLQ.

Figure 7.9

Scree plot: SLQ



The above screen plot identifies five factors, while Horn's parallel analysis suggests a five-factor model. The pattern matrix is presented in Table 7.9 and shows that the questionnaire's theoretical structure was confirmed, with the exception of Item 23, which loaded on persuasive mapping instead of organisational stewardship.

Table 7.9

Pattern matrix: SLQ

PATTERN MATRIX ITEM	FACTOR				
	1	2	3	4	5
[SLQ.14] I encourage others to offer compelling reasons for choices	0.800				
[SLQ.16] I encourage others to share the thinking behind their decisions	0.767				
[SLQ.15] I encourage others to dream 'big dreams' about the organisation	0.564				
[SLQ.23] I am preparing the organisation to make a positive difference in the future	0.540				-0.338

PATTERN MATRIX					
ITEM	**FACTOR**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
[SLQ.17] I am good at helping others to share their thoughts	0.490				
[SLQ.18] I am good at gently persuading others without being pushy	0.472				
[SLQ.3] I sacrifice my own interests to meet others' needs		0.778			
[SLQ.1] I put others' best interests ahead of my own		0.722			
[SLQ.4] I go above and beyond the call of duty to meet others' needs		0.703			
[SLQ.2] I do everything I can to serve others		0.558			
[SLQ.6] I am good at helping others with their emotional issues			-0.951		
[SLQ.7] I am talented at helping others to heal emotionally			-0.840		
[SLQ.5] I am someone that others turn to if they have a personal trauma			-0.790		
[SLQ.8] I am one that can help mend others' hard feelings			-0.676		
[SLQ.11] I have good awareness of what is going on around me				-0.914	
[SLQ.9] I am alert to what's happening around me				-0.797	
[SLQ.12] I am in tune with what is happening around me				-0.756	
[SLQ.10] I am good at anticipating the consequences of decisions				-0.539	
[SLQ.13] I am usually good at anticipating what is going to happen in the organisation				-0.437	
[SLQ.20] I believe that our organisation needs to function as a community					-0.785
[SLQ.22] I encourage others to have a community spirit in the workplace					-0.683
[SLQ.21] I see the organisation for its potential to contribute to society					-0.630
[SLQ.19] I believe that the organisation needs to play a moral role in society					-0.600

Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

The questionnaire's theoretical structure was confirmed, with the exception of Item 23, which loaded on persuasive mapping instead of organisational stewardship.

Although Item 23 correlated with a factor distinct from its theoretically intended subscale in the five-factor EFA, the item was retained because of its theoretical pertinence and contribution to content inclusivity. The different factor-analytic performance was evident and was treated as an issue requiring further validation by CFA, rather than an adequate basis for automatic elimination.

7.5.1.4 Exploratory factor analysis for the PSQ

The data were deemed suitable for factor analysis, since the KMO value (0.921) was above 0.6 and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$) (Table 7.10).

Table 7.10

KMO and Bartlett's test results: PSQ

KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.921
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	4066.316
	Df	780
	Sig.	0.001

Communalities were all above 3, which is acceptable. Table 7.11 shows the eigenvalues and total variance explained for the PSQ.

Table 7.11

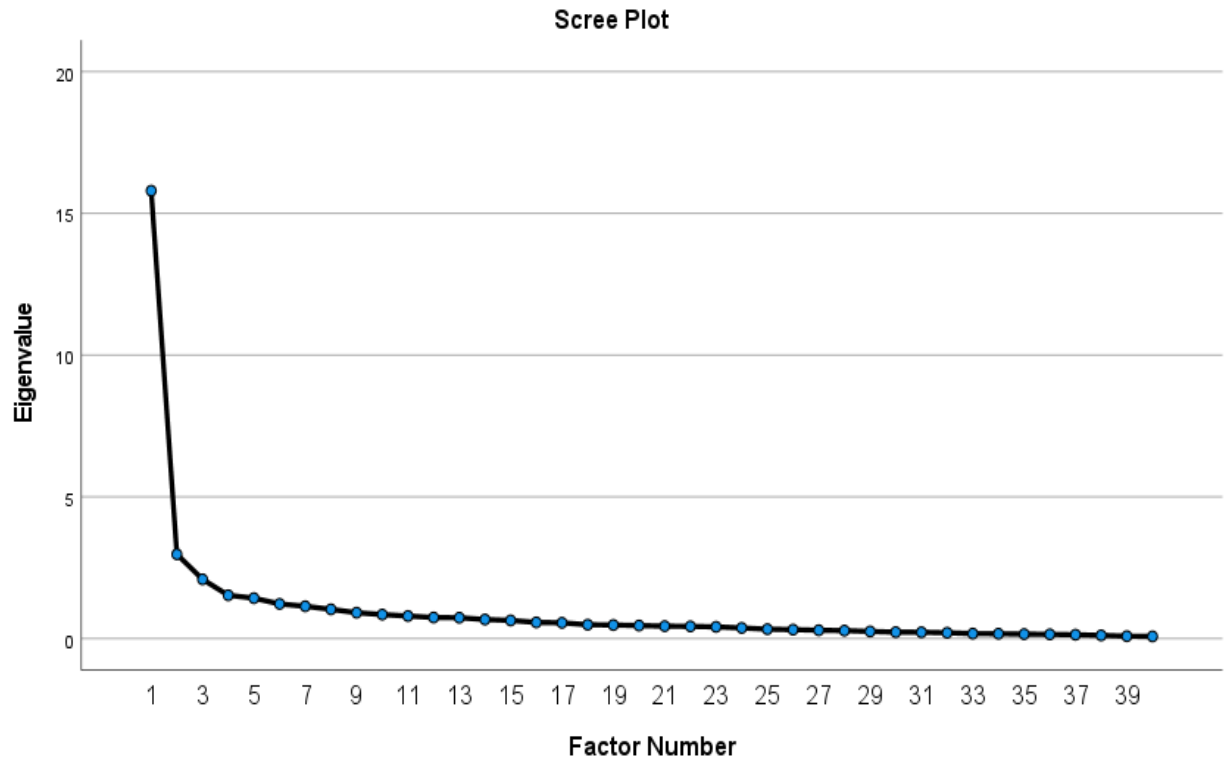
Eigenvalues and total variance explained: PSQ

FACTOR	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	15.799	39.498	39.498	15.474	38.686	38.686
2	2.975	7.438	46.936	2.527	6.318	45.004
3	2.091	5.228	52.164	1.619	4.047	49.051
4	1.528	3.821	55.985	1.102	2.756	51.807
5	1.427	3.568	59.553	0.866	2.164	53.971
6	1.223	3.058	62.611	0.830	2.075	56.046
7	1.141	2.852	65.463	0.686	1.715	57.762
8	1.033	2.582	68.046	0.493	1.231	58.993

The scree plot for the PSQ is presented in Figure 7.10.

Figure 7.10

Scree plot: PSQ



The Kaiser criterion suggests eight factors, while the above scree plot and Horn's parallel analysis identified three factors. Theoretically, the instrument has eight sub-scales. However, an eight-factor solution did not correspond to the theoretical scales. Instead, a three-factor solution was explored, as suggested by the parallel analysis. While only one item loaded meaningfully on the third factor (>0.4), the remaining two factors showed alignment with the two-factor theory of active engagement (all scores matched, except for Item 31) and independent thinking, with the exception of Items 38, 26, and 28.

The pattern matrix for the PSQ is presented in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12

Pattern matrix: PSQ

PATTERN MATRIX A			
ITEM	**FACTOR**		
	1	**2**	**3**
[PSQ_Y.4] [YOU] When you are not the leader of a group project, do you still contribute at a high level, often doing more than your share?	0.893		
[PSQ_Y.40] [YOU] Do you actively support your leader when their goals are consistent with the organisation's?	0.879		
[PSQ_Y.30] [YOU] When you accept an assignment, can the leader count on high-performance, high-quality work with minimal supervision and that you will fill in the cracks if need be?	0.871		
[PSQ_Y.31] [YOU] Are you intellectually and interpersonally honest with your boss and coworkers?	0.845		
[PSQ_Y.13] [YOU] Do you admit your failures rather than try to downplay or cover them up?	0.823		
[PSQ_Y.12] [YOU] Do you find pride and satisfaction in helping the leader achieve his or her goals?	0.793		
[PSQ_Y.10] [YOU] Are you highly committed to and energised by your work and job?	0.779		
[PSQ_Y.8] [YOU] Do you take regular and significant action to upgrade your work skills or knowledge?	0.767		
[PSQ_Y.16] [YOU] Are you a self-starter in looking for assignments and completing them?	0.763		

PATTERN MATRIXA ITEM	FACTOR		
	1	2	3
[PSQ_Y.28] [YOU] Do you help out other coworkers, which makes them look good, even when you don't get any credit?	0.763		
[PSQ_Y.24] [YOU] Do you push your work abilities to their limits?	0.758		
[PSQ_Y.5] [YOU] Do you generally think up better alternatives than the leader's proposed plan?	0.747		
[PSQ_Y.20] [YOU] Have you acquired a distinctive competence that sets you apart from your coworkers?	0.717		
[PSQ_Y.9] [YOU] Do you distinguish between your ego's preferences vs. an honest assessment of the ideas under discussion?	0.711		
[PSQ_Y.32] [YOU] Does your enthusiasm rub off on and energise your coworkers?	0.700		
[PSQ_Y.1] [YOU] Do you thoroughly evaluate the decisions of superiors?	0.694		
[PSQ_Y.2] [YOU] When starting a new job, do you build a quick record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?	0.675		
[PSQ_Y.35] [YOU] Do you stretch the truth and credit-taking to make yourself look good?	0.673		
[PSQ_Y.25] [YOU] Do you stand up to the leader or the group when you believe they are going in the wrong direction, even though it might mean conflict or retaliation?	0.655		
[PSQ_Y.38] [YOU] When you are not the appointed leader, do you try to force control from the leader because you like being the centre of attention or power?	0.635		
[PSQ_Y.39] [YOU] Do you abide by your own ethical standards rather than look to the leader of the group?	0.626		
[PSQ_Y.34] [YOU] Do you let the leader know immediately when you are in trouble, e.g., slipping a schedule?	0.597		
[PSQ_Y.19] [YOU] Do you manipulate your boss to get what you want?	0.542		

PATTERN MATRIXA ITEM	FACTOR		
	1	2	3
[PSQ_Y.26] [YOU] When you disagree with the leader, do you unload on the leader in a public forum rather than discuss it privately?	0.493		
[PSQ_Y.18] [YOU] Do you withhold your best ideas and best effort from the organisation or the leader?	0.415	0.332	-0.326
[PSQ_Y.36] [YOU] Are your personal work goals misaligned with the organisation's goals?	0.365	0.324	-0.349
[PSQ_Y.7] [YOU] Do you depend on the leader to do the thinking for the group?		0.676	
[PSQ_Y.11] [YOU] Do you look to the leader to solve the tough problems?		0.613	
[PSQ_Y.23] [YOU] Do you rely on the boss to make most of the decisions regarding your work assignments?	0.321	0.514	
[PSQ_Y.15] [YOU] When disagreements arise, do you generally submit to the leader to avoid confrontation or retaliation?		0.429	
[PSQ_Y.6] [YOU] Do you complain about work to your friends but do not make your feelings public to your boss?		0.417	
[PSQ_Y.21] [YOU] Do you accept what doctors, teachers, bosses, and other authority figures tell you rather than question or argue with them?		0.412	
[PSQ_Y.14] [YOU] When you finish an assignment, do you wait for the leader to give you another one?		0.404	
[PSQ_Y.37] [YOU] Are you submissive to people because they are in positions of power?		0.387	
[PSQ_Y.3] [YOU] Are you a conformist at work, e.g., dress, procedures, ways of thinking, etc.?	-0.321	0.371	
[PSQ_Y.33] [YOU] Do you put off evaluating your strengths and weaknesses?		0.352	
[PSQ_Y.27] [YOU] Are your boss' performance standards for you higher than your own?		0.305	

PATTERN MATRIXA ITEM	FACTOR 1	2	3
[PSQ_Y.29] [YOU] When the leader asks you to do something that is not right for you or runs counter to your personal preferences, do you usually do it anyway?			
[PSQ_Y.17] [YOU] Do you make a habit of questioning the leader's decisions?			0.670
[PSQ_Y.22] [YOU] Do you take on extra outside assignments even though they interfere with doing a superb job on your core work responsibilities?			-0.371
Extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation.			
a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.			

The EFA findings suggest that the anticipated eight-factor framework for the PSQ scale did not emerge when the original scale was applied in the current research. The three-factor method suggested by the parallel analysis included only a single item, limiting evidence that it represented a distinct and dependable latent dimension. Consequently, the two-factor solution was more theoretically and empirically sound because it mirrored the instrument's original two-factor structure. This result suggests that the original and modified versions of the PSQ instrument may have differing dimensional configurations, and the structure of the version used must be empirically verified. As a result, the study enriches the measurement literature by confirming that the original two-factor model remains empirically substantiated in the present sample and research context, while also underscoring the importance of distinguishing between the theoretical framework of an updated scale and the empirical structure of the original tool.

7.5.1.5 Exploratory factor analysis for the IWPQ

Table 7.13 displays the KMO and Bartlett's test results for the IWPQ.

Table 7.13

KMO and Bartlett's test results: IWPQ

KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.903
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	2024.456
	Df	153
	Sig.	0.001

The KMO results above indicate a score of 0.903, which is above the recommended score of 0.6. This result, together with Bartlett's test of sphericity, suggests that the sampling was adequate to proceed with factor analysis. Communalities were all below the recommended value of 0.3.

Table 7.14 presents the eigenvalues and total variance explained for the IWPQ.

Table 7.14

Eigenvalues and total variance explained: IWPQ

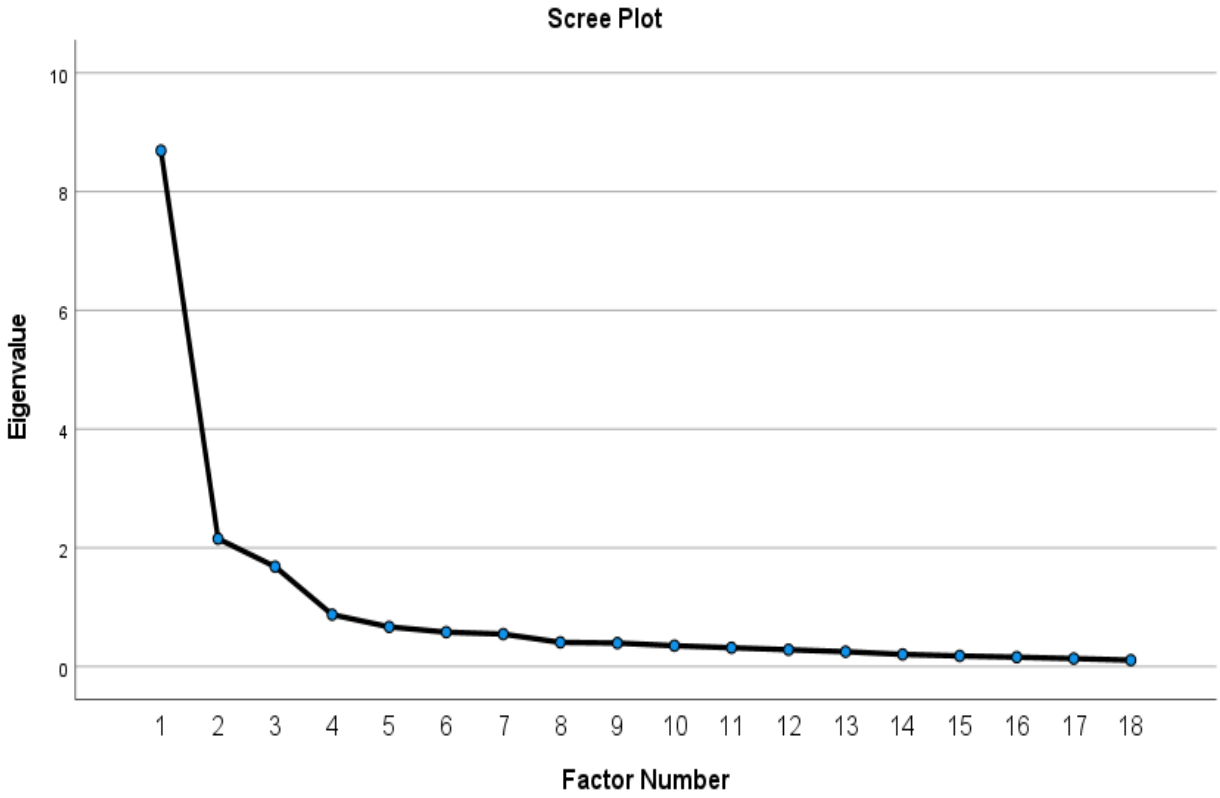
FACTOR	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			EXTRACTION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	8.692	48.287	48.287	8.347	46.371	46.371
2	2.154	11.969	60.255	1.739	9.661	56.032
3	1.684	9.354	69.610	1.390	7.722	63.754

Three factors were identified through the Kaiser criterion, which was confirmed with both the scree plot and Horn's parallel analysis. These factors explain 63.75% of the variance, which also corresponds to the theoretical structure of the questionnaire.

Figure 7.11 presents the scree plot for the IWPQ.

Figure 7.11

Scree plot: IWPQ



The pattern matrix in Table 7.15 shows that the theoretical factors are exactly duplicated in the data.

Table 7.15

Pattern matrix: IWPQ

PATTERN MATRIX ITEM	FACTOR		
	1	2	3
[IWPQ.11] I took on extra responsibilities	0.992		
[IWPQ.12] I continually sought new challenges in my work	0.917		
[IWPQ.10] I came up with creative solutions for new problems	0.773		
[IWPQ.7] I took on challenging tasks when they were available	0.678		
[IWPQ.6] On my own initiative, I started new tasks when my old tasks were completed	0.576		
[IWPQ.13] I actively participated in meetings and/or consultations	0.566		0.313

PATTERN MATRIX ITEM	FACTOR		
	1	2	3
[IWPQ.13] I actively participated in meetings and/or consultations	0.566		
[IWPQ.8] I worked on keeping my job-related knowledge up to date	0.507		
[IWPQ.9] I worked on keeping my work skills up to date	0.493		
[IWPQ.18] I talked to people outside the organisation about the negative aspects of my work		0.794	
[IWPQ.16] I focused on the negative aspects of the situation at work instead of the positive aspects		0.794	
[IWPQ.15] I made problems at work bigger than they were		0.726	
[IWPQ.14] I complained about minor work-related issues at work		0.654	
[IWPQ.17] I talked to colleagues about the negative aspects of my work		0.620	
[IWPQ.5] I managed my time well			0.835
[IWPQ.4] I was able to carry out my work efficiently			0.829
[IWPQ.1] I was able to plan my work so that I finished it on time			0.794
[IWPQ.3] I was able to set priorities			0.657
[IWPQ.2] I kept in mind the work result I needed to achieve			0.584

7.5.2 Internal consistency reliability

Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency of the factors. Table 7.16 below summarises the Cronbach alpha values, which should preferably be above 0.7 (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 164). Clark and Watson (1995) suggest that the average inter-item correlation should be between 0.1 and 0.5. Scholars give different cut-off points for item-total correlation. A value of 0.30 is suggested by Cristobal et al. (2007), 0.40 by Loiacono et al. (2002), while 0.50 is suggested by Francis and White (2002) and Kim and Stoel (2004).

Table 7.16

Internal consistency values of the factors

INSTRUMENT	CRONBACH ALPHA	AVERAGE INTER-ITEM CORRELATION	MINIMUM ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION
SAEES			
Organisational satisfaction	0.789	0.482	0.564
Organisational commitment	0.921	0.667	0.719
Strategy and implementation	0.945	0.633	0.675
Immediate manager	0.942	0.703	0.714
SLQ			
Altruistic calling	0.789	0.486	0.564
Emotional healing	0.894	0.678	0.661
Wisdom	0.871	0.582	0.564
Persuasive mapping	0.776	0.415	0.474
Organisational stewardship	0.846	0.529	0.555
PSQ			
Independent thinking	0.757	0.304	0.190*
Active engagement	0.929	0.369	0.537
IWPQ			
Task performance	0.904	0.657	0.716
Contextual performance	0.914	0.573	0.642
Counterproductive	0.886	0.507	0.586

*Even though this value was lower than acceptable, it was retained as the overall alpha was acceptable and the scale had a small number of items.

As can be seen from the table, all values were within acceptable limits, but some average inter-item correlations were above the 0.5 guidelines. This suggests some item redundancy in these scales.

7.5.3 Confirmatory factor analysis

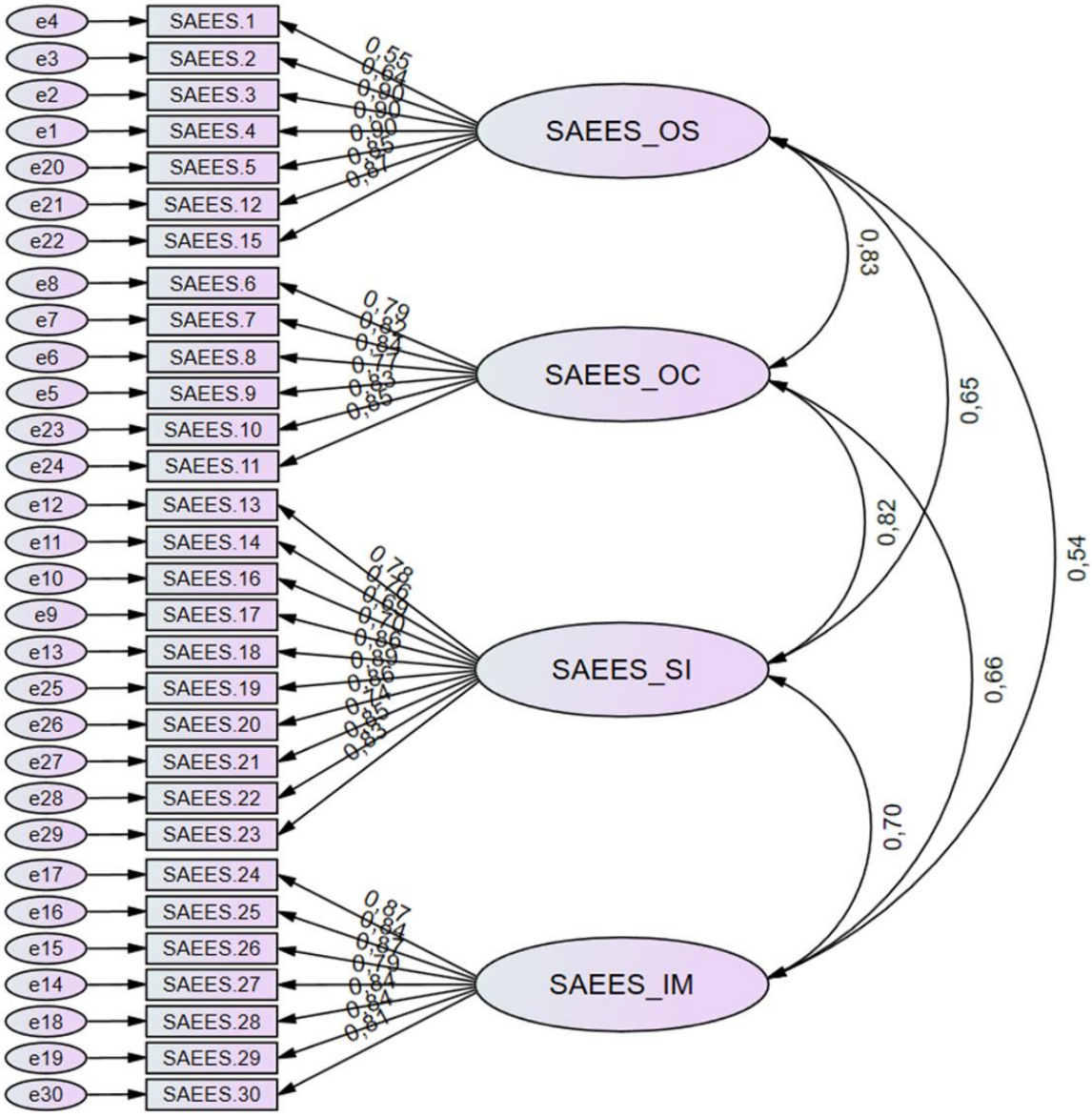
Following the EFA above and the internal consistency reliability, the suggested factor structure was tested using CFA. The results are reported below.

7.5.3.1 Confirmatory factor analysis for the SAEES

A baseline model for employee engagement was constructed. As this model did not reach an acceptable fit, the adjusted model was tested after adding modification indices (Figure 7.12).

Figure 7.12

Baseline CFA model for the SAEES



The fit indices of the baseline employee engagement model are presented in Table 7.17 and show that the model was not a good fit to the data. The adjustments were done as per Figure 7.13.

Table 7.17

Fit indices of the baseline SAEES

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	3.542
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.71
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.66
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.81
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.84
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.86
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.102
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.062

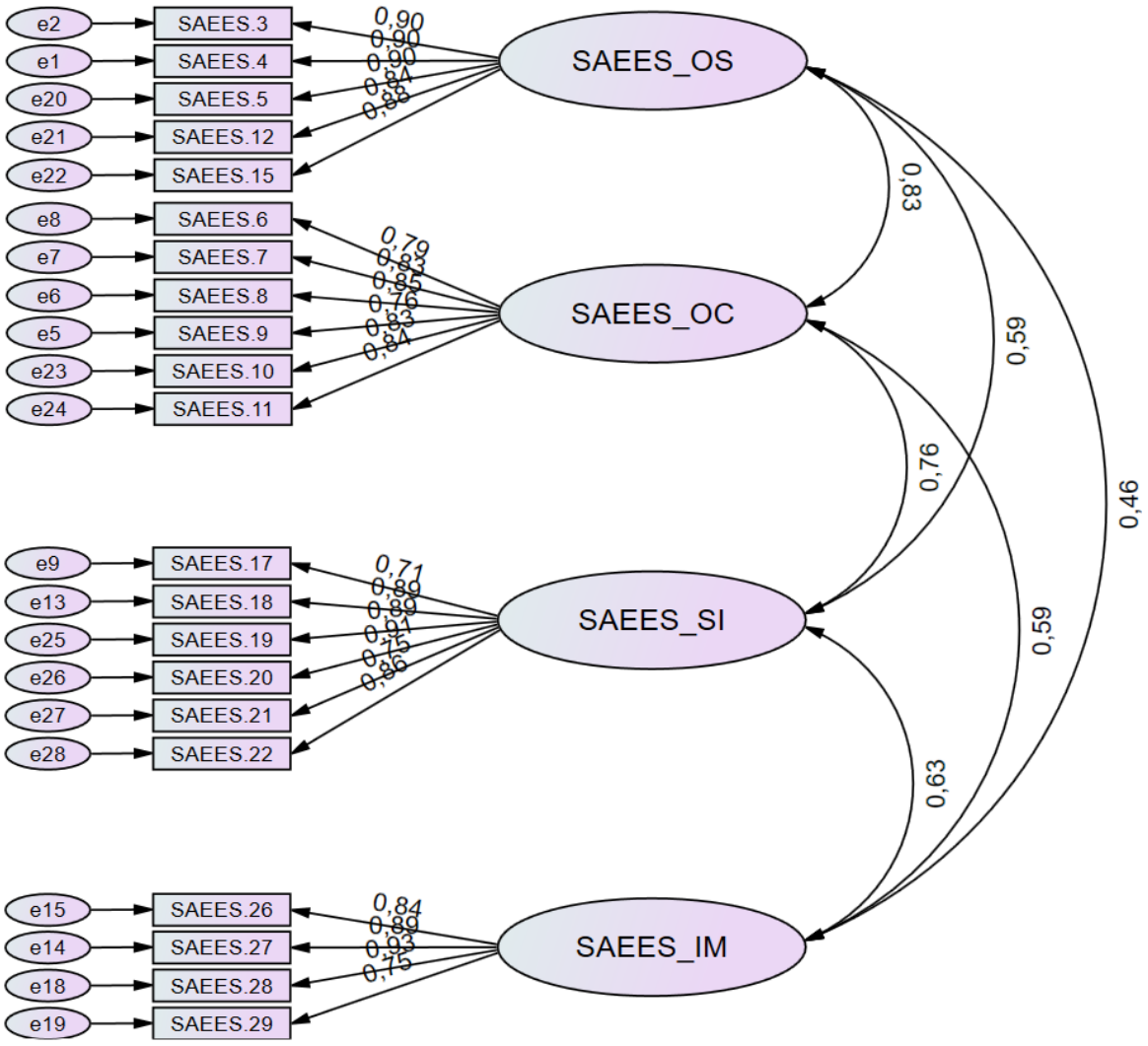
The comprehensive array of fit indices indicates that the suggested model shows mixed results, often reflecting insufficient to marginal global fit. The model yielded CMIN/df = 3.542, GFI = 0.71, AGFI = 0.66, NFI = 0.81, TLI = 0.84, CFI = 0.86, RMSEA = 0.102, and SRMR = 0.062. The significant chi-square result ($p < .001$) suggests that the model-predicted covariance matrix differs substantially from the observed covariance matrix. Nevertheless, because chi-square is sensitive to sample size, it should not be analysed in isolation. Combining indices provides more insight and shows that while the SRMR is comparatively advantageous, several other indices suggest the model does not achieve an acceptable overall fit.

The model demonstrated mixed fit, characterised by acceptable residual fit (SRMR = .062) but inadequate approximate and comparative fit (RMSEA = .102; CFI = .86; TLI = .84; NFI = .81), together with weak absolute fit (GFI = .71; AGFI = .66) and moderate CMIN/df (3.542). Thus, the model does not demonstrate good overall fit in its current form. Nevertheless, the acceptable SRMR indicates that the average standardised residual discrepancy is within a generally acceptable range, providing some empirical support for the model. The findings therefore warrant further theoretically justified examination and refinement rather than outright rejection of the underlying theoretical framework. This interpretation is consistent with Hu and Bentler (1999), who argued for evaluating combinations of fit indices, and with subsequent SEM guidance cautioning against treating numerical cut-offs as rigid rules. A single favourable index such as SRMR = .062 should not be used to claim overall model fit when the remaining evidence is predominantly unfavourable Bentler (1990).

The adjusted model is presented in
Figure.

Figure 7.13

Adjusted CFA model for the SAEES



The fit indices of the adjusted employee engagement model are presented in Table 7.18 and show that the model has a good fit to the data. Construct validity of the instrument can thus be assumed.

Table 7.18

Fit indices of the adjusted SAEES

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	2.451
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.85
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.81
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.91
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.94
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.94
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.077
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.042

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) yielded the subsequent model-fit statistics: χ^2 $p < .001$; CMIN/df = 2.451; GFI = .85; AGFI = .81; NFI = .91; TLI = .94; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .77; and SRMR = .042. Taken together, these indices provide mixed evidence about the adequacy of the proposed measurement model. Crucially, model fit assessment should not rely on a single metric or a rigid universal threshold. Investigators are urged to evaluate multiple indices that reflect different dimensions of model fit and to analyse them in relation to the model's theoretical framework.

The confirmatory factor analysis produced mixed but generally acceptable evidence of model fit. The chi-square statistics were statistically significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the hypothesised measurement model differs significantly from the observed covariance matrix. However, because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size, it was interpreted in conjunction with alternative model fit indices. The CMIN/df value of 2.451 indicated an acceptable level of parsimonious fit. Furthermore, the incremental fit indices were favourable, with NFI = .91, TLI = .94 and CFI = .94, indicating that the proposed measurement model represented a substantial improvement over the baseline model. The SRMR of .042 further supported the model, indicating relatively small standardised residual discrepancies.

7.5.3.2 Confirmatory factor analysis for the SLQ

A baseline model for servant leadership was constructed. As this model did not reach an acceptable fit, an adjusted model was tested after adding modification indices (Figure 7.14).

Figure 7.14

Baseline CFA model for the SLQ

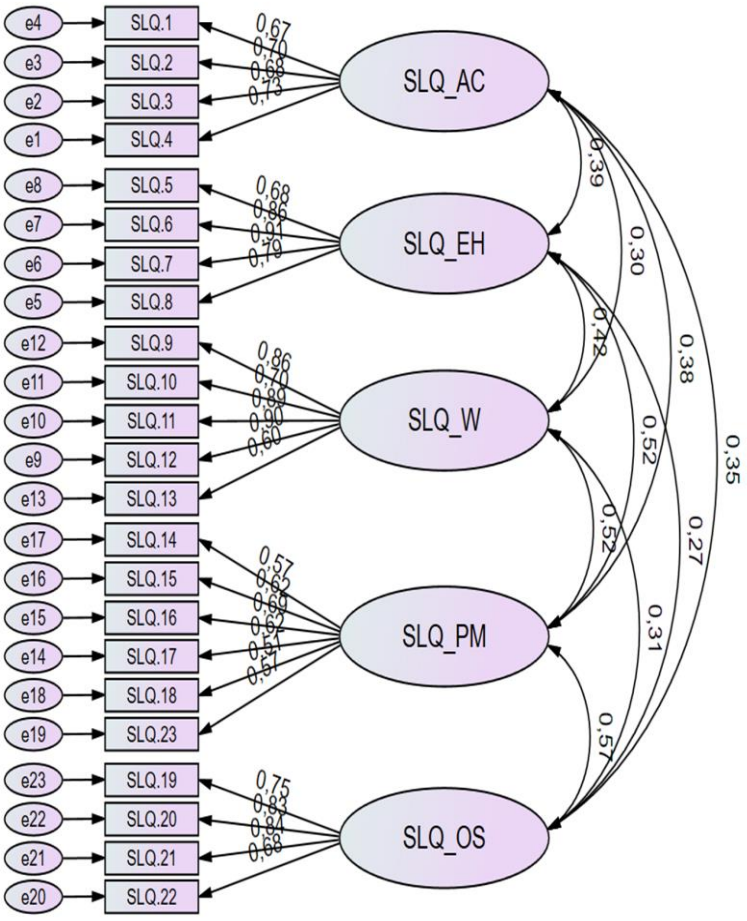


Table 7.19

Fit indices of the baseline SLQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	SERVANT LEADERSHIP	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3-5	<3	CMIN/df	2.238
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.86
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.82
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.84
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.89
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.90
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.072
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.069

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) yielded the subsequent model-fit statistics: $p < .001$, CMIN/df = 2.238, GFI = .86, AGFI = .82, NFI = .84, TLI = .89, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .072, and SRMR = .069. Overall, the proposed measurement model shows satisfactory, though not consistently robust, alignment with the observed data. Certain indices, notably CMIN/df, RMSEA, and SRMR, suggest an adequate degree of fit, while GFI, AGFI, NFI, and TLI fall short of widely accepted thresholds. The CFI reaches .90, often considered a minimally acceptable threshold; however, more rigorous scientific guidelines advocate values closer to .95. The model shows a marginally acceptable fit, with some indicators supporting the measurement framework while others suggest additional assessment may be needed. Hu and Bentler (1999) advise against relying on a single universal threshold and suggest assessing multiple indices simultaneously.

The measurement model shows mixed results but generally provides acceptable evidence of fit. CMIN/df, RMSEA, and SRMR suggest an adequate model fit, while GFI, AGFI, NFI, and TLI reflect a marginal fit. The CFI of .90 indicates a marginal level of conventional acceptance instead of a robust fit. Consequently, the model should be characterised as exhibiting marginal to acceptable overall fit rather than exceptional fit.

Figure 7.15 presents the adjusted model.

Figure 7.15
Adjusted CFA model for the SLQ

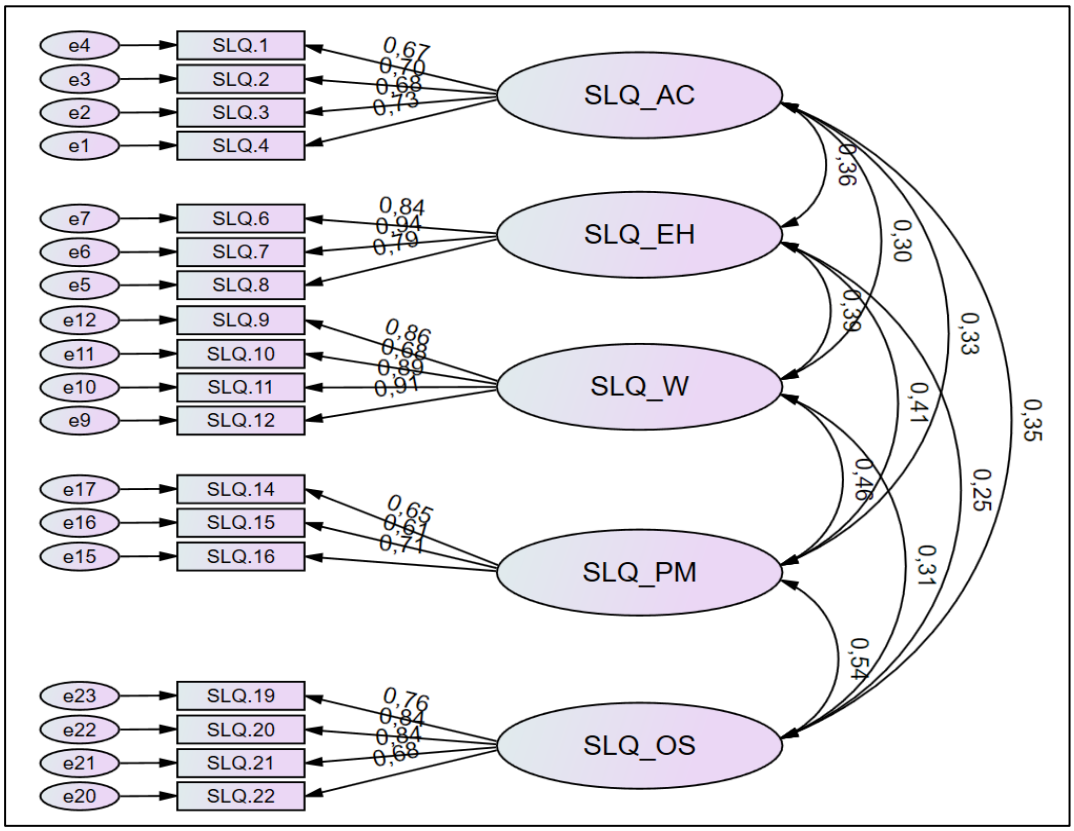


Table 7.20 presents the fit indices of the adjusted servant leadership model and shows that the model fits the data well.

Table 7.20

Fit indices of the adjusted SLQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	SERVANT LEADERSHIP	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3-5	<3	CMIN/df	1.693
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.91
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.88
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.91
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.95
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.96
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.054
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.050

The indicated model-fit statistics comprise $p < .001$, CMIN/DF = 1.693, GFI = .91, AGFI = .88, NFI = .91, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .054, and SRMR = .050. Taken together, these results provide strong support that the theorised measurement/structural model captures the observed data well. SEM advice encourages considering an array of indices that capture distinct elements of fit, since each statistic has its own merits and limitations.

The model can reasonably be reported as demonstrating good overall fit to the data. The most compelling evidence comes from the convergence of CMIN/DF = 1.693, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .054 and SRMR = .050. The GFI and NFI also conform to standard acceptable thresholds. The AGFI of .88 is marginally below .90 and should be recognised as a constraint of the fit profile rather than obscured. Primarily, the substantial chi-square should not be interpreted as proof that the model is inherently flawed; instead, it signifies that a perfect fit was not attained, whilst the other indices suggest that the model still demonstrates commendable practical or approximation fit.

7.5.3.3 Confirmatory factor analysis for the PSQ

A PSQ baseline model was constructed. Because this model did not reach an acceptable fit, we tested an adjusted model after adding modification indices (Figure 7.16).

Figure 7.16

Baseline CFA model for the PSQ

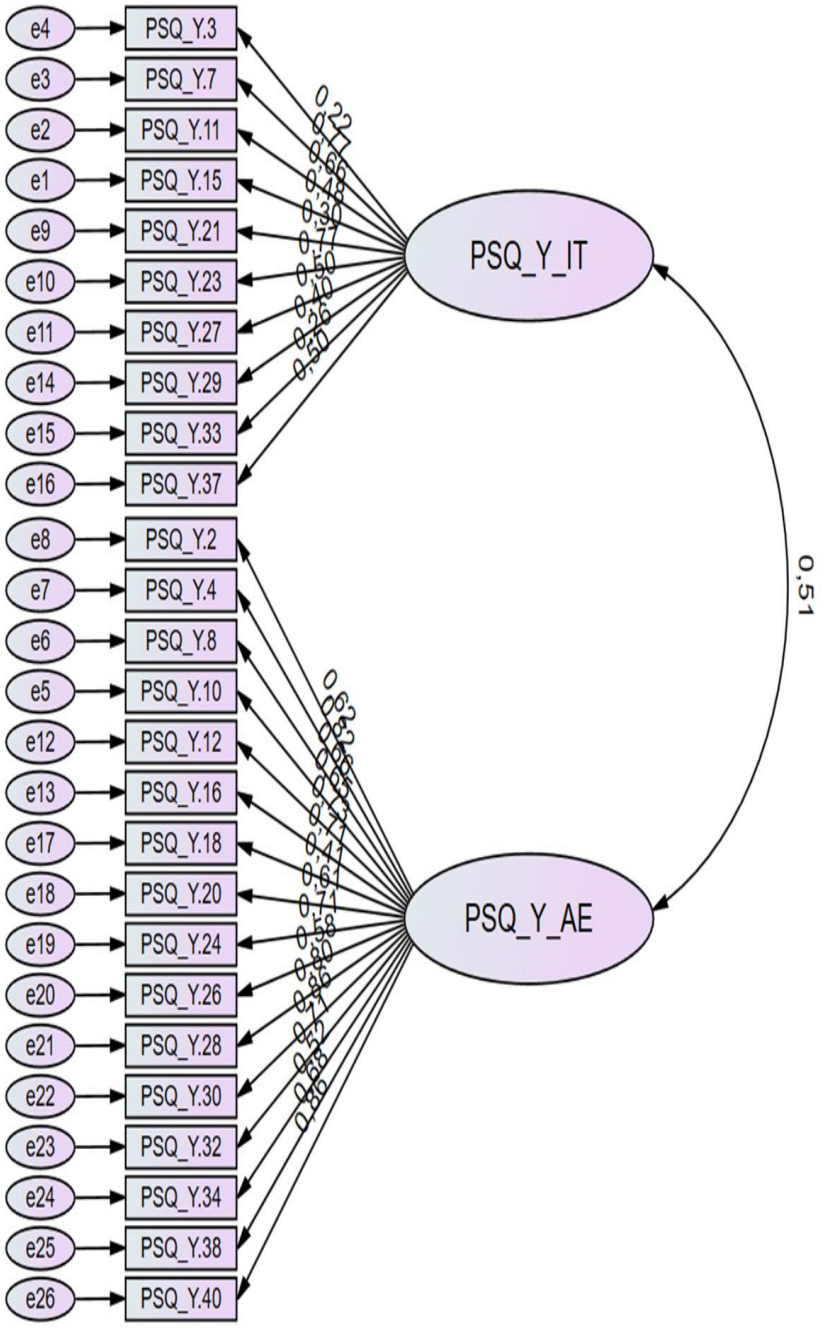


Figure 7.17 presents the adjusted model. Table 7.21 presents the fit indices of the baseline Personal Styles Questionnaire and shows that the model fits the data well.

Table 7.21

Fit indices of the baseline PSQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	PERSONAL STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	2.316
GFI	>0.90	>0,95	GFI	0.82
AGFI	>0.90	>0,95	AGFI	0.78
NFI	>0.90	>0,95	NFI	0.79
TLI	>0.90	>0,95	TLI	0.85
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.86
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.074
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.084

A baseline model for the Personal Styles Questionnaire was constructed. As this model did not reach an acceptable fit, an adjusted model was tested after adding modification indices (Figure 7.17).

The reported fit indices are χ^2 $p < .001$, CMIN/df = 2.316, GFI = .82, AGFI = .78, NFI = .79, TLI = .85, CFI = .86, RMSEA = .074, and SRMR = .084. Collectively, these results indicate that the measurement model shows some evidence of acceptable fit, particularly in the relative chi-square and RMSEA. However, the incremental and absolute fit indices are weaker than conventionally recommended levels. Therefore, the model should not be described as demonstrating unequivocally good or excellent fit. A defensible NQF Level 10 interpretation would characterise it as showing mixed or marginal overall model fit, requiring careful consideration of the theoretical structure and potentially further model refinement.

The CFA results provide evidence of reasonable approximate fit, as reflected by CMIN/df = 2.316 and RMSEA = .074. However, the relatively low GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI and CFI values indicate weaknesses in absolute and incremental model fit. Overall, the measurement model shows mixed or marginal fit and warrants further theoretical and empirical assessment.

Figure 7.17

Adjusted CFA model for the PSQ

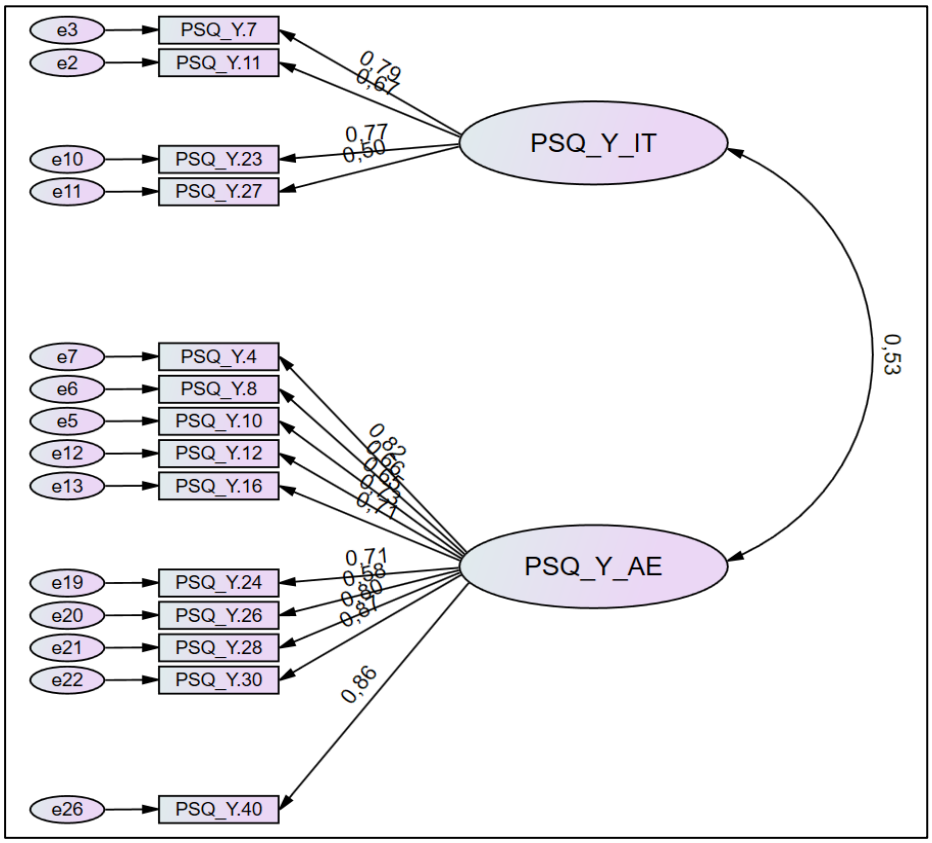


Table 7.22 presents the fit indices for the adjusted personal styles model and indicates a good fit to the data.

Table 7.22

Fit indices of the adjusted PSQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	PERSONAL STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	2.081
GFI	>0.90	>0,95	GFI	0.91
AGFI	>0.90	>0,95	AGFI	0.88
NFI	>0.90	>0,95	NFI	0.92
TLI	>0.90	>0,95	TLI	0.95
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.95
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.067
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.049

The CFA findings suggest that the hypothesised measurement model demonstrates an overall acceptable to good level of fit to the observed data. The fit indices are: χ^2 significance, p = 0.000; CMIN/df = 2.081; GFI = 0.91; AGFI = 0.88; NFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.95; CFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.067; and a second value of 0.049, which appears to be the lower confidence-limit value for RMSEA rather than a second RMSEA statistic. This pattern matters because you should not judge CFA model fit from one statistic alone. Instead, consider several indices together because different indices assess model fit from somewhat different perspectives.

The interpretation aligns with conventional SEM/CFA standards rather than treating cut-off values as inflexible rules. Key methodological texts include Hu and Bentler (1999), who investigated widely utilised fit indices and recommended combinations of fit data; Kline (2011, 2023), who supplies extensive advice on SEM model evaluation; and Brown (2015), who presents detailed guidance focused on CFA and latent-variable modelling. Recent methodological discussions have underscored that fit-index criteria should not be applied mechanically, and that substantive and measurement considerations must accompany fit assessment.

The results showed that some items remained in the two main PSQ categories.

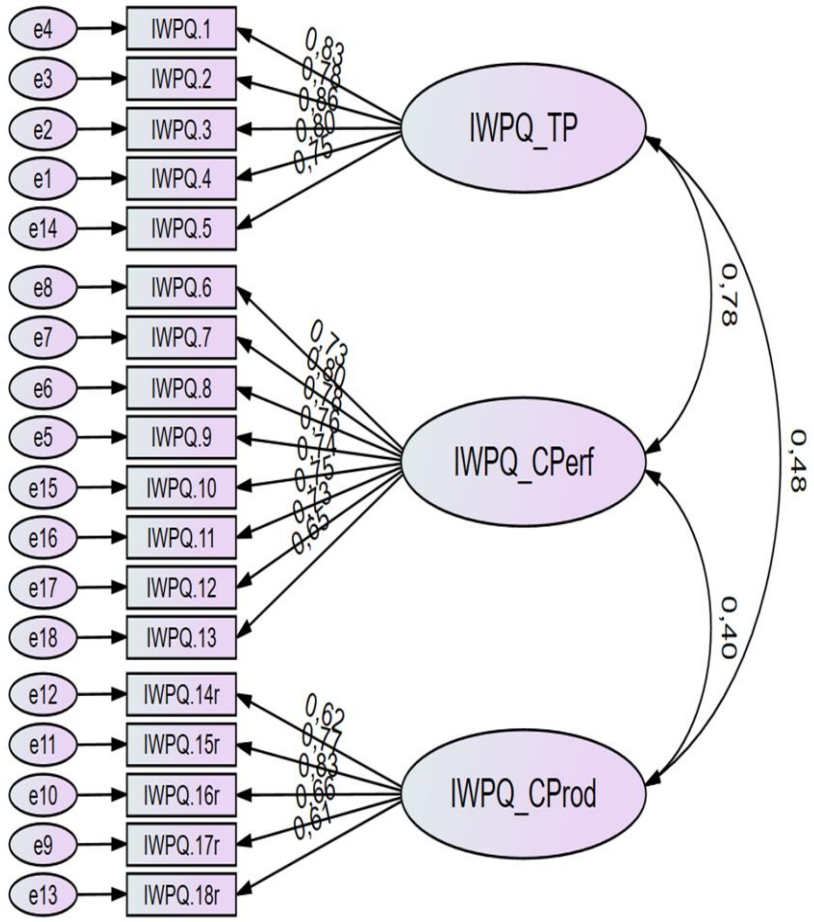
The researcher used the two PSQ categories for further research.

7.5.3.4 Confirmatory factor analysis for the IWPQ

The researcher developed a baseline model to predict individual work performance. As this model did not reach an acceptable fit, an adjusted model was tested after adding modification indices (Figure 7.18).

Figure 7.18

Baseline CFA model for the IWPQ



A baseline model for the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire was constructed, as presented in Table 7.23. As this model did not reach an acceptable fit, an adjusted model was tested after adding modification indices

Table 7.23

Fit indices of the baseline IWPQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	3.740
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.82
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.76
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.83
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.84
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.87
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.106
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.057

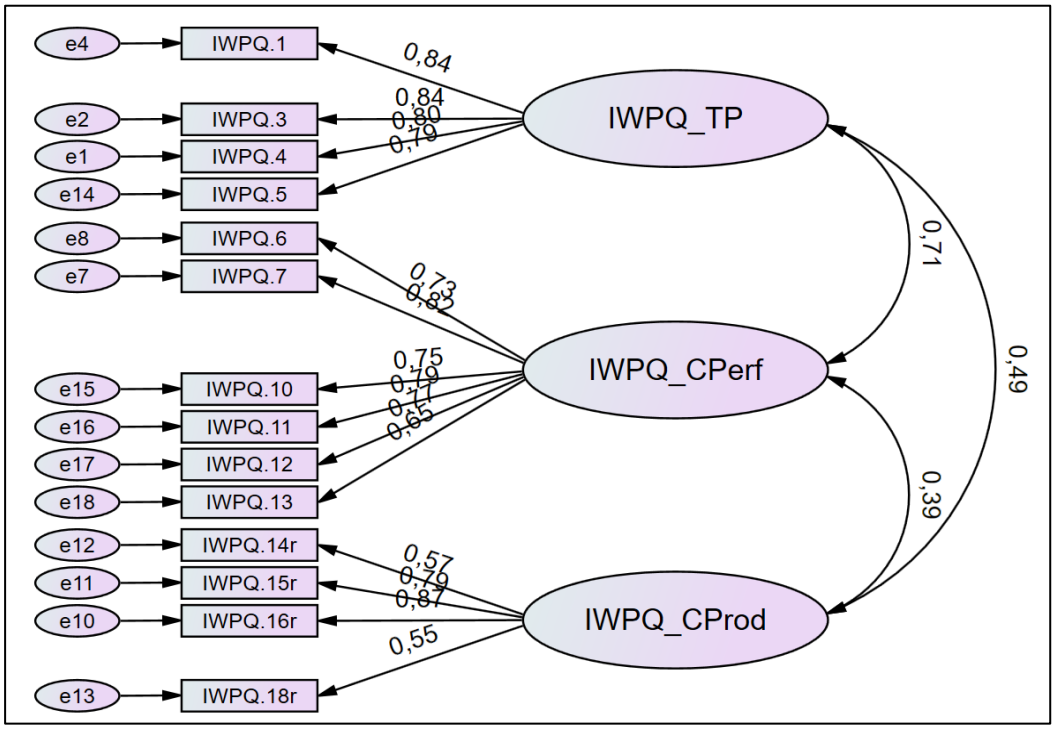
The presented confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) statistics are $p < .001$, CMIN/df = 3.740, GFI = .82, AGFI = .76, NFI = .83, TLI = .84, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .106, and SRMR = .057. Overall, these indices indicate that the hypothesised measurement model does not fit the observed data well. Specific indices, especially the SRMR of .057, demonstrate a satisfactory residual fit, whereas the CMIN/df, GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA reflect various extents of model discordance. Thus, it is not fitting to refer to this model solely as exhibiting an "excellent match. The findings suggest a lack of coherence or insufficient model fit, requiring scrutiny of the measurement model and its theoretical foundation.

The model shows some alignment with the data, especially on SRMR; nonetheless, overall fit remains insufficient, as numerous absolute and incremental indices reveal significant discrepancies between the model and the data.

Figure 7.19 presents the adjusted model.

Figure 7.19

Adjusted CFA model for the IWPQ



The fit indices of the adjusted individual work performance model are presented in Table 7.24, showing that the model has a good fit to the data.

Table 7.24

Fit indices of the adjusted IWPQ

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	1.989
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.92
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.89
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.92
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.95
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.96
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.064
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.043

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) produced a statistically significant chi-square result, p = 0.000 (p < 0.001), with CMIN/df = 1.989, GFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.95, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.064 and SRMR = 0.043. Collectively, these findings indicate that the proposed measurement model aligns satisfactorily to excellently with the empirical data. The model plausibly depicts the connections between the observable indicators and their underlying latent structures. Nonetheless, the statistically significant chi-square should not be taken in isolation as proof of inadequate model fit, as chi-square is influenced by sample size and may remain significant even when the difference between the proposed and actual covariance matrices is minimal. Schreiber and colleagues advocate for documentation.

The CFA model can reasonably be reported as demonstrating acceptable-to-good overall model fit, with particularly strong evidence from CFI (0.96), TLI (0.95), CMIN/df (1.989), and SRMR (0.043). The RMSEA of 0.064 supports a reasonable approximate fit. The only relatively weaker indicators are the significant chi-square and AGFI of 0.89; neither should be used alone to reject the model. The convergence of most indices provides a defensible basis for concluding that the hypothesised measurement model adequately fits the observed data.

Composite reliability and convergent validity

Whereas Cronbach's alpha is used as a follow-up measure of reliability after EFA, CR is used following CFA. The AVE value can be used as a measure of convergent validity. CR should ideally be >0.7, and AVE>0.5. Pasamar et al. (2020), however, argue that AVE values >0.4 could be acceptable, especially if the CR is >0.6.

Table 7.25 summarises the CR and convergent validity of the various factors measured in this study. All values meet the criteria for acceptability.

Table 7.25

Composite reliability and convergent validity of study factors

INSTRUMENT AND FACTORS	CR	AVE
SAEES		
Organisational satisfaction	0.948	0.784
Organisational commitment	0.923	0.668
Strategy and implementation	0.933	0.701
Immediate manager	0.915	0.731
SLQ		
Altruistic calling	0.790	0.485
Emotional healing	0.893	0.737
Wisdom	0.905	0.706
Persuasive mapping	0.693	0.430
Organisational stewardship	0.860	0.607
PSQ		
Independent thinking	0.782	0.479
Active engagement	0.924	0.551
IWPQ		
Task performance	0.890	0.503
Contextual performance	0.887	0.569
Counterproductive	0.796	0.689

7.5.4 Descriptive statistics per scale

Following the reliability and validity analysis above, we calculated mean scores for each factor. Table 7.26 presents these, together with the scale totals.

Table 7.26

Descriptive statistics of scales and factors

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS				
	Mean	**Std. deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
SAEES_OS	4.09	0.902	-1.258	1.604
SAEES_OC	3.96	0.948	-1.104	0.934
SAEES_SI	3.52	1.034	-0.580	-0.269
SAEES_IM	3.88	1.067	-1.027	0.439
SAEES	3.87	0.839	-0.905	0.690
SLQ_AC	4.07	0.583	-0.482	0.719
SLQ_EH	3.79	0.826	-0.451	-0.228
SLQ_W	4.35	0.601	-0.806	0.438
SLQ_PM	4.12	0.677	-0.970	2.011
SLQ_OS	4.40	0.654	-1.422	2.794
SLQ	4.15	0.452	-0.673	1.238
PSQ_Y_IT	0.61	0.877	-0.613	0.010
PSQ_Y_AE	1.12	0.888	-1.946	3.526
PSQ_Y	0.86	0.751	-1.400	2.366
PSQ_B_IT	0.50	0.873	-0.402	-0.078
PSQ_B_AE	1.19	0.830	-1.828	3.536
PSQ_B	0.85	0.710	-1.083	2.021
IWPQ_TP	4.13	0.801	-1.341	2.232
IWPQ_CPerf	4.22	0.784	-1.668	3.437
IWPQ_CProd	4.15	0.772	-1.142	1.283
IWPQ	4.16	0.628	-1.507	3.341

7.5.5 Correlations between scales

The study hypotheses concerned the correlations between the variables. Bivariate relationships were initially examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the results are presented in Table 7.27. The analysis included the original PSQ and its two overall factors.

Table 7.27

Correlations between scales

	SAEES_OS	SAEES_OC	SAEES_SI	SAEES_IM	SAEES	SLQ_AC	SLQ_EH	SLQ_W	SLQ_PM	SLQ_OS	SLQ	PSQ_Y_IT	PSQ_Y_AE	PSQ_Y	PSQ_B_IT	PSQ_B_AE	PSQ_B	IWPQ_TP	IWPQ_CPerf	IWPQ_CProd	IWPQ
SAEES_OS	--																				
SAEES_OC	.786**	--																			
SAEES_SI	.569**	.693**	--																		
SAEES_IM	.518**	.603**	.611**	--																	
SAEES	.831**	.900**	.852**	.816**	--																
SLQ_AC	.126*	.125*	0.097	0.089	.128*	--															
SLQ_EH	.133**	.220**	.125*	.107*	.171**	.295**	--														
SLQ_W	.150**	.200**	0.044	0.094	.140**	.231**	.374**	--													
SLQ_PM	.247**	.304**	.237**	.176**	.282**	.194**	.332**	.395**	--												
SLQ_OS	.232**	.263**	.187**	.202**	.259**	.260**	.310**	.320**	.448**	--											
SLQ	.262**	.333**	.208**	.198**	.292**	.560**	.730**	.673**	.705**	.688**	--										
PSQ_Y_IT	0.005	-0.063	-.124*	-0.076	-0.079	-0.020	0.030	0.086	.168**	0.053	0.094	--									
PSQ_Y_AE	.122*	.126*	0.033	.118*	.116*	0.073	0.097	.156**	.167**	.199**	.204**	.451**	--								
PSQ_Y	0.075	0.038	-0.053	0.026	0.022	0.031	0.075	.142**	.197**	.149**	.175**	.850**	.854**	--							
PSQ_B_IT	.163**	0.094	0.053	0.067	.108*	-0.013	0.040	0.050	.139**	0.035	0.076	.612**	.330**	.552**	--						
PSQ_B_AE	.169**	.200**	.111*	.202**	.200**	0.094	.103*	0.094	.184**	.185**	.196**	.330**	.780**	.653**	.390**	--					
PSQ_B	.199**	.175**	0.098	.159**	.184**	0.047	0.085	0.085	.193**	.130*	.161**	.569**	.659**	.721**	.843**	.824**	--				
IWPQ_TP	.255**	.201**	.205**	.211**	.256**	0.006	.103*	.243**	.147**	0.069	.168**	0.049	.121*	.100*	0.082	.158**	.143**	--			
IWPQ_CPerf	.329**	.264**	.239**	.186**	.296**	.111*	.128*	.332**	.251**	.118*	.273**	.136**	.122*	.151**	.192**	.125*	.191**	.622**	--		
IWPQ_CProd	.293**	.294**	.184**	.203**	.283**	.118*	.212**	.193**	.197**	.157**	.263**	0.057	.193**	.148**	.119*	.250**	.219**	.407**	.335**	--	
IWPQ	.365**	.316**	.262**	.250**	.348**	0.097	.184**	.321**	.248**	.143**	.293**	.101*	.182**	.166**	.163**	.222**	.230**	.852**	.819**	.723**	--

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a positive and statistically significant association between overall leadership and the outcome variable ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient's magnitude indicates a moderately positive connection, suggesting that higher leadership is associated with higher outcome levels; however, leadership alone explains little of the observed variance.

Below are some of the observations worth noting based on the correlation results:
The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between overall leadership and the outcome variable ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient size reflects a moderate positive correlation, suggesting that higher leadership is associated with higher outcome levels; however, leadership alone does not explain a significant share of the observed variance.

- The correlation patterns presented in Table 7.27 reveal that the SAEES dimensions are strongly interrelated, with correlation coefficients ranging from .569 to .786. These findings indicate that the dimensions are closely related yet remain distinguishable from one another. The high intercorrelations further suggest that the dimensions represent interconnected aspects of a broader underlying construct.
- The SLQ dimensions exhibited moderate intercorrelations ($r = .295–.448$), indicating that the dimensions are related yet sufficiently distinct. This pattern is theoretically meaningful, as it supports conceptualising the SLQ as comprising related but distinct dimensions. Item 23 (“I am preparing the organisation to make a positive difference in the future”) loaded on the persuasive mapping factor rather than organisational stewardship, suggesting a contextually relevant construct structure.
- The small but statistically significant relationship between followership and performance (H3) indicates a weak yet meaningful association within the current sample. This finding suggests that, although the constructs are related, they remain conceptually distinct.
- The model structure suggests that leadership may mediate the relationship between engagement and performance. However, this should be formally tested using appropriate methods (e.g., bootstrapped indirect effects), making it a limitation.

7.5.6 Biographical variable differences

The differences between biographical variables in relation to the variables of interest were investigated using an independent samples t-test (for comparing two groups) or a one-way ANOVA (for comparing more than two groups). The variables studied included gender, age, race, job grade, type of employment, years of service, highest qualification, and industry. Only significant results are reported below.

7.5.6.1 Gender

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare male and female respondents according to the scale scores. Table 7.28 presents a summary of the significant results.

Table 7.28

Summary of gender differences

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST							
GENDER	**STATISTIC**	**SAEES_SI**	**SLQ_AC**	**SLQ_EH**	**SLQ_PM**	**PSQ_Y_IT**	**IWPQ_CPROD**
Male (n = 211)	Mean	3.41	4.00	3.65	4.20	0.70	4.22
	SD	1.08	0.62	0.73	0.67	0.85	0.76
Female (n = 181)	Mean	4.00	4.14	3.95	4.03	0.49	4.06
	SD	0.96	0.53	0.73	0.67	0.90	0.77
Levene's test for the equality of variances	F-test	3.135	2.973	8.946	0.04	1.045	0.389
	Sig	0.077	0.087	0.003	0.841	0.307	0.533
Equal variances not assumed	t-test	-2.325	-2.292	-3.706	2.562	2.415	2.105
	Df	390	390	389.76	390	390	390
	p (2-tailed)	0.021	0.022	<.001	0.011	0.016	0.036
Effect size (Cohen's D)		-0.236 Small	-0.232 Small	-0.37 Small	0.26 Small	0.245 Small	0.213 Small

As shown in Table 7.28, female respondents scored significantly higher than male respondents on strategy and implementation and altruistic calling; female respondents also scored marginally higher than their male counterparts on emotional healing. Male respondents scored higher on persuasive mapping, independent thinking, and counterproductive behaviour.

7.5.6.2 Age

Age groups were compared using a one-way ANOVA. Significant differences were observed on three of the scales, as reported in Table 7.29.

Table 7.29

Summary of age differences

Measure	**AGE GROUP**						**F(2.389)**	**p-value**	**η2**	**Effect size**
	18–40 (n = 61)		41–50 (n = 117)		51–64 (n = 214)					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
SAEES_OS	3.80	0.96	4.07	0.97	4.19	0.84	4.167	0.016	0.021	Small
SLQ_PM	3.90	0.67	4.16	0.67	4.17	0.68	4.219	0.015	0.021	Small
SLQ_OS	4.20	0.74	4.55	0.58	4.40	0.66	4.134	0.017	0.021	Small

Pairwise differences in the mean scores reported in Table 7.29 revealed that, for organisational satisfaction, there was a significant difference between the 18–40- and 51- 64-year age groups (p = .012), with the older group having a higher score. The same pattern emerged for performance mapping (p = .013). On the organisational stewardship score, a significant difference was found between the 18–40- and 41–50-year age groups (p = .012), with the older group again scoring higher.

7.5.6.3 Job grade

Job grade differences were compared using a one-way ANOVA. Significant differences were observed on three of the scales. Table 7.30 displays the results for job grade differences.

Pairwise comparisons showed that, on the organisational satisfaction scale, top management scored significantly higher than both managers (p = 0.018) and senior managers (p = 0.020). For organisational commitment, top management had significantly higher scores than employees (p = 0.008), managers (p = 0.001), and senior managers (p = 0.008).

The same pattern emerged for strategy and implementation, with top management scoring significantly higher than employees ($p = 0.030$), supervisors ($p = 0.001$), managers ($p < .001$), and senior management ($p = 0.023$). This finding was echoed in the total SAEES score, with top management scoring significantly higher than employees ($p = 0.012$), supervisors ($p = 0.022$), managers ($p < .001$), and senior management ($p = 0.023$). Overall, respondents in top management showed significantly higher engagement than respondents at most other levels.

Regarding persuasive mapping, employees' mean score was significantly lower than that of managers ($p = 0.003$), senior management ($p < 0.001$), and top management ($p < 0.001$). In addition, top management had a significantly higher score than managers ($p = 0.033$). On total SLQ scores, employees also scored lower than both managers ($p = 0.047$) and top management ($p = 0.003$). In addition, senior management scored significantly lower than top management ($p = 0.003$).

The next significant difference across job grades was for the independent thinking factor, as measured by the PSQ. Employees scored significantly lower on this scale than both senior managers ($p = 0.018$) and top management ($p = 0.015$). Lastly, employees received significantly lower scores on contextual performance than senior managers ($p = 0.024$) and top management ($p = 0.012$).

Table 7.30

Summary of job grade differences

Measure	JOB GRADE													
	Employee (n = 66)		Supervisor (n = 29)		Manager (n = 91)		Senior management (n = 95)		Top management (n = 111)		F(4,387)	p-value	η2	Effect size
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
SAEES_OS	4.00	0.98	3.94	0.99	3.89	0.94	3.99	0.86	4.37	0.78	3.72	0.006	0.037	Small
SAEES_OC	3.82	1.08	3.84	0.89	3.79	1.01	3.87	0.88	4.31	0.80	5.34	<.001	0.052	Small
SAEES_SI	3.44	1.15	3.03	1.03	3.21	1.11	3.55	0.88	3.93	0.89	8.75	<0.001	0.083	Medium
SAEES	3.76	0.91	3.65	0.81	3.69	0.89	3.69	0.89	4.17	0.74	5.69	<0.001	0.056	Small
SLQ_PM	3.78	0.80	4.01	0.48	4.07	0.69	4.19	0.57	4.37	0.56	9.69	<0.001	0.091	Medium
SLQ	3.99	0.49	4.10	0.34	4.18	0.41	4.15	0.43	4.24	0.46	3.561	0.007	0.036	Small
PSQ_Y_IT	0.28	0.94	0.53	1.00	0.64	0.82	0.71	0.88	0.70	0.81	3.14	0.015	0.031	Small
IWPQ_Cperf	3.96	0.84	4.11	0.61	4.15	0.80	4.35	0.68	4.35	0.82	3.49	0.008	0.035	Small

.

This study examined the main effects of biographical variables but did not explore interaction effects. Examining interactions, such as whether gender differences in engagement vary by job grade or whether age effects differ across racial groups, could have provided richer insights into the relationships among the study variables.

The findings indicate that employee engagement, leadership, and followership differed significantly by gender (Section 4.2). Pace & Sciotto (2021), as seen in Section 5.7, support the view that gender disparities exist in engagement dimensions such as well-being, work–life balance, career advancement, and job stability. Male employees scored higher on engagement than female employees, with significant differences in the engagement aspects. Instead of taking on leadership responsibilities, women are expected to be followers. According to Hyde (2014), women are viewed as less capable of holding leadership roles and are generally rated lower than men. To provide more egalitarian opportunities and outcomes.

Furthermore, age is thought to affect leadership, engagement, and followership. By addressing age-related differences among employees, organisations could enhance overall performance, foster collaboration, and attract and retain individuals from diverse generations. Beaven (2014) highlights the importance of recognising generational diversity as a strength.

7.5.7 Hypothesis testing results

This section discusses the results in relation to each of the seven research hypotheses.

7.5.7.1 Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and work performance

Hypothesis 1 relates to the relationship between employee engagement and work performance. There were positive and statistically significant relationships between all the scale scores and total scores of the two instruments (Table 7.27), ranging from $r = 0.250$ ($p < 0.01$) to $r = 0.365$ ($p < .01$). Three relationships reached a medium effect size, namely that between organisational satisfaction and contextual performance ($r = 0.329$, $p < .01$), organisational satisfaction and IWPQ total ($r = 0.365$, $p < .01$), and organisational commitment and IWPQ total ($r = 0.316$, $p < .01$). This hypothesis is thus supported, especially about these relationships.

7.5.7.2 Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between leadership and work performance

Hypothesis 2 relates to the relationship between leadership and work performance. The overall total scores of the two instruments were statistically related (r = 0.293). There were positive and statistically significant relationships between five out of six scale scores and total scores of the two instruments (Table 7.27), ranging from r = 0.097 (p < 0.01) to r = 0.321 (p < 0.01). This hypothesis is thus supported.

7.5.7.3 Hypothesis 3: There is a small but significant relationship between followership and performance

Results in relation to Hypothesis 3 showed a small but significant relationship between followership and performance. As shown in Table 7.27, the correlations were small but significant. The total scores on these instruments correlated at r = 0.230 (p < .01), which Cohen (1998) describes as practically small. Correlations between the sub-scales ranged from r = 0.101 (p < .05) to r = 0.230 (p < .01). It can thus be concluded that this hypothesis is supported.

7.5.7.4 Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between work performance and its dimensions

All scale scores and total scores of the three sub-scales showed positive and statistically significant relationships (Table 7.27), ranging from r = 0.723 (p < .01) to r = 0.852 (p < .01). This hypothesis is therefore supported.

7.5.7.5 Hypothesis 5: Significant differences between biographical variables in relation to the variables of the study

Hypothesis 5 relates to the differences between biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Significant differences were found in three biographical variables – namely, gender, age, and job grade – across the four variables (refer to Section 7.4.4.1). It can thus be concluded that this hypothesis is supported.

7.5.7.6 *Hypothesis 6: Relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.*

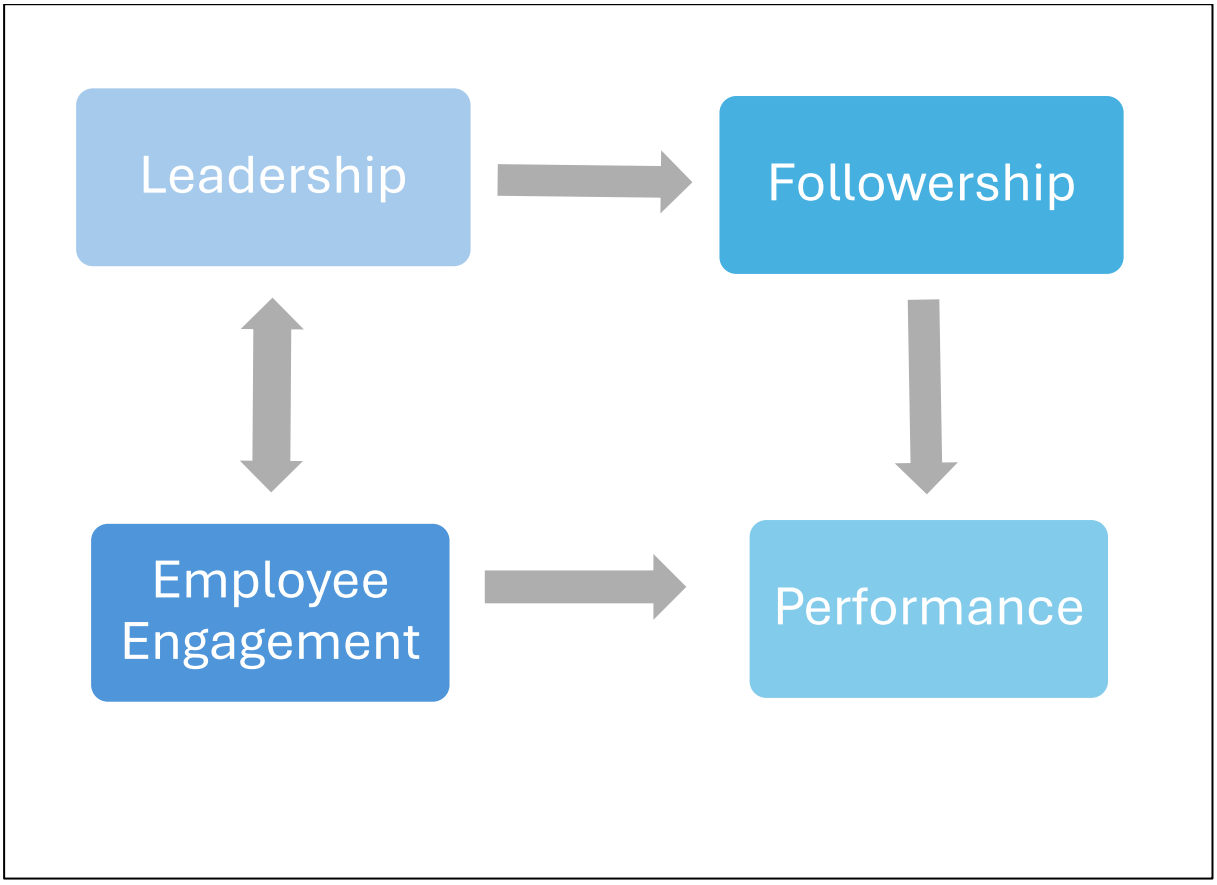
Hypothesis 6 relates the constructs employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Employee engagement is positively related to leadership and has a non-significant relationship with followership. Furthermore, leadership is positively related to followership. This hypothesis is therefore partially supported.

7.5.7.7 *Hypothesis 7: Development of a model of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance*

Hypothesis 7 relates to developing the theoretical model for work performance, which integrates employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, as discussed in Section 5.1. The theoretical model was developed and is illustrated in Figure below. Thus, this hypothesis is supported.

Figure 7.20

Proposed theoretical model



The proposed theoretical model is based on the idea that employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance inform work performance. The definitions and dimensions of each variable are subsequently explained.

Nienaber and Martins (2015, p. 405) refer to employee engagement as engaged employees who are fully absorbed and enthusiastic about their work, taking positive action to further the organisation's reputation and interests. This study adopted this definition, explaining the multifaceted and complex construct of employee engagement in the workplace. Servant leadership is when a leader sees themselves as a servant first and demonstrates key leadership characteristics, namely an altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, organisational stewardship, and wisdom (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Followership influences the relationship between leaders and followers in support of a goal, purpose, or mission that reflects the mutual intention of both leaders and followers (Kelley, 1992). Lastly, regarding individual work performance, Koopmans (2015) defines work performance as the employee's behaviours or actions, rather than the results of those behaviours, that are relevant to the organisation's goals. The dimensions to be considered are described below in Table 7.31.

Table 7.31

Variables and dimensions related to the performance model

VARIABLES	DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION	RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE
Employee engagement	Organisational satisfaction Organisational commitment Immediate manager Strategy and implementation	A general feeling of job satisfaction Commitment to the organisation Effectiveness of managerial tasks Develop new ideas and take initiative	Employee engagement improves organisational performance (Martins & Nienaber, 2014, p. 486)

VARIABLES	DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION	RELATIONSHIP TO PERFORMANCE
Servant leadership	Altruistic calling Emotional healing Persuasive mapping: Wisdom Organisation stewardship	Desire to make a positive difference Fostering spiritual recovery Sound reasoning and mental frameworks Knowledge and utility Prepare an organisation to make a positive contribution	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) argue that servant leadership operates at all levels, from the individual to society.
Followership	Conformist Alienated Pragmatist Passive Star/effective/exemplary Two dimensions, namely independent thinking and active engagement	Agree with everything that the leaders say Adverse, critical, and independent Not taking a stance on issues An attitude of staying safe Independent and critical thinkers	Star/effective/exemplary followers show initiative and facilitate others' needs (Kelley, 2008).
Individual work performance	Task Contextual Adaptive Counterproductive	Central job tasks The organisational, social. and psychological environment Adapting to changes Harmful to the well-being	Koopmans et al. (2011) focus on the organisation’s goals and work performance, which is multidimensional.

This table represents the researcher's theoretical model, as presented in Table 5.1. The researcher tested this theoretical model.

7.6 VALIDATION OF THE THEORETICAL MODEL USING THE EMPIRICAL MODEL

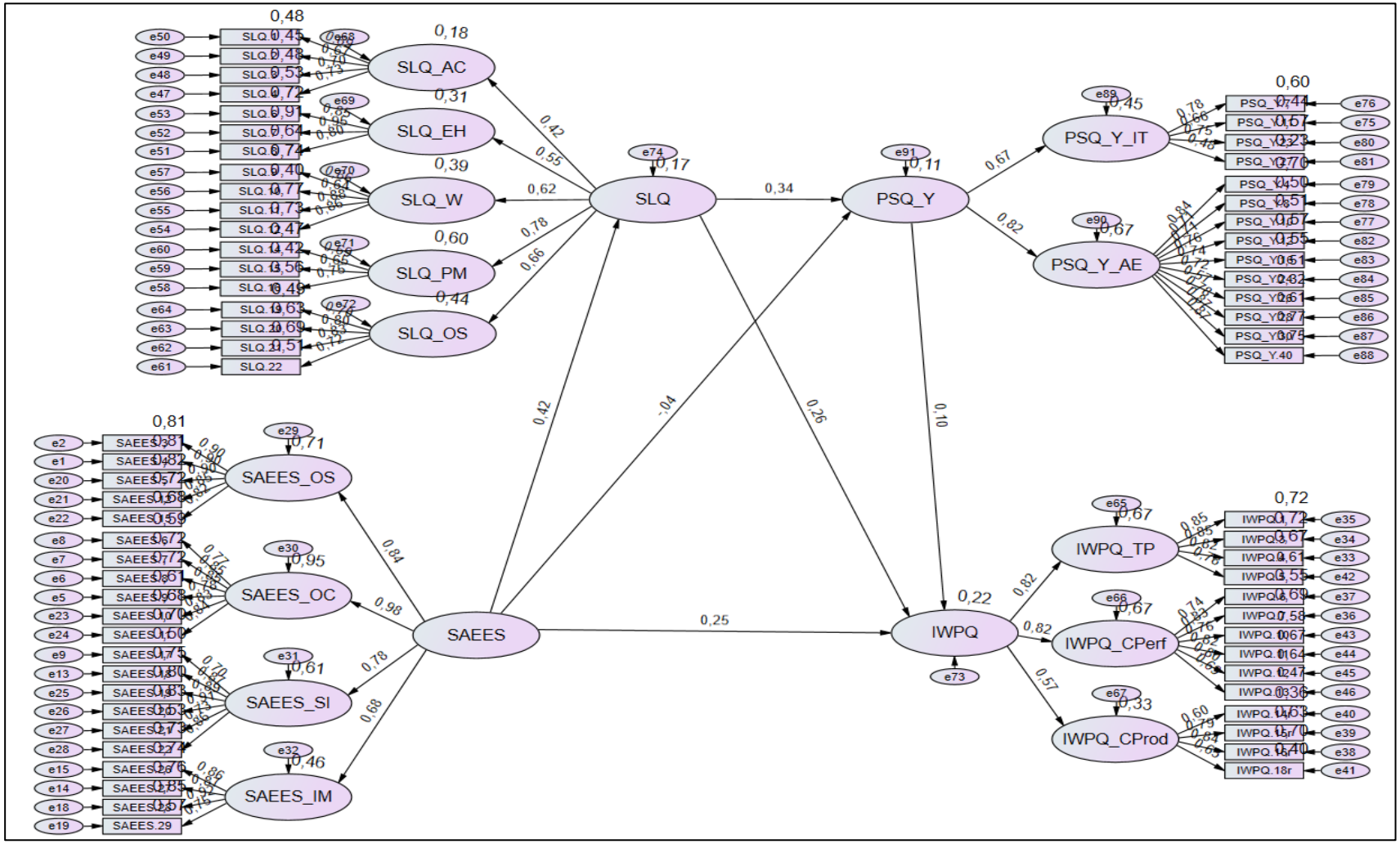
This section reports the theoretical model developed from the literature review and tested in the empirical research. The model consists of the following variables:

- Employee engagement, as measured by the SAEES
- Leadership, as measured by the SLQ
- Followership, as measured by the PSQ
- Work performance, as measured by the IWPQ

The model was tested using SEM and is presented graphically in Figure below. The empirical model offers a more comprehensive and dynamic framework than its theoretical counterpart by integrating the relationships between constructs and the contextual, biographical, and organisational factors that influence the world of work. While theoretical models primarily provide conceptual clarity and focus on abstract relationships among variables, the empirical model enriches this foundation by incorporating practical, data-driven insights into internal and external influences.

Figure 7.21

Empirical model developed in the study



Chapter 7 achieved the research aims. The model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations was developed, as reflected in Figure. The key features of the empirical model are subsequently explained.

7.6.1 Relationship between variables (refer to Figure 7.21)

- **Employee engagement and work performance**

Employee engagement has a positive relationship with work performance. Employee engagement and individual work performance are positively related, suggesting that higher engagement is linked to improved individual work performance. This relationship suggests a strong, direct connection, implying that employee engagement may drive or precede individual work performance. The results demonstrate that higher engagement levels are positively associated with improved performance.

- **Leadership and work performance**

Leadership has a positive relationship with work performance. This highlights its mediating role in the system. Leadership could be an intermediary factor that strengthens the connection between followership and individual work performance. Leadership is likely to have a positive influence on work performance.

- **Followership and work performance**

Similarly, the non-significant relationship between followership and work performance implies a weak or negligible direct influence. This may suggest that followership, while important, does not directly impact work performance, or that other variables, such as leadership, mediate the relationship. For example, followership may need to be operationalised through leadership to have a meaningful impact on performance outcomes.

- **Significant group differences**

The empirical model recognises significant differences across the four variables (employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance) among three biographical groups (gender, age, and job grade) (see Section 7.4.4.1).

- **Employee engagement has a positive relationship with leadership**

The positive relationship between employee engagement and leadership suggests synergy between these variables. This could mean that efforts to enhance employee engagement may simultaneously improve leadership. For example, when employee engagement improves, leadership may also strengthen through training or development programmes, which could help achieve organisational goals.

- **Employee engagement and followership**

The non-significant relationship between employee engagement and followership indicates a minimal or non-existent direct association. This lack of significance could result from intervening factors or a contextual disconnect between the variables. The lack of significance may indicate that employee engagement influences followership indirectly through other factors, such as leadership.

- **Leadership and followership**

Leadership has a positive relationship with followership. This highlights its mediating role in the system. Leadership may act as an intermediary factor that strengthens the connection between followership and individual work performance. Leadership is likely to positively influence followership.

- **Empirical model**

The empirical model relates to the fit of the data to the theoretical model, which refers to the structural model. The theoretical model for work performance integrates employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, as discussed in Section 5.1.

7.6.2 Integration of external and internal factors

The empirical model recognises that work dynamics cannot be understood in isolation. External factors, such as economic conditions, technological advancements, and societal trends, significantly shape workplace practices and individual behaviours. At the same time, internal factors, including organisational culture, leadership styles, and team dynamics, play an equally crucial role in shaping performance outcomes.

For instance, studies have shown that external pressures, such as economic downturns, can lead to heightened stress and lower job satisfaction, while supportive internal environments can mitigate these effects (Murphy, 1994). Including these factors ensures a holistic understanding of the work environment.

7.6.3 Focus on individual, team, and organisational factors

The empirical model emphasises the interplay among individual, team, and organisational levels. Factors such as skills, motivation, and emotional intelligence are critical at the individual level. Teams contribute through collaboration, communication, and shared goals, while organisational factors, such as structure, strategy, and resources, create the overarching framework within which individuals and teams operate (Deloitte, 2016).

7.6.4 Consideration of biographical differences

One of the empirical model's most significant contributions is its acknowledgement of biographical differences, such as age, gender, and job grade. These factors influence how individuals perceive and respond to their work environment. For example, younger employees may prioritise career growth opportunities, whereas older employees may value stability and work–life balance (Mouton, 2001). Similarly, gender dynamics and positional hierarchies can impact access to resources and career advancement opportunities.

Research by Swanberg et al. (2011) highlights the importance of these variables, showing that cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement measures can vary significantly across demographic groups. This nuanced understanding enables organisations to tailor strategies that effectively meet employees' diverse needs.

7.6.5 Advantages of the empirical model

The empirical model has several advantages. First, it is practically relevant. It offers actionable insights by grounding theories in real-world data. It enables organisations to design interventions that address specific challenges, such as improving team cohesion or reducing turnover among particular demographic groups. Second, it is dynamic and adaptable. Unlike static theoretical models, the empirical model evolves with changing workplace dynamics. For instance, in the context of remote work trends accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the empirical model can incorporate factors such as virtual collaboration tools and their impact on team performance. Third, the empirical model possesses enhanced predictive power. The model's comprehensive nature enhances its predictive capabilities. By considering multiple dimensions—constructs, contextual factors, and biographical differences—it provides a more accurate forecast of outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, and employee retention.

The empirical model surpasses the theoretical model by offering a more nuanced and actionable framework for understanding work dynamics. By incorporating external and internal factors across individual, team, and organisational levels, and by accounting for biographical differences, it provides a robust tool for researchers and practitioners. By bridging theory and practice, the empirical model deepens our understanding of the world of work and equips organisations to navigate its complexities effectively.

Table 7.32 reports the regression coefficients.

Table 7.32

Regression coefficients

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
SLQ	<---	SAEES	0.241	0.044	5.512	***
PSQ_Y	<---	SAEES	-0.047	0.081	-0.581	0.561
PSQ_Y	<---	SLQ	0.67	0.177	3.798	***
IWPQ	<---	SLQ	0.252	0.084	3.002	0.003

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
IWPQ	<--	SAEES	0.142	0.04	3.504	***
IWPQ	<--	PSQ_Y	0.05	0.036	1.386	0.166
SAEES_OS	<--	SAEES	0.946	0.086	11.023	***
SAEES_OC	<--	SAEES	1.35	0.116	11.659	***
SAEES_SI	<--	SAEES	1.205	0.112	10.76	***
SAEES_IM	<--	SAEES	1			
IWPQ_TP	<--	IWPQ	1.64	0.223	7.348	***
IWPQ_CPerf	<--	IWPQ	1.45	0.204	7.099	***
IWPQ_CProd	<--	IWPQ	1			
SLQ_AC	<--	SLQ	0.616	0.113	5.445	***
SLQ_EH	<--	SLQ	1.025	0.146	7.003	***
SLQ_W	<--	SLQ	0.953	0.126	7.551	***
SLQ_PM	<--	SLQ	1.141	0.149	7.673	***
SLQ_OS	<--	SLQ	1			
PSQ_Y_IT	<--	PSQ_Y	0.522	0.149	3.512	***
PSQ_Y_AE	<--	PSQ_Y	1			

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
SAEES.4	<--	SAEES_OS	1.153	0.051	22.638	***
SAEES.3	<--	SAEES_OS	1.206	0.053	22.686	***
SAEES.9	<--	SAEES_OC	0.994	0.054	18.376	***
SAEES.8	<--	SAEES_OC	0.926	0.044	20.971	***
SAEES.7	<--	SAEES_OC	0.903	0.043	20.991	***
SAEES.6	<--	SAEES_OC	0.999	0.055	18.1	***
SAEES.17	<--	SAEES_SI	0.742	0.045	16.325	***
SAEES.18	<--	SAEES_SI	0.944	0.041	22.757	***
SAEES.27	<--	SAEES_IM	0.932	0.051	18.253	***
SAEES.26	<--	SAEES_IM	1.069	0.06	17.957	***
SAEES.28	<--	SAEES_IM	1.015	0.053	19.327	***
SAEES.29	<--	SAEES_IM	1			
SAEES.5	<--	SAEES_OS	1.221	0.053	22.901	***
SAEES.12	<--	SAEES_OS	1.108	0.054	20.653	***
SAEES.15	<--	SAEES_OS	1			
SAEES.10	<--	SAEES_OC	0.942	0.047	20.224	***

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
SAEES.11	<--	SAEES_OC	1			
SAEES.19	<--	SAEES_SI	1.001	0.041	24.203	***
SAEES.20	<--	SAEES_SI	1.071	0.043	25.205	***
SAEES.21	<--	SAEES_SI	0.873	0.051	17.156	***
SAEES.22	<--	SAEES_SI	1			
IWPQ.4	<--	IWPQ_TP	0.932	0.054	17.375	***
IWPQ.3	<--	IWPQ_TP	0.986	0.055	17.994	***
IWPQ.1	<--	IWPQ_TP	1.043	0.058	18.003	***
IWPQ.7	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1.118	0.075	14.892	***
IWPQ.6	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1.056	0.078	13.475	***
IWPQ.16r	<--	IWPQ_CProd	1.246	0.102	12.242	***
IWPQ.15r	<--	IWPQ_CProd	1.037	0.086	12	***
IWPQ.14r	<--	IWPQ_CProd	0.857	0.087	9.811	***
IWPQ.18r	<--	IWPQ_CProd	1			
IWPQ.5	<--	IWPQ_TP	1			
IWPQ.10	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1.065	0.077	13.817	***

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
IWPQ.11	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1.179	0.08	14.75	***
IWPQ.12	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1.163	0.081	14.405	***
IWPQ.13	<--	IWPQ_CPerf	1			
SLQ.4	<--	SLQ_AC	1			
SLQ.3	<--	SLQ_AC	0.977	0.085	11.493	***
SLQ.2	<--	SLQ_AC	0.788	0.07	11.219	***
SLQ.1	<--	SLQ_AC	0.802	0.07	11.445	***
SLQ.8	<--	SLQ_EH	1			
SLQ.7	<--	SLQ_EH	1.216	0.057	21.241	***
SLQ.6	<--	SLQ_EH	0.995	0.051	19.463	***
SLQ.12	<--	SLQ_W	1			
SLQ.11	<--	SLQ_W	0.992	0.046	21.756	***
SLQ.10	<--	SLQ_W	0.693	0.051	13.718	***
SLQ.9	<--	SLQ_W	1.06	0.05	21.058	***
SLQ.16	<--	SLQ_PM	1			
SLQ.15	<--	SLQ_PM	1.03	0.097	10.585	***

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
SLQ.14	<--	SLQ_PM	0.959	0.087	11.011	***
SLQ.22	<--	SLQ_OS	1			
SLQ.21	<--	SLQ_OS	1.139	0.078	14.663	***
SLQ.20	<--	SLQ_OS	1.018	0.072	14.206	***
SLQ.19	<--	SLQ_OS	0.863	0.068	12.65	***
PSQ_Y.11	<--	PSQ_Y_IT	1.238	0.152	8.162	***
PSQ_Y.7	<--	PSQ_Y_IT	1.393	0.161	8.644	***
PSQ_Y.10	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.852	0.051	16.82	***
PSQ_Y.8	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.858	0.052	16.635	***
PSQ_Y.4	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.943	0.043	21.884	***
PSQ_Y.23	<--	PSQ_Y_IT	1.358	0.158	8.578	***
PSQ_Y.27	<--	PSQ_Y_IT	1			
PSQ_Y.12	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.95	0.052	18.347	***
PSQ_Y.16	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.906	0.051	17.867	***
PSQ_Y.24	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.843	0.05	16.895	***
PSQ_Y.26	<--	PSQ_Y_AE	0.714	0.058	12.262	***

			ESTIMATE	S.E.	CR	p
PSQ_Y.28	<---	PSQ_Y_AE	0.872	0.045	19.419	***
PSQ_Y.30	<---	PSQ_Y_AE	1.023	0.043	23.698	***
PSQ_Y.40	<---	PSQ_Y_AE	1			

The empirical model reveals the following:

- Employee engagement has a positive relationship with work performance.
- Leadership has a positive relationship with work performance.
- Followership has a non-significant relationship with work performance.
- Employee engagement has a positive relationship with leadership.
- Leadership has a positive relationship with followership.
- Employee engagement has a non-significant relationship with followership.

The fit indices of the model are reported in Table 7.33 and show that the model demonstrates a good fit to the data, as the majority of fit indices are acceptable.

Table 7.33

Fit indices of the empirical model

FIT INDEX	ACCEPTABLE	EXCELLENT	INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE	
p-value	>0.05		p-value	0.000
CMIN/df	3–5	<3	CMIN/df	1.703
GFI	>0.90	>0.95	GFI	0.78
AGFI	>0.90	>0.95	AGFI	0.76
NFI	>0.90	>0.95	NFI	0.82
TLI	>0.90	>0.95	TLI	0.91
CFI	0.90–0.95	>0.95	CFI	0.92
RMSEA	0.06–0.08	<0.06	RMSEA	0.042
SRMR	0.08–0.10	<0.08	SRMR	0.061

7.7 REVIEW OF RESEARCH AIMS

The research aims of this study were addressed in this chapter. The following conclusions were made in relation to each research aim.

- **Research Aim 1:** To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.

The EFA and CFA confirmed that this construct can be measured in a reliable and valid way (refer to Section 7.4.1.2 and Table 7.6 for EFA and Section 7.4.2.1 and Table 7.17 for CFA).

- **Research Aim 2**: To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.

The EFA and CFA confirmed that this construct can be measured in a reliable and valid way (refer to Section 7.4.1.3 and Table 7.9 for EFA and Section 7.4.2.2 and Table 7.18 for CFA).

- **Research Aim 3:** To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.

The EFA and CFA confirmed that this construct can be measured in a reliable and valid way. However, the original theoretical factors were not confirmed (refer to Section 7.4.1.4 and Table 7.12 for EFA and Section 7.4.2.3 and Table 7.19 for CFA).

- **Research Aim 4:** To measure the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

The EFA and CFA confirmed that this construct can be measured in a reliable and valid way (refer to Section 7.4.1.5 and Table 7.15 for EFA and Section 7.4.2.4 and Table 7.20 for CFA).

- **Research Aim 5**: To determine differences between biographical groups in terms of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

The results of the t-test and ANOVA confirmed the relationship between the biographical groups and the different variables (refer to Section 7.4.4.1, Table 7.24 for gender differences, Table 7.25 for age differences, and Table 7.26 for job grade differences).

- **Research Aim 6**: To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.

The results confirmed the relationship between the biographical groups and the different variables (refer to Section 7.4.4.1, Table 7.24 for gender differences, Table 7.25 for age differences, and Table 7.26 for job grade differences).

- **Research Aim 7**: To develop a work performance model.

The theoretical model was developed and tested empirically, and is presented in Section 7.4. The empirical model is presented in Section 7.5.

7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research findings, including the biographical groups, the measurement instruments, the research aims and hypotheses, and the constructs of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. It also reported the results of the CFA, EFA, SEM, and model development. The next chapter discusses the study's limitations, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 focused on the study's research conclusions, limitations, and recommendations. First, the chapter presents conclusions from the literature. Second, the chapter presents conclusions from empirical perspectives. Third, the study presents its contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

The theoretical and empirical conclusions are presented in this chapter. The theoretical constructs, including employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, provided a basis for the literature review. The researcher also examined the relationship between the biographical variable and research variables.

8.2 THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

This chapter reviewed literature on employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance dimensions. The conclusions drawn from the literature review are presented below, organised by research aim.

The general aim of this research was:

- To develop a theoretical model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations.

The specific aims of this research in relation to theoretical study were:

- **Research Aim 1:** To conceptualise the construct of employee engagement and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 2:** To conceptualise the construct of leadership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 3:** To conceptualise the construct of followership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.

- **Research Aim 4:** To conceptualise the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 5:** To determine differences between biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.
- **Research Aim 6**: To determine the theoretical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research Aim 7**: To develop an empirical model of employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance

The study aimed to identify the relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance dimensions to develop a work performance model for South African organisations. The literature review of the selected constructs is presented below. The conclusions drawn from the literature are presented below in accordance with each research aim.

8.2.1 Research Aim 1: To conceptualise the construct of employee engagement and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective

Chapter 2 discussed the conceptualisation of employee engagement, which addressed Research Aim 1 of the study. The chapter discussed different definitions and dimensions of employee engagement. Chapter 2 then discusses the conclusions drawn.

The current study is aligned with Nienaber and Martins' (2015) definition and dimensions of employee engagement. According to Nienaber and Martins (2015, p. 405), employee engagement refers to "engaged employees at both the individual and organisational level, who are fully absorbed by and enthusiastic about their work, and so take positive action to further the organisation's reputation and interests".

The researcher defined employee engagement as "the multidimensional integration of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and energetic engagement and a commitment to work and the organisation". A supportive work environment fosters this engagement, which is collectively oriented towards enhancing individual performance, achieving team-level objectives, and driving broader organisational outcomes.

Employee engagement is a complex framework that operates across individual, team, and organisational dimensions. An engagement assessment tool was tailored to South Africa's diverse organisational environment rather than directly implementing an instrument designed elsewhere. Consequently, their foundational paradigm defined engagement as the combination of employees' drive and involvement in their work, alongside behaviours that enhance organisational interests, aims, and standing.

Nienaber and Martins' (2015) four dimensions of engagement, namely organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, strategy and implementation, and the immediate manager, will be discussed next.

- *Organisational satisfaction* revolves around the meaningfulness of a job, including an enjoyable and inspiring work environment, as well as a general sense of job satisfaction.
- *Organisational commitment* involves taking pride in the work being done for the organisation and congruence between personal and organisational values.
- The dimension of *organisational strategy* and implementation determines whether employees are encouraged to develop new ideas and whether initiative is encouraged.
- The last dimension is the immediate manager, which measures how an employee is supported and engaged by their immediate manager or supervisor.

The researcher defines the four dimensions of employee engagement as follows:

- Organisational satisfaction encompasses the general and specific experience with one's job and environment.
- Organisational commitment involves identifying with the organisation's accomplishments and aligning personal and organisational values.
- The dimension of organisational strategy and implementation determines whether employees are encouraged to be creative and act autonomously in the workplace.
- The immediate manager dimension focuses on the availability of and engagement with the immediate manager or supervisor.

Chapter 2 delineates theories of employee engagement, emphasising the following dimensions. Psychological engagement theories interpret employee engagement as a constructive psychological bond between an individual and their work (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2010); the factors driving employee engagement are analysed through the lens of social exchange theory (Saks, 2006); integrative models are intended to offer a comprehensive conceptual framework for employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck & Wollard, 2010); empirical research on the multidimensional aspects of employee engagement in workplace settings employing measurement tools (Gallup, 2016; Nienaber & Martins, 2014).

The main contributions by various theories are indicated below:

- Kahn's 1990 employee engagement theory remains a foundational work in organisational psychology.
- Saks (2006) presented employee engagement as a reciprocal interaction between employees and the organisation
- Macey and Schneider (2008) made a significant contribution by clarifying employee engagement as a multidimensional construct involving traits, states, and behaviours.
- Shuck and Wollard's (2010) integrated evaluation of the literature examined and came up with a conceptual definition
- Gallup (2024) developed a comprehensive, empirically based survey designed to assess workplace engagement
- Martins and Nienaber (2014) view employee engagement as a multidisciplinary construct spanning individual, team, and organisational levels and developed an assessment tool to measure employee engagement in the South African context

The theoretical and practical significance of employee engagement has been demonstrated by its widespread implementation across sectors, including workforce surveys, academic research, HR, and consulting. Academics and professionals have differing perspectives on employee engagement, as indicated in the theories.

8.2.2 Research Aim 2: To conceptualise the construct of leadership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective

Chapter 3 achieved the second research aim by conceptualising leadership and its dimensions (see Section 3.2). Chapter 3 then discusses the conclusions drawn.

Leadership is an ever-changing phenomenon that requires leaders to adapt to new organisational, technological, and societal developments to remain relevant in modern work environments.

In this study, the researcher concentrated on servant leadership (see Section 3.3). This area of leadership focuses on being a servant first and having a natural desire to serve others are two key concepts that define servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). A leader should serve by cultivating a culture of compassion, development, and unity of purpose (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); they involve followers in spiritual, emotional, ethical, and relational aspects (Spears, 2010).

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006, p. 305) define servant leadership as a leadership ideology that emphasises service to others.

Based on the literature, the researcher defined servant leadership as “a selfless vocation wherein the individual prioritises the needs of others and offers service without the expectation of personal gain or recognition”.

Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) identified the key dimensions of servant leadership as altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship. In this study, the five dimensions of servant leadership were defined as follows (pp. 318-319):

- *Altruistic calling* is the inherent need to make a difference in others, give them preference, and do things for them.
- *Emotional healing* is the leader’s ability to encourage individuals to recover emotionally and spiritually from trauma or adversity and empower them to deal with challenges.
- *Persuasive mapping* is the leader’s use of reasoning and mental capacity to promote lateral thinking to inspire others to act.
- *Wisdom* is the application of higher knowledge, being mindful of the environment while considering potential outcomes and consequences.

- *Organisational stewardship* is the degree to which the leader creates an environment conducive to giving back to the community through different programmes and initiatives.

The researcher defines the five dimensions of servant leadership as follows:

- The altruistic calling is the fundamental urge to enhance the lives of others, elevate their significance, and partake in endeavours for their benefit.
- Emotional healing refers to a leader's capacity to encourage individuals to recuperate from trauma or misfortune, hence equipping them to confront obstacles adeptly.
- Persuasive mapping is a leader's application of logic and cognitive abilities to foster lateral thinking and encourage others to act.
- Wisdom entails applying profound understanding, considering one's environment, and assessing possible consequences and outcomes.
- Organisational stewardship is the measure of a leader's ability to establish an environment that supports community service through multiple initiatives and programs.

Leadership theories

The evolution of leadership theory has transitioned from defining leadership through leader characteristics, as noted by Carlyle (1841) and Stogdill (1948), to examining leader behaviours as, proposed by Blake and Mouton (1982), contextual adaptation as theorised by Fiedler (1967) and Hersey and Blanchard (1969), and further to the analysis of leader–follower dynamics, as described by House (1977) and Bennis et al. (2018), culminating in modern theories that emphasise charismatic (House, 1977); transformational (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), transactional (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978), authentic (Walumbwa et al., 2008); spiritual (Fry, 2003); ethical (Brown et al., 2019); servant, contextual (Dinh et al., 2014); and systems leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977). This progression signifies a deeper understanding that successful leadership is shaped by the interplay among leaders, followers, organisational context, ethical and moral principles, organisational culture, and intricate organisational processes.

Leaders who are cognisant of internal organisational aspects and external environmental conditions are likely to be effective in their roles while executing strategic and operational decisions.

The leadership perspective discussed in Section 3.4 and the contextual framework discussed in Section 3.5 provide insights into how leaders navigate the workplace. Leaders who grasp the nuances of power (see Section 3.6) are likely to influence their team members positively. Section 3.72 presents the factors essential to leadership, including competencies, caring for others, and empathy. Section 3.73 presents the outcomes, including employee engagement and collaboration.

8.2.3 Research Aim 3: To conceptualise the construct of followership and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective

Chapter 4 achieved Research Aim 3 by conceptualising followership. The chapter addressed the definition of followership, its dimensions, and the associated challenges (see Section 4.2). Ongoing developments in followership research necessitate a detailed understanding of the theoretical models and empirical techniques that underpin the field to enhance scholarly exploration and guide future studies.

Kelley (1992, p. 1) views effective followers as individuals contributing significantly to achieving organisational goals through critical thinking and active engagement. According to Kelley (1992), followership influences the relationship between leaders and followers in promoting a shared mission, goal, or purpose that reflects the collective purpose of both parties.

The researcher defined effective followers as “individuals who meaningfully contribute to the accomplishment of organisational goals through thoughtful evaluation and vigorous engagement”. Followership shapes the connection between leaders and followers by enhancing a collective mission, aim, or purpose that represents the shared aspirations of both parties.

Kelley (1992) identified the dimensions of followership as active engagement and independent critical thinking.

The first dimension, active engagement, denotes the extent to which followers voluntarily participate in organisational activities by demonstrating initiative, dedication, responsibility, and discretionary effort.

The second dimension, independent critical thinking, denotes followers' capacity to assess information impartially, question assumptions constructively, engage in creative thought, and formulate suitable solutions to organisational issues.

The researcher defined the dimensions as follows.

Critical thinking is viewed as "the proficiency of followers in analysing, investigating options, seeking resolutions, assessing information without bias, constructively questioning assumptions, engaging in innovative thought processes, and creating appropriate solutions to organisational challenges".

The second element, active engagement, "pertains to the extent to which followers voluntarily and proactively participate in organisational duties by assuming responsibility for task completion and demonstrating initiative, dedication, accountability, and additional effort".

Followership Theories

The evolution of followership theory signifies a growing acknowledgement of followers as vital participants in organisational efficiency. Initial research focused on classifying followers by behavioural categories (Chaleff, 1995; Kellerman, 2008; Kelley, 1992); later studies, however, highlighted follower traits, motives, and active contributions (Carsten et al., 2010). Contemporary theories regard followership as a valid organisational function (DeRue, 2011; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), a relational dynamic that arises from leader–follower exchanges (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), a phenomenon constructed through social interactions (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), and a cognitive process influenced by individuals' subconscious perceptions of followers (Sy, 2010). These viewpoints collectively illustrate that followership transcends mere passive compliance and is increasingly recognised as a dynamic, reciprocal, and context-sensitive process that enhances leadership and organisational effectiveness.

This section presented the psychology of followership. The study of followership reveals a progressively refined insight into the role of followers in organisational contexts. Current scholarly discourse identifies followers as engaged organisational contributors, whose perspectives, conduct, motivations, and affiliations markedly impact leadership effectiveness and overall organisational performance.

Research has shifted from describing follower attributes and conduct styles (Chaleff, 1995; Kelley, 1992) to analysing cognitive functions (Sy, 2010), relational frameworks (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and the joint creation of leadership and followership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Through these lenses, successful followership is marked by self-reliant critical thought, vigorous participation, beneficial connections with leaders, and a commitment to the organisation's success. The shifting nature of power as a leadership influence is shaping followership. Followers can draw on individual (self-derived power), shared (collective leader-follower power), and emergent (crucial scenarios) power to transform circumstances. This is observable in work-related and personal domains.

8.2.4 Research Aim 4: To conceptualise the construct of work performance and its dimensions from a theoretical perspective

Chapter 5 achieved Research Aim 4 by conceptualising work performance and its dimensions. Work performance is crucial for achieving both personal and organisational goals, enhancing organisational efficiency and sustainability, and ensuring enduring success.

Koopmans (2015) refers to individual work performance as employees' behaviours or actions, rather than the results of these behaviours, as they relate to the organisation's goals.

In this study, the researcher defined work performance as "the behaviours and actions that individuals exhibit in the workplace and that align with organisational goals". This definition is aligned with individual work performance.

Koopmans (2015) identifies four dimensions of individual work performance: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work performance.

- *Task performance* refers to the primary job responsibilities delegated to employees. It encompasses planning and organisation, decision-making, administration, problem-solving, oral and written communication, resource monitoring and control, correctness and neatness, job knowledge, work quantity, job quality, skills, and current knowledge.

- *Contextual performance* is the behaviour of employees that supports the social, psychological, and organisational environment in which the main activities are carried out. Such behaviours include effort, initiative, duty-related focus, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, drive, perseverance, proactivity, inventiveness, collaboration and assistance to others, communication, politeness, interpersonal relationships, and organisational commitment.
- *Adaptive performance r*efers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in a work system or role. It entails adapting plans and objectives to the circumstances, generating fresh and creative ideas, acquiring new skills and technology, understanding diverse cultures and groups, being adaptable and open-minded, demonstrating resilience, analysing quickly, remaining composed, and acting appropriately.
- *Counterproductive work behaviour* is deemed detrimental to the organisation's well-being. It encompasses behaviours such as off-task behaviour, presenteeism, taking too many or too long breaks, absenteeism, incorrect task performance, complaining, tardiness, accidents, arguing or fighting with coworkers, stealing, misusing privileges, ignoring safety procedures, aggression, and substance abuse.

The researcher defines the four dimensions of individual work performance: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work performance.

- Task performance refers "to the fundamental duties assigned to individuals. It comprises the development and organisation of plans, decision-making, administrative duties, problem resolution, oral and written communication, resource supervision and regulation, accuracy and organisation, job expertise, quantity of work, quality of output, abilities, and current information".
- Contextual performance refers "to employees' actions that enhance the social, psychological, and organisational atmosphere in which primary tasks are performed. Such actions encompass diligence, initiative, task-oriented concentration, zeal, ingenuity, determination, proactivity, creativity, teamwork, support for others, communication skills, courtesy, interpersonal connections, and dedication to the organisation".
- Adaptive performance refers "to an employee's capacity to adjust to changes in a work environment or position.

- It involves modifying strategies and goals to suit the situation, cultivating innovative concepts, obtaining new competencies and technologies, appreciating various cultures and communities, exhibiting flexibility and receptiveness, showcasing perseverance, conducting swift analyses, maintaining poise, and responding suitably".
- Counterproductive work behaviour is "regarded as damaging to the organisation's well-being. It involves conduct including off-task actions, presenteeism, taking excessive or prolonged breaks, absenteeism, incorrect task performance, expressing dissatisfaction, tardiness, incidents, altercations with coworkers, theft, misappropriation of privileges, neglecting safety regulations, aggression, and substance misuse".

The evolution of work performance theory illustrates a shift from perceiving performance mainly in terms of productivity and efficiency (Taylor, 1911) to recognising it as employee behaviour (Campbell, 1990; Murphy, 1989) and eventually acknowledging work performance as a multifaceted construct consisting of separate yet interconnected behavioural domains (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, 1997; Koopmans et al., 2011, 2014).

Koopmans (2011)'s research on work performance recognises that effective performance encompasses both task-specific and broader organisational behaviours, acknowledging that employees enhance organisational effectiveness by fulfilling essential job duties, engaging in behaviours that foster a positive organisational climate, and refraining from actions that could obstruct organisational operations. This progression signifies a growing and thorough understanding of work performance as a behavioural, multifaceted, and context-dependent concept. The performance perspective offers insights on performance from various viewpoints, including national, organisational, HR, and individual levels, as detailed in Chapter 5 Section 5.6.

8.2.5 Research Aim 5: To measure differences between biographical variables and employee engagement, leadership, followership, and individual work performance

Chapter 5 achieved the fifth research aim by identifying differences between biographical variables and employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. The variables studied included gender, age, race, job grade, type of employment, years of service, highest qualification, and industry.

The literature indicates that biographical variables are more effectively perceived as contextual attributes that can affect employee engagement, leadership, followership, and job performance via variations in organisational roles, career trajectories, workplace prospects, and organisational settings, rather than through direct causal relationships (Avolio et al., 2009; Christian et al., 2011). Data on gender, age, race, job classification, employment type, tenure, highest educational attainment, and industry vary by context. As a result, researchers should treat these biographical factors as control variables in organisational studies, enabling them to determine whether relationships among employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance are consistent across demographic categories while avoiding unfounded assumptions about demographic disparities (Ng & Feldman, 2010) Biographical variables are frequently utilised as control variables to investigate whether associations across organisational dimensions vary across different employee cohorts (Trenerry et al., 2021). The relationships among variables are discussed in section 5.9.2

8.2.6 Research Aim 6: To determine the theoretical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership and work performance from a theoretical perspective

Research Aim 6 was achieved in Chapters 2 to 5, which focused on determining the theoretical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Section 5.8 illustrated the need to develop leadership and followership skills to enhance organisational effectiveness.

Novikov (2016) found that pragmatist and exceptional followers do not perform the same in the workgroup and on the job (Section 5.10). The critical-thinking components of followership, as well as job and workgroup performance, were positively associated with active involvement. Research shows that strong, positive leadership relationships are crucial for engaging individuals and improving performance in their roles. This study emphasised the importance of leaders supporting, recognising, and rewarding efforts to promote engagement and a healthy work environment. As shown in Section 3.7.2, most executives believe that employee engagement is essential to the organisation’s success.

Employee engagement improves both individual performance and overall organisational outcomes.

Giambattista (2018) asserts that, to improve followership and leadership skills, organisations must choose how to integrate training, innovation, and efficiency. Tshukudu (2020) claims that employee engagement has a good and substantial impact on organisational performance. This illustrates the connection between performance and engagement.

8.2.7 Research Aim 7: To develop a theoretical work performance model

Chapter 5 achieved Research Aim 7 by developing a theoretical model of work performance. Research Aims 1 to 6 consolidated the four constructs (employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance). The research examined how employees interact with their tasks, how they perceive leadership, how followership behaviours manifest in the workplace, and how these elements collectively influence work performance.

The theoretical model considered the following: internal and external factors, as well as research and biographical variables. Internal and external factors, including technology, the economy, health, social factors, and a diverse workplace, are likely to impact employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Biographical factors, including age, gender, and job level, relate to the variables' dimensions.

The dimensions of various variables are: employee engagement (organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, strategy and implementation, and the immediate manager); leadership (altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship); followership (active engagement and critical thinking); and work performance (task performance, contextual performance, adaptive and counterproductive work performance), to understand work performance. The empirical conclusions will be presented next.

8.3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

This section discusses the empirical research conclusions in relation to the research aims.
The general aim of this research was:

- To develop a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership for work performance across levels in South African organisations.

The specific aims of this research in relation to empirical study were:

- **Research Aim 1:** To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 2:** To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 3**: To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 4**: To determine the relationship between work performance and its dimensions within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 5**: To determine differences between biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 6**: To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations.
- **Research Aim 7:** To develop a work performance model.

8.3.1 Research Aim 1: To determine the relationship between employee engagement and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations

Empirical Research Aim 1 was achieved, as explained in Chapter 7, where the relationship between employee engagement and work performance was examined. The Pearson correlation results showed positive and statistically significant relationships between all scale scores and the total scores of employee engagement and work performance. Three relationships reached a medium effect size: organisational satisfaction and contextual performance, organisational satisfaction and total work performance, and organisational commitment and total work performance.

Overall, the data shows a consistent positive relationship: all four dimensions are positively linked to employee engagement, and all identified connections are statistically significant. This consistency is potentially revealing because it suggests that involvement generally increases with each dimension, even as the strength of these linkages varies.

The relationship is strongest with organisational satisfaction (r = 0.365), followed by organisational commitment (r = 0.316), Strategy and implementation (r = 0.262), and Immediate manager (r = 0.250). However, treat differences in coefficients descriptively unless thorough statistical tests show the correlations differ significantly.

The relationship between employee engagement and work performance is positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$). This positive trend suggests that increases in work performance are generally linked to increases in employee engagement. According to the traditional interpretation of Schober et al. (2018), a coefficient of 0.348 indicates a weak positive relationship. Nevertheless, the connection should not be seen as inconsequential. The coefficient reflects a substantial linear correlation, but this work performance does not solely determine employee engagement.

Tshukudu (2020) supports the study findings, arguing that employee engagement has a significant and positive impact on performance. This demonstrates that engagement and performance are related. To achieve organisational objectives, employees must be engaged, understand the work environment, and collaborate effectively. Raghavendra and Kamaraj's (2024) research found that organisational performance and employee engagement are positively correlated, indicating that more engaged employees lead to better organisational outcomes.

Past researchers focused on job satisfaction as moderators, while current research focuses on organisational satisfaction, which contributes to the organisation's overall success.

Tshukudu (2020) reinforces the widely held belief that engaged employees are more productive, more dedicated, and better aligned with corporate objectives by demonstrating that employee engagement has a significant, beneficial impact on performance. This viewpoint is useful, as it emphasises involvement as a key factor in the success of both individuals and organisations.
To accomplish organisational goals, employees must understand the workplace and work well together, both of which are crucial contextual elements. When employees have clear roles, communicate well, and maintain positive team dynamics, engagement increases. This is consistent with systems theory, which holds that interactions between individuals and their surroundings are essential to an organisation's success.

This finding is further supported by Raghavendra and Kamaraj (2024), who found a positive relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance, indicating that highly engaged employees improve organisational outcomes. This demonstrates the usefulness of funding engagement tactics, including employee well-being programmes, leadership development, and recognition.

Tshukudu (2020) and Raghavendra and Kamaraj (2024) both offer compelling evidence for the engagement–performance relationship. Organisations should, however, acknowledge that engagement influences performance alongside other organisational and contextual factors.

8.3.2 Research Aim 2: To determine the relationship between leadership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations

The second aim of the empirical research was achieved, as explained in Chapter 7, where Servant leadership and work performance showed a statistically significant correlation, as indicated by Pearson's correlation coefficient. All scale scores showed positive, statistically significant relationships with the total scores for servant leadership and work performance. IWPQ (Table 7.27). The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a positive, statistically significant correlation between overall leadership and work performance ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$).

The coefficient's magnitude reflects a very slight positive association, indicating that greater leadership corresponds with improved work performance outcomes, yet leadership alone does not account for a substantial share of the observed variability. Evaluation of the leadership sub-dimensions showed distinct correlation patterns, with coefficients ranging from $r = 0.097$ to $r = 0.321$.

The third leadership dimension "wisdom" showed the strongest link ($r = 0.321$, $p < 0.001$), whereas the first dimension "altruistic calling" showed the weakest correlation ($r = 0.097$). The other dimensions showed positive and statistically significant associations with Emotional healing ($r = 0.184$, $p < 0.001$), persuasive mapping ($r = 0.248$, $p < 0.005$), and Organisational stewardship ($r = 0.143$, $p < 0.001$), respectively. In summary, these findings suggest that leadership correlates favourably with work performance, although its contribution varies across its distinct elements.

Hence, the results should be understood as demonstrating association rather than causation, and the small effect sizes imply that future multivariate analyses should consider other explanatory variables.

Khan et al. (2024) support these findings. They investigated the moderating effects of information asymmetry and task interdependence on the association between servant leadership and employees' job performance. Their findings show that servant leadership positively affected employees' performance, which was further moderated by knowledge asymmetry and task interdependence.

8.3.3 Research Aim 3: To determine the relationship between followership and its dimensions in relation to work performance within South African organisations

Empirical Research Aim 3 was partially achieved, as explained in Chapter 7, which focused on determining the interrelationship between followership and work performance. Followership dimensions significantly affect how individuals interact with leaders. Critical thinking examines how individuals approach circumstances independently and critically. Active engagement measures individuals' initiative, energy, and participation in accomplishing organisational objectives (see Section 6.4.2.3).

The Pearson correlation coefficient linking followership to work performance was $r = .166$, $p < .001$, indicating a positive, statistically significant but comparatively minor relationship. This positive relationship suggests that greater followership is often correlated with higher levels of work performance. The figure of .166 indicates a weak relationship; yet it is systematic enough to suggest that followership correlates with broader work performance. Current guidelines warn that statistical significance should not be taken as proof that a link is fundamentally strong or practically meaningful. The correlation coefficient conveys the intensity and direction of the association, while the p-value indicates whether the detected relationship differs from zero under the specified statistical model.

The study established small but significant relationships between all scale scores and the total scores for followership and work performance (Table 7.27).

Overall, the main conclusion is that followership is positively related to work performance; however, the relationship is slight. The active engagement demonstrates the most substantial positive influence ($r = .182$, $p < .001$), in contrast to independent thinking, which shows a diminished effect ($r = .101$, $p < .05$). Consequently, the discoveries might aid in recognising areas that necessitate future theoretical and empirical investigation, but they ought not to be exclusively utilised to ascertain intervention priorities or causal mechanisms.

Scholarly interest in the relationship between followership and work performance has grown, as organisations realise that followers' behaviours, attitudes, and competences also affect performance. In addition, followership research emphasises followers' active contributions to work outcomes, whereas traditional leadership studies have frequently concentrated on leaders as the main drivers of organisational success.

Effective followership enhances team effectiveness, productivity, and problem-solving. Followers' initiative and accountability lighten leaders' load and improve organisational flexibility. This aligns with Carsten et al. (2018), who found that proactive followers often shape leadership processes and improve organisational outcomes through collaboration and independent thinking.

In general, followership and work performance have a dynamic, reciprocal relationship. By encouraging critical engagement, accountability, and active participation, effective followership improves both individual and team performance. However, the degree of empowerment provided to followers, company culture, and leadership style all influence its impact. As a result, companies should invest in both strong followership behaviours and leadership development.

8.3.4 Research Aim 4: To measure work performance and its dimensions within South African organisations

Empirical Research Aim 4 was achieved, as explained in Chapter 7, where work performance and its dimensions were measured. Participants completed the IWPQ self-report measure, which consists of 18 items across 3 scales: Task Performance [IWPQ_TP], Contextual Performance [IWPQ_CPerf], and Counterproductive [IWPQ_CProd].

The Pearson product-moment correlation between work performance and its dimensions examined was ($r = 0.852$), with statistical significance at ($p < 0.001$). This indicates a strong to very strong positive correlation. According to accepted criteria, correlations ranging from around 0.70 to 0.90 are typically regarded as substantial or robust positive associations, but values nearing 0.90 signify an exceptionally strong relationship (Mukaka, 2012). Consequently, the coefficient of 0.852 indicates that higher levels of the work performance dimensions correlated with performance are consistently linked to enhanced performance within the study population.

Task performance refers to an individual's ability to fulfil job-related responsibilities, whereas contextual performance encompasses social, psychological, and organisational behaviours that support the work environment. The research validated the instrument's construct validity, confirming that individual work performance is a three-dimensional construct with respectable discriminant and convergent validity. The three performance dimensions are task, contextual, and counterproductive performance.

Overall, the findings show a consistent, strong positive relationship between work performance and its dimensions. The overall correlation of task performance ($r = 0.852$) is the strongest, followed by contextual performance ($r = 0.819$) and counterproductive performance ($r = 0.723$).

This consistency strengthens the empirical argument that work performance and its dimensions are closely related. All three relationships are positive and statistically significant, with significance levels ranging from ($p < 0.01$) to ($p < 0.001$).

8.3.5 Research Aim 5: To determine differences between biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance

Empirical Research Aim 5 was achieved, as explained in Chapter 7, by examining variations among biographical variables in relation to employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, and their dimensions. The goal was to understand the differences between the biographical variables, specifically, gender, age, and job grade in terms of the research variables.

The first biographical category to be discussed is gender. Female respondents scored higher on the SAEES sub-scale strategy and implementation and the SLQ sub-scales altruistic calling and emotional healing. Male respondents scored higher on the SLQ sub-scale persuasive mapping, the PSQ sub-scale independent thinking, and the IWPQ sub-scale counterproductive behaviour. The results show an intriguing yet complex trend that warrants careful interpretation: female respondents scored higher on the employee engagement and work performance sub-scales, whereas male respondents scored higher on the servant leadership and work performance sub-scales.

These findings suggest gender-based differences in leadership-related behaviours and workplace attitudes; however, such differences should not be interpreted as universal or inherent.

Females often show greater emotional commitment, relationship orientation, and organisational attachment, which may explain the higher employee engagement scores among female respondents. Research has indicated that women may prioritise meaningful work, interpersonal relationships, and teamwork, all of which are strongly associated with engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2010). Stronger work performance may be explained by greater engagement, since motivation, commitment, and willingness to put in effort are characteristics of engaged employees. However, treat this interpretation with caution.

Greater female participation may reflect societal expectations that encourage women to invest more emotional effort and commitment in their work, which may not necessarily translate into sustained performance, particularly when accompanied by increased pressure. Because servant leadership is often associated with attributes such as empathy, support, and nurturing—qualities stereotypically linked to feminine leadership styles—the finding that men scored higher on those dimensions is somewhat surprising. This could indicate a shift in role occupancy, where men are still over-represented in senior roles and thus have greater opportunities to exhibit servant leadership traits, or it could indicate that men in leadership positions are increasingly embracing relational leadership behaviours.

These findings raise important questions about how performance is evaluated, given that men also performed better on several work performance sub-scales. Given performance's multidimensional nature, men and women may excel in different domains.

For example, men may score higher on task performance or leadership-related outcomes because they have greater access to authority and decision-making responsibilities. In contrast, women may demonstrate stronger contextual performance, such as teamwork and cooperation.

Beyond gender, institutional and cultural variables may also shape these disparities. Societal gender stereotypes, leadership opportunities, organisational standards, and job expectations can influence both employee engagement and work performance outcomes. For instance, men are more likely to hold leadership positions where servant leadership behaviours are recognised and rewarded, whereas women may face obstacles to leadership advancement despite high engagement.

Overall, although the results point to significant gender inequalities, researchers should consider a broader socio-organisational context. Beyond gender, several interrelated factors affect performance, servant leadership, and engagement. Future studies should investigate whether corporate culture, position distribution, or broader socialisation processes drive these disparities.

The second biographical category to be discussed is age. Older employees scored higher than the younger employees. The SAEES Organisational Satisfaction score for ages 51–64 was higher than that of the 18–40-year age group ($p = 0.012$). Similarly, SLQ Persuasive Mapping differed significantly ($p = 0.013$). Furthermore, SLQ Organisational Stewardship differed significantly between the 18- 40-year and 41–50-year age groups ($p = 0.012$), with the latter scoring higher. The scales that are loaded for different age groups are employee engagement and servant leadership.

One explanation for older employees scoring higher is that they often possess greater work experience, job expertise, and organisational knowledge, which can enhance performance. As skills and expertise accumulate, productivity and efficiency improve over time. Furthermore, familiarity with organisational procedures may reduce role ambiguity, thereby increasing engagement and confidence.

Older employees may be better able to manage work-related stress because they have higher levels of emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping mechanisms. This may lead to sustained engagement and performance. This assumption may be too broad, as some younger employees may be just as resilient, particularly in fast-paced, innovative workplaces.

Research often shows that older generations prioritise responsibility, loyalty, and job stability, which may lead to higher engagement and performance. Flexibility, work–life balance, and quick progression may be more important to younger employees, which may affect how engagement manifests. This view also risks stereotyping generations. Younger employees' lower engagement may reflect different workplace expectations rather than a lack of dedication.

The third and final biographical category is job grade differences, which represent scores across job levels in the current sample. The total SAEES score showed that top management scored significantly higher than employees ($p = 0.012$), supervisors ($p = 0.022$), managers ($p < 0.001$), and senior management ($p = 0.023$). Overall, top-management respondents showed significantly higher engagement than those at most other levels. Regarding SLQ Persuasive Mapping, employees' mean score was significantly lower than that of managers ($p = 0.003$), senior management ($p < 0.001$), and top management ($p < 0.001$). In addition, top management scored significantly higher than managers ($p = 0.033$).

The next significant difference among job grades was observed for the independent thinking factor, as measured by the PSQ. Employees scored significantly lower on this scale than both senior managers ($p = 0.018$) and top management ($p = 0.015$). Senior and top management roles tend to deal with the co.

Lastly, employees received significantly lower scores on contextual performance than senior managers ($p = 0.024$) and top management ($p = 0.012$).

8.3.6 Research Aim 6: To determine an empirical relationship between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance within South African organisations

This aim explains the conclusions drawn from empirical research. Some significant correlations were found between subscales of employee engagement and servant leadership, although they were typically small (Table 7.27). The total scores on these instruments correlated at $r = 0.292$ ($p < .01$), which Cohen (1998) describes as small in practical terms. Correlations between the sub-scales ranged from $r = 0.044$ ($p < .05$) to $r = 0.333$ ($p < .01$). Only two correlations reached a medium effect size: those between organisational commitment and the total SLQ score ($r = 0.333$, $p < .01$) and organisational commitment and persuasive mapping ($r = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$).

The correlation analysis demonstrated statistically significant positive associations among employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work performance. Employee engagement had the most significant correlation with work performance ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$), followed by servant leadership ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$) and followership ($r = 0.230$, $p < 0.001$). Employee engagement showed a moderate positive link with performance, servant leadership showed a small-to-moderate correlation, and followership showed a minor positive connection. In terms of shared variance, employee engagement accounted for roughly 12.1%, servant leadership 8.6%, and followership 5.3% of the variance in job performance. Collectively, the data show that all three dimensions significantly correlate with work performance, though their bivariate associations differ in intensity.

The study shows statistically significant beneficial links between employee engagement, servant leadership, followership, and work effectiveness. Employee engagement (SAEES) showed a positive, statistically significant link with work performance ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient indicates a moderate positive link, suggesting that employees with higher engagement levels also tend to achieve better work performance.

This finding provides empirical evidence that employee engagement significantly correlates with work performance, while also indicating that performance is affected by variables beyond engagement.

This analysis aligns with the extensive literature on employee engagement and South African studies about engagement measurement (Nienaber & Martins, 2014, 2015; Saks, 2006). The correlation between servant leadership (SLQ) and job performance was both favourable and statistically significant ($r = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$). The coefficient indicates a modest positive correlation, with about 8.6% of the variance explained ($r^2 = 0.086$). Consequently, elevated perceptions of servant leadership correlate with enhanced work performance. Increased recognition of servant leadership is linked to superior levels of job performance. The results imply that leadership practices centred on serving, cultivating, and aiding followers may be significant for employee success.

- **Employee engagement and followership**

The non-significant relationship between employee engagement and followership indicates a minimal or non-existent direct association. This minimal significance could result from intervening factors or a contextual disconnect between the variables. The minimal significance might indicate that employee engagement influences followership indirectly through other factors, such as leadership.

Several theoretical perspectives may explain why followership does not significantly predict employee engagement or may even exhibit a negative relationship. Research suggests that followership does not directly affect key employee outcomes; instead, it operates through mediating characteristics such as trust and satisfaction. Research on leadership–followership dynamics indicates that work engagement arises from their interplay, rather than from followership independently, implying an insignificant direct effect. Empirical evidence indicates that negative or passive followership behaviours correlate with adverse organisational outcomes and decreased employee satisfaction, which is conceptually related to decreased engagement.

Contemporary work highlights that followership frequently acts as a moderate or contextual variable, rather than a principal predictor of engagement. Collectively, the data suggest that followership may not directly predict employee engagement.

A compelling argument exists for multilevel and mediation-based frameworks, wherein engagement is shaped by the interplay among leadership, followership, and organisational atmosphere (Noermijati et al., 2024). The correlation between followership and employee engagement varies. Some research indicates minimal or non-significant direct effects, and even adverse consequences, for passive followership, whereas others find robust positive correlations when followership is active and contextually reinforced. Consequently, followership should be understood as conditional and context-dependent, with its influence on engagement mediated by broader organisational dynamics (Zawawi et al., 2024).

- **Leadership and followership**

Leadership has a positive relationship with followership, highlighting its mediating role in the system. Leadership may act as an intermediary factor that strengthens the connection between followership and work performance. Leadership is likely to positively influence followership.

Servant leadership is widely acknowledged as a relational leadership model that enhances positive followership behaviours by prioritising followers' needs, development, and empowerment. The leader–follower interaction in servant leadership is based on reciprocity, trust, and moral obligation, fostering an atmosphere conducive to active engagement, autonomous critical thinking, and organisational citizenship among followers. Recent empirical research indicates that servant leaders provide psychological safety and autonomy, which are essential precursors to effective followership. When followers view leaders as facilitators rather than authoritarian figures, they are more inclined to take ownership of tasks and engage actively in organisational processes (Jiang & Wei, 2024).

Moreover, contemporary research suggests that servant leadership fosters exemplary followers by strengthening moral courage and relational maturity (Jonker & Dube, 2025). Kelley defines exemplary followership as independent thought and active participation, both of which servant leaders encourage through humility, stewardship, and empowerment. Empirical evidence indicates that servant leadership fosters followers' flourishing at work and proactive actions, implying that servant-led environments motivate followers to exceed formal role expectations and become strategic contributors to organisational performance. The positive correlation is especially important in knowledge-intensive and dynamic environments where follower agency is crucial for organisational longevity (Hu et al., 2025; Jiang & Wey, 2024).

According to Febrianti & Yulian (2022), work engagement positively affects job performance, while servant leadership positively affects both. This study also showed that work engagement mediates the association between servant leadership and job performance. Managers and other leaders in manufacturing organisations can benefit greatly from this study by using servant leadership to improve worker performance. This leadership approach will increase employee involvement, ultimately improving job performance.

8.3.7 Research Aim 7: To develop a work performance model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership

The empirical model indicates that employee engagement, leadership, and followership significantly determine work performance. Employee engagement and leadership each demonstrate a positive relationship with work performance, while followership also shows a significant relationship with work performance.

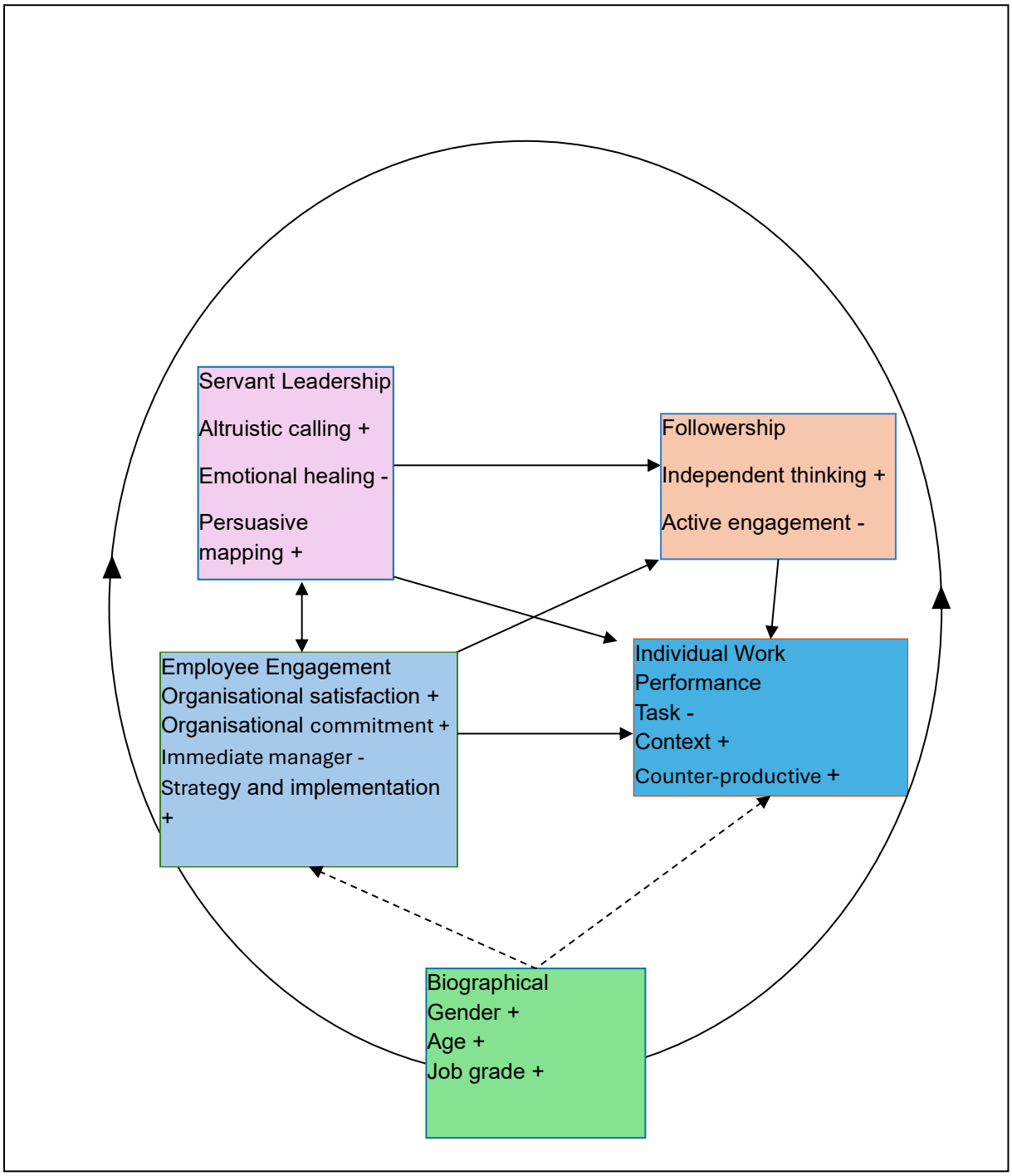
Furthermore, employee engagement is positively associated with leadership, and leadership, in turn, is positively associated with followership. However, no statistically significant relationship was found between employee engagement and followership.

The model also included two mediators. It was hypothesised that both leadership and followership mediate the relationship between employee engagement and work performance. The results show that leadership significantly mediates the relationship between engagement and work performance, but that followership does not. Leadership therefore explains part of the relationship.

Hypothesis 7 concerns the development of a performance model. The empirical model presented in Figure 8.1 was developed based on the literature review and subsequently tested in the empirical research.

Figure 8.1

Theoretical model



8.3.8 Empirical model explanation

The empirical model incorporates measured constructs of employee engagement (organisational satisfaction, organisational commitment, immediate manager, and strategy and implementation). It also includes leadership (altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasion mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship), followership (Active participation and independent thinking), and work performance (Task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work performance). It also includes biographical variables such as age, gender, and job grade.

Employee engagement and work performance are positively correlated, meaning employees who are emotionally, cognitively, and physically committed to their work are more likely to show higher levels of task, contextual, and adaptive performance.

Improved productivity, creativity, service quality, and organisational citizenship behaviours are the outcomes of engaged employees' increased energy, perseverance, and discretionary effort towards accomplishing organisational goals.

Work performance is a motivational process that improves employee effectiveness and long-term performance through sufficient job and personal resources. Therefore, organisations that invest in meaningful work, supportive leadership, and employee welfare are likely to achieve better organisational outcomes, given the strong positive correlation between employee engagement and job performance (Jonker & Dube, 2025).

8.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

8.4.1 Contribution to industrial psychology

This research contributes to the theoretical and empirical knowledge in industrial psychology by advancing the understanding of the dynamic interplay among employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. The study integrated disparate constructs (i.e., engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance) within a unified framework, addressing gaps in the existing literature. It expanded the body of research on these constructs. Although research has examined these constructs individually, few studies have examined all four together in a single study.

By incorporating biographical differences (gender, age, job grade), the study aligned with contemporary trends in industrial psychology that emphasise diversity and inclusivity. It explored how biographical factors influence workplace dynamics. Furthermore, the study bridged the gap between engagement theories and performance frameworks by explaining how engagement, a psychological state, translates into tangible outcomes such as performance. Including followership also highlights the often-overlooked role of employees as active contributors to organisational leadership processes, emphasising that effective organisations require mutual leader–follower interactions. The study contributed to followership research in particular, as this construct is under-researched compared to the other three constructs.

8.4.2 Practical contribution

The study provided valuable information for HR specialists, legislators, and organisational leaders by highlighting practical strategies to enhance employee performance:

- Engagement techniques are crucial for promoting the customisation of leadership and engagement interventions to varied employee groups while taking biographical differences into account.
- To detect and address obstacles to engagement and performance, organisations could use engagement surveys and diagnostics to incorporate model factors (such as leadership, followership, performance, and biographical variables).

- Training in servant leadership as a component of leadership development could be used to increase performance. Leaders who value empowerment, humility, and moral behaviour can foster motivated and engaged employees.
- Organisations should develop followership training programmes to foster critical thinking and active employee engagement, thereby fostering a culture of responsibility and teamwork.
- Organisations can offer coaching and mentoring to promote role clarity and foster follower success traits, thereby enhancing performance at work.
- To accomplish performance objectives, engagement programmes must be coordinated with leadership and followership initiatives.
- Legislators should develop legislation and guidelines to promote and regulate employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance.

The study integrated employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance, providing a comprehensive framework for studying employee behaviours and organisational effectiveness.

8.4.3 Research contribution

This study offers a foundation for future research in industrial psychology, organisational behaviour, and management sciences. The study provides researchers with a testable framework to empirically investigate the linkages between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. The study used SEM to validate the pathways and moderating effects.

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following study limitations were identified:

The current study used a quantitative research design. Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the constructs.

The study was limited to four constructs: employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Other variables that may influence these relationships were beyond the study's scope and warrant further investigation.

This study was conducted within selected South African organisations in the iFeedback database. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalised to all South African organisations or to organisations in other countries without further validation.

Top management, which scored higher than the other levels, made up most of the sample. If the sample had been representative of all levels, the outcomes might have been different.

Some participants at lower levels had no subordinates. As a result, some elements of the four dimensions, such as leadership, might have been challenging to relate to.

The measurement tools also presented challenges. Although the instruments were carefully selected, certain issues were identified. First, one component did not load in the SAEES; two factors loaded differently in the SLQ; and the PSQ produced the original two dimensions rather than the expected ones. Only the IWPQ emerged as anticipated.

The survey included self-assessments of employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. The use of self-assessment has limits. One of the main disadvantages of self-assessment questionnaires is the possibility of inaccurate responses. Particularly when answering delicate issues, respondents may not be entirely truthful. They might respond in a socially acceptable way, a phenomenon known as social desirability bias. These issues can also affect survey validity and reliability. One issue is response bias, or an individual's tendency to provide a particular response regardless of the question (Larson, 2019)

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made in relation to future research:

- To better comprehend the degree of performance, it is recommended that future research focus more on diverse organisational contexts. Examining organisational structures, leadership styles, and cultural dynamics can improve understanding of how these contextual elements influence employee behaviour and outcomes.
- Future research should employ a mixed-methods strategy that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- The range of variables evaluated in future research should be increased. Including a broader range of behavioural, psychological, and organisational factors may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the processes influencing employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. This approach would enable researchers to capture the complexity of workplace dynamics more effectively.
- Future research should examine potential moderating variables to determine the conditions under which relationships among these variables are strengthened or weakened.

- Cross-cultural research could be employed to investigate whether the effects of engagement, leadership, and followership, as well as biographical aspects such as gender and age, vary depending on the cultural and organisational setting.
- Longitudinal research can be employed to examine the long-term effects of engagement, leadership, and followership on work performance. This approach may shed light on how work performance changes over time and how it continues to influence outcomes.
- Future research should investigate the impact of technology on followership, leadership, and engagement, particularly in hybrid work environments.
- Future studies should examine the integration of general aspects of performance management with other HR systems, including learning and development, career development, rewards and compensation, and recruitment and selection, to promote a more cohesive and effective HRM process.

The study provided a valuable framework for understanding the interplay between employee engagement, leadership, followership, and work performance. Deeper insights into how organisations can successfully promote work performance by implementing these guidelines can be obtained by broadening the scope of variables and embracing a variety of approaches. This foundation can be expanded upon in future studies and applications.

8.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 8 concluded the study by presenting the study conclusions, limitations, and recommendations. The chapter discussed conclusions drawn from the literature and empirical findings, along with the study's contributions to industrial psychology, practical applications, and the broader field of study. The researcher developed a model of employee engagement, leadership, and followership in relation to work performance across South African organisations.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

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ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE: A Model of Employee Engagement, Leadership And Followership for Work Performance across levels in South African Organisations

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in a survey conducted by Sylvia Baloyi under the supervision of Prof OM Ledimo, a professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology towards a PhD at the University of South Africa.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The survey you have received has been designed to develop a model to improve workplace performance. Organisations face performance challenges that threaten their survival and rely on employees to thrive consistently. Individuals play a crucial role in sustaining performance in the workplace. The researcher intends to discover the core characteristics of employee engagement, leadership and followership essential for performance model within the South African labour market and propose ways of applying it effectively for the benefit of the organisation

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You were selected to participate in this survey because you are a full-time employee, with relevant job grade and work experience required to understanding workplace performance in South African organisations. You will not be eligible to complete the survey if you are unemployed, working part-time or temporary, working outside South Africa and your age range is below 18 and above 65.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

If you choose to participate in this survey, it will take up no more than 45 minutes of your time to complete the survey online. By completing this survey, you agree that the information you

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provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are under no obligation to complete the survey, and you can withdraw from the study at any stage when you choose to do so.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not benefit from your participation as an individual; however, it is envisioned that this study's findings will form a basis for developing a model to improve workplace performance. It will also increase the body of knowledge for this study's constructs and provide more insight and understanding in managers, leaders, and practitioners' professional work performance.

ARE THEIR ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing the survey. However, should the negative consequence arise they will be referred to the Ethics Committee

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and report on the findings from the participating group's perspective and not from an individual's perspective. Any identifying information obtained in connection with this survey will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law).

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HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

The data will be password protected by the researcher, Statistician and iFeedback company. The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes. After that, the data will be permanently destroyed; hard copies will be shredded and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the computer's hard drive.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participation is voluntary, and you will not receive any payment or incentive for participating in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

The research will be reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Economic and Management Science, Unisa.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

To find out about the final research findings or require any further information, please contact the researcher Sylvia Baloyi telephonically or via email. Alternatively, if you are interested in any published material related to this study, you are welcome to request such documents from the researcher.

WHO TO CONTACT SHOULD I HAVE ANY QUERIES?

The primary researcher, Sylvia Baloyi, can be contacted during office hours. The study leader, Prof OM Ledimo, can be contacted during office hours

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Should you have any questions regarding the study's ethical aspects, you can contact the chairperson of the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Economic and Management Science. Alternatively, you can report any severe unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

Thanking you in advance for your participation in the survey

Researcher's Name & Surname: Sylvia Baloyi **Date:** 05 February 2021

Researcher's Signature_____

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has explained to me the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation in this study.

I have read and understood the study, as explained in the participation information sheet above. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that this study's findings will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but my participation will be kept confidential.

I agree to complete the online survey.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant Signature_____

Researcher's Name & Surname: Sylvia Baloyi **Date:** 05 February 2021

Researcher's Signature_____

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ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

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UNISA CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

05 March 2021

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : ***2021_CEMS/IOP_002***
Name : Ms Sylvia Baloyi
Student #: 31702597
Staff #: N/a

Dear Ms Sylvia Baloyi,

Decision: Ethics approval from 05 March 2021 to 05 March 2026

Researcher(s): Name: Ms Sylvia Baloyi
E-mail address, telephone: sylbalo@hotmail.com, 082 684 9696

Supervisor (s): Name: Prof Ophillia Ledimo
E-mail address, telephone: Manetom@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 8219

A Model of Employee Engagement, Leadership and Followership for Work Performance across levels in South African Organisations.

Qualification: Doctorate (PhD)- Post graduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for **Five** years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on the 3rd March 2021 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on 5th March 2021.*

The proposed research may only commence with the provision that:

1. ***The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 which is attached.***

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2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(05 March 2026)**
8. Submission of a complete research ethics progress report will constitute an application for the renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2021_CEMS/IOP_002** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Chair of IOP ERC

E-mail: vnieka2@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-8231

Signature

Executive Dean : CEMS

E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4805

ANNEXURE C: QUESTIONNAIRE

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QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please complete the following biographical information. This information will only be used for statistical purposes.

Tick the appropriate block

1. Gender

Male	Female

2. Age

Below 18	18-30	31-40	41-50	50-64

3. Race

White	Black	Coloured	Indian

4. Job Grade

Employee	Supervisor	Manager	Senior Management	Top Management

5. Type of Employment

Full- time	Part-time	Contractor

6. Years of Service

0 to 1 year	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6-10 years	10 years and above

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7. Highest Qualification

Std 7-8 (Grades 9 to 10)	Std 9-10 (Grades 11-12)	Certificate	Diploma	First Degree	Post Graduate Qualification

8. Industry or Economic Sector

Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing	
Mining and Quarrying	
Manufacturing	
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	
Construction	
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motor-Cycles and Personal and Household Goods; Hotels and Restaurants Transport, Storage and Communication	
Financial Intermediation Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	
Community, Social and Personal Services	
Private Households; Exterritorial Organisations, Representatives of Foreign Governments and other Activities	

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SECTION B

QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

Please read each of the following statements and rate the frequency with which each is true

Statement	0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Always
1. I put others' best interests ahead of my own					
2. I do everything I can to serve others					
3. I sacrifice my own interests to meet others' needs					
4. I go above and beyond the call of duty to meet others' needs					
5. I am someone that others turn to if they have a personal trauma					
6. I am good at helping others with their emotional issues					
7. I am talented at helping others to heal emotionally					
8. I am one that can help mend others' hard feelings					
9. I am alert to what's happening around me					
10. I am good at anticipating the consequences of decisions					
11. I have good awareness of what's going on around me					
12. I am in tune with what is happening around me					
13. I am usually good at anticipating what's					

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going to happen in the organization					
14. I encourage others to offer compelling reasons for choices					
15. I encourage others to dream "big dreams" about the organization					
16. I encourage others to share the thinking behind their decisions					
17. I am good at helping others to share their thoughts					
18. I am good at gently persuading others without being pushy					
19. I believe that the organization needs to play a moral role in society					
20. I believe that our organization needs to function as a community					
21. I see the organization for its potential to contribute to society					
22. I encourage others to have a community spirit in the workplace					
23. I am preparing the organization to make a positive difference in the future					

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QUESTIONNAIRE 2

For each statement, please make two judgements. In the column marked YOU, indicate the extent to which the statement describes you. In the BOSS column, indicate how your boss (or most recent boss) would describe you. Use the following scale for both columns:
Answer as accurately and frankly as possible. Please portray yourself and your boss' view as they really are, not as you would like them to be.

A = Always
B = Often
C = Sometimes
D = Seldom
E = Never

YOU	BOSS	
		1. Do you thoroughly evaluate the decisions of higher ups?
		2. When starting a new job, do you build a quick record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?
		3. Are you a conformist at work, e.g. dress, procedures, ways of thinking, etc.?
		4. When you are not the leader of a group project, do you still contribute at a high level, often doing more than your share?
		5. Do you generally think up better alternatives than the leader's proposed plan?
		6. Do you grouse about work to your friends but do not make your feelings public to your boss?
		7. Do you depend on the leader to do the thinking for the group?
		8. Do you take regular and significant action to upgrade your work skills or knowledge?
		9 Do you distinguish between your ego's preferences vs. an honest assessment of the ideas under discussion?
		10. Are you highly committed to and energized by your work and job?
		11. Do you look to the leader to solve the tough problems?
		12. Do you find pride and satisfaction in helping the leader achieve his or her goals?
		13. Do you admit your failures rather than try to downplay or cover them up?

YOU	BOSS	
		14. When you finish an assignment, do you wait for the leader to give you another one?

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		15. When disagreements arise, do you generally acquiesce to the leader to avoid confrontation or reprisals?
		16. Are you a self-starter in looking for assignments and completing them?
		17. Do you make a habit of questioning the leader's decisions?
		18. Do you withhold your best ideas and best effort from the organization or the leader?
		19. Do you manipulate your boss to get what you want?
		20. Have you acquired a distinctive competence that sets you apart from your co-workers?
		21. Do you accept what doctors, teachers, bosses, and other authority figures tell you rather than question or argue with them?
		22. Do you take on extra outside assignments even though they interfere with doing a superb job on your core work responsibilities?
		23. Do you rely on the boss to make most of the decisions regarding your work assignments?
		24. Do you push your work abilities to their limits?
		25. Do you stand up to the leader or the group when you believe they are going in the wrong direction, even though it might mean conflict or reprisals?
		26. When you disagree with the leader, do you unload on the leader in a public forum rather than discuss it privately?
		27. Are your boss' performance standards for you higher than your own?
		28. Do you help out other co-workers, which makes them look good, even when you don't get any credit?
		29. When the leader asks you to do something that is not right for you or runs counter to your personal preferences, do you usually do it anyway?
		30. When you accept an assignment, can the leader count on high performance, high quality work with minimal supervision and that you will "fill in the cracks" if need be?
YOU	BOSS	31. Are you intellectually and interpersonally honest with your boss and co-workers?

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		32. Does your enthusiasm rub off on and energize your co-workers?
		33. Do you put off evaluating your strengths and weaknesses?
		34. Do you let the leader know ASAP when you are in trouble, e.g. slipping a schedule?
		35. Do you stretch the truth and credit-taking to make yourself look good?
		36. Are your personal work goals misaligned with the organization's goals?
		37. Are you deferential to people because they are in positions of power?
		38. When you are not the appointed leader, do you try to wrest control from the leader because you like being the center of attention or power?
		39. Do you abide by your own ethical standards rather than look to the leader of the group?
		40. Do you actively support your leader when their goals are consistent with the organization's?

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QUESTIONNAIRE 3

Instructions:

The following questions relate to how you carried out your work during the past 3 months. In order to get an accurate picture of your conduct at work, it is important that you complete the questionnaire as carefully and honestly as possible. If you are uncertain about how to answer a particular question, please give the best possible answer. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is completely anonymous: your answers will not be seen by your supervisor(s) or colleagues

In the past 3 months...

1. I was able to plan my work so that I finished it on time.	Seldom	Sometimes	Regularly	Often	Always
2. I kept in mind the work result I needed to achieve.					
3. I was able to set priorities. 4. I was able to carry out mywork efficiently.					
5. I managed my time well.					
6. On my own initiative, I started new tasks when my old tasks were completed.					
7. I took on challenging tasks when they were available.					
8. I worked on keeping my job related knowledge up-to-date.					
9. I worked on keeping my work skills up-to-date.					
10. I came up with creative solutions for new problems.					
11. I took on extra					

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responsibilities.					
12. I continually sought new challenges in my work.					
13. I actively participated in meetings and/or consultations.					

In the past 3 months...

14. I complained about minor work-related issues at work.	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Regularly	Often
15. I made problems at work bigger than they were.					
16. I focused on the negative aspects of situation at work instead of the positive aspects.					
17. I talked to colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.					
18. I talked to people outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work.					

QUESTIONNAIRE 4

Decide whether you agree or differ with each statement and click in the white circle below the scale (e.g. strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree) that best reflects your view.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. At my work I feel bursting with energy.					
2. At my job I feel strong and vigorous.					
3. My job inspires me.					
4. I feel positive about my work.					
5. I feel my work is fulfilling.					

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6. I am positive about my future in the organisation.					
7. I feel committed to the organisation.					
8. I am proud to work for this organisation					
9. I will encourage my friends to join the organisation.					
10. My personal values are in line with organisational values.					
11. I am excited by our vision and mission.					
12. I enjoy my work.					
13. The organisational leadership gives employees a clear picture of the directions the organisation is headed.					
14. The organisation vision for the future is inspiring.					
15. My job is meaningful to me.					
16. In my organisation individual employees are involved in implementing the strategy of the organisation.					
17. In our organisation individual employees accept accountability for their performance					
18. In our organisation employees are encouraged to develop ideas to improve work procedures and methods.					
19. The organisation has a stimulating environment.					
20. Initiative is encouraged in the organisation.					
21. Risk taking is encouraged in the organisation.					
22. The way we do things around here encourages high performance.					
23. Our top management communicates the vision and mission to us.					
24. My immediate manager inspires people in my business unit.					
25. My immediate manager does a					

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good job of 'managing the work' - that is making appropriate work assignments, scheduling the work, setting priorities, etc. for me and my team.					
26. I trust my immediate manager.					
27. My immediate manager trusts me.					
28. I have the support from my immediate manager to do my job effectively.					
29. My immediate manager gives me regular feedback that helps me to improve my performance.					
30. I am satisfied with the way that my work performance is evaluated.					

Thanking you in advance for your participation in the survey.

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ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRE APPROVALS

From: Barbuto, Jay <jbarbuto@Fullerton.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 3:59:51 AM
To: Sylvia Baloyi
Subject: Re: Servant Leadership Questionnaire

You have permission to use the SLQ for research, unaltered. If you plan to translate it to another language, you do not have permission to use it. Too many poor translations have occurred and only translation experts that agree to follow strict guidelines will be permitted. I have seen too many amateur attempts at translation and few succeed, if ever to replicate the factor structure that the SLQ consistently achieves.

Best,

Jay Barbuto

Kelley Followership Questionnaire

From: Robert Kelley <rk2n@andrew.cmu.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2020 9:19 PM
To: Sylvia Baloyi <sylbalo@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Form Submission - Contact Robert Kelley - Kelley Followership Questionnaire

Hi Sylvia,

The 40 item questionnaire is attached. Please send me a summary of your work.

Cheers -- Dr. K.

Robert Kelley Ph.D.

From: Nico Martins <martinsn@mweb.co.za>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 11:01 AM
To: 'Sylvia Baloyi' <sylbalo@hotmail.com>
Cc: manetom@unisa.ac.za
Subject: RE: SB Revised Chapter 1 2020 Final

Sylvia,
Attached the questionnaire and a typical layout with the scale. You can also note some of the recent research and how the questionnaire was adapted was the researchers.
Regards.
Nico
Prof N Martins

Individual Work Performance (IWP)
From: Koopmans, L. (Linda) <linda.koopmans@tno.nl>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 2:19 PM
To: Sylvia Baloyi <sylbalo@hotmail.com>
Subject: RE: Request permission to use the Individual Work Performance (IWP) for Doctoral Studies

Dear Sylvia,

Thank you for your e-mail and your interest in the IWPQ. You have my permission to use the scale in your research. Please find attached the manual of the IWPQ. This manual includes the final 1.0 version: with 3 subscales and 18 items. Also it includes background information and scoring instructions.

Good luck with your PhD research!

Kind regards,

Dr. Linda Koopmans

ANNEXURE E: MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Group Statistics

1. Gender		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SAEES_OS	Male	211	4,1536	0,83399	0,05741
	Female	181	4,0243	0,97608	0,07255
SAEES_OC	Male	211	3,9929	0,91538	0,06302
	Female	181	3,9273	0,98949	0,07355
SAEES_SI	Male	211	3,4052	1,08243	0,07452
	Female	181	3,6473	0,96005	0,07136
SAEES_IM	Male	211	3,8472	1,06096	0,07304
	Female	181	3,9240	1,07598	0,07998
SAEES	Male	211	3,8497	0,82237	0,05661
	Female	181	3,8807	0,86051	0,06396
SLQ_AC	Male	211	4,0047	0,62391	0,04295
	Female	181	4,1395	0,52528	0,03904
SLQ_EH	Male	211	3,6493	0,87542	0,06027
	Female	181	3,9503	0,73240	0,05444
SLQ_W	Male	211	4,3590	0,60893	0,04192
	Female	181	4,3439	0,59233	0,04403
SLQ_PM	Male	211	4,2022	0,67076	0,04618
	Female	181	4,0276	0,67484	0,05016
SLQ_OS	Male	211	4,3791	0,70091	0,04825
	Female	181	4,4365	0,57624	0,04283
SLQ	Male	211	4,1189	0,49961	0,03439
	Female	181	4,1796	0,38894	0,02891
PSQ_Y_IT	Male	211	0,7038	0,84793	0,05837
	Female	181	0,4903	0,90037	0,06692
PSQ_Y_AE	Male	211	1,1199	0,91812	0,06321
	Female	181	1,1127	0,85343	0,06343
PSQ_Y	Male	211	0,9118	0,75793	0,05218
	Female	181	0,8015	0,74257	0,05519
PSQ_B_IT	Male	211	0,5687	0,88136	0,06068
	Female	181	0,4171	0,86082	0,06398
PSQ_B_AE	Male	211	1,1436	0,88258	0,06076
	Female	181	1,2497	0,76381	0,05677

PSQ_B	Male	211	0,8562	0,77001	0,05301
	Female	181	0,8334	0,63709	0,04735
IWPQ_TP	Male	211	4,1611	0,71762	0,04940
	Female	181	4,0912	0,88818	0,06602
IWPQ_CPerf	Male	211	4,2646	0,66559	0,04582
	Female	181	4,1538	0,90138	0,06700
IWPQ_CProd	Male	211	4,2192	0,76470	0,05264
	Female	181	4,0552	0,77351	0,05749
IWPQ	Male	211	4,2150	0,56835	0,03913
	Female	181	4,1001	0,68533	0,05094

Anova

2. Age		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
SAEES_OS	18 - 40	61	3,8164	0,95937	0,12283
	41 - 50	117	4,0701	0,96751	0,08945
	51 - 64	214	4,1888	0,83484	0,05707
	Total	392	4,0954	0,90318	0,04562
SAEES_OC	18 - 40	61	3,8798	0,94042	0,12041
	41 - 50	117	3,9516	1,04704	0,09680
	51 - 64	214	3,9969	0,89541	0,06121
	Total	392	3,9651	0,94840	0,04790
SAEES_SI	18 - 40	61	3,5273	0,95121	0,12179
	41 - 50	117	3,5641	1,06962	0,09889
	51 - 64	214	3,4992	1,04146	0,07119

	Total	392	3,5230	1,03438	0,05224
SAEES_IM	18 - 40	61	3,8320	1,00283	0,12840
	41 - 50	117	3,8654	1,16686	0,10788
	51 - 64	214	3,9159	1,03032	0,07043
	Total	392	3,8878	1,06659	0,05387
SAEES	18 - 40	61	3,7639	0,78413	0,10040
	41 - 50	117	3,8628	0,93880	0,08679
	51 - 64	214	3,9002	0,79584	0,05440
	Total	392	3,8678	0,83852	0,04235
SLQ_AC	18 - 40	61	3,9590	0,54425	0,06968
	41 - 50	117	4,0897	0,59039	0,05458
	51 - 64	214	4,0864	0,58952	0,04030
	Total	392	4,0676	0,58341	0,02947
SLQ_EH	18 - 40	61	3,7814	0,86042	0,11016
	41 - 50	117	3,8319	0,81135	0,07501
	51 - 64	214	3,7632	0,82856	0,05664
	Total	392	3,7866	0,82692	0,04177
SLQ_W	18 - 40	61	4,3074	0,52914	0,06775
	41 - 50	117	4,3611	0,57558	0,05321
	51 - 64	214	4,3657	0,63431	0,04336
	Total	392	4,3552	0,60072	0,03034
SLQ_PM	18 - 40	61	3,8962	0,66817	0,08555
	41 - 50	117	4,1567	0,66749	0,06171
	51 - 64	214	4,1729	0,67422	0,04609
	Total	392	4,1250	0,67679	0,03418
SLQ_OS	18 - 40	61	4,2172	0,73948	0,09468
	41 - 50	117	4,5107	0,58390	0,05398
	51 - 64	214	4,3902	0,65692	0,04491
	Total	392	4,3992	0,65504	0,03308
SLQ	18 - 40	61	4,0322	0,45099	0,05774
	41 - 50	117	4,1900	0,44825	0,04144
	51 - 64	214	4,1557	0,45197	0,03090
	Total	392	4,1467	0,45249	0,02285
PSQ_Y_IT	18 - 40	61	0,4959	0,99843	0,12784

	Top Management	111	4,0721	1,01264	0,09612
	Total	392	3,8852	1,06812	0,05395
SAEES	Employee	66	3,7577	0,90806	0,11177
	Supervisor	29	3,6514	0,81105	0,15061
	Manager	91	3,6875	0,88919	0,09321
	Senior Management	95	3,8234	0,77393	0,07940
	Top Management	111	4,1681	0,74435	0,07065
	Total	392	3,8657	0,83976	0,04241
SLQ_AC	Employee	66	4,0795	0,59511	0,07325
	Supervisor	29	4,0086	0,37490	0,06962
	Manager	91	4,1099	0,49751	0,05215
	Senior Management	95	4,0632	0,60138	0,06170
	Top Management	111	4,0405	0,67128	0,06371
	Total	392	4,0663	0,58356	0,02947
SLQ_EH	Employee	66	3,5909	0,87666	0,10791
	Supervisor	29	3,6552	0,87959	0,16334
	Manager	91	3,9744	0,72219	0,07571
	Senior Management	95	3,7509	0,83789	0,08597
	Top Management	111	3,8228	0,82244	0,07806
	Total	392	3,7891	0,82396	0,04162
SLQ_W	Employee	66	4,1818	0,63328	0,07795
	Supervisor	29	4,4138	0,47376	0,08797
	Manager	91	4,3791	0,52884	0,05544
	Senior Management	95	4,3763	0,57644	0,05914
	Top Management	111	4,4234	0,62685	0,05950
	Total	392	4,3603	0,58687	0,02964
SLQ_PM	Employee	66	3,7778	0,79600	0,09798
	Supervisor	29	4,0115	0,47545	0,08829
	Manager	91	4,0733	0,68818	0,07214
	Senior Management	95	4,1930	0,56614	0,05809
	Top Management	111	4,3664	0,55769	0,05293
	Total	392	4,1310	0,65927	0,03330
SLQ_OS	Employee	66	4,3144	0,72895	0,08973
	Supervisor	29	4,4052	0,54451	0,10111

	Manager	91	4,3791	0,63723	0,06680
	Senior Management	95	4,3711	0,60677	0,06225
	Top Management	111	4,5225	0,60354	0,05729
	Total	392	4,4088	0,63226	0,03193
SLQ	Employee	66	3,9889	0,48660	0,05990
	Supervisor	29	4,0989	0,33562	0,06232
	Manager	91	4,1832	0,40929	0,04291
	Senior Management	95	4,1509	0,41907	0,04300
	Top Management	111	4,2351	0,45759	0,04343
	Total	392	4,1511	0,44046	0,02225
PSQ_Y_IT	Employee	66	0,2765	0,93863	0,11554
	Supervisor	29	0,5259	1,00077	0,18584
	Manager	91	0,6401	0,81752	0,08570
	Senior Management	95	0,7079	0,88325	0,09062
	Top Management	111	0,7027	0,81430	0,07729
	Total	392	0,6046	0,87770	0,04433
PSQ_Y_AE	Employee	66	1,0455	0,72984	0,08984
	Supervisor	29	1,1345	0,91467	0,16985
	Manager	91	1,1538	0,81898	0,08585
	Senior Management	95	1,0926	0,93151	0,09557
	Top Management	111	1,1550	0,99149	0,09411
	Total	392	1,1196	0,88869	0,04489
PSQ_Y	Employee	66	0,6610	0,64430	0,07931
	Supervisor	29	0,8302	0,88548	0,16443
	Manager	91	0,8970	0,64138	0,06724
	Senior Management	95	0,9003	0,79416	0,08148
	Top Management	111	0,9288	0,81268	0,07714
	Total	392	0,8621	0,75238	0,03800
PSQ_B_IT	Employee	66	0,2083	0,81640	0,10049
	Supervisor	29	0,6207	0,70906	0,13167
	Manager	91	0,3901	0,83184	0,08720
	Senior Management	95	0,5263	0,87707	0,08999
	Top Management	111	0,7050	0,92883	0,08816
	Total	392	0,4987	0,87411	0,04415

PSQ_B_AE	Employee	66	1,0818	0,69391	0,08541
	Supervisor	29	1,2655	0,81647	0,15161
	Manager	91	1,1923	0,83947	0,08800
	Senior Management	95	1,1537	0,91673	0,09405
	Top Management	111	1,2802	0,83119	0,07889
	Total	392	1,1946	0,83151	0,04200
PSQ_B	Employee	66	0,6451	0,51168	0,06298
	Supervisor	29	0,9431	0,62095	0,11531
	Manager	91	0,7912	0,64301	0,06741
	Senior Management	95	0,8400	0,78532	0,08057
	Top Management	111	0,9926	0,79250	0,07522
	Total	392	0,8467	0,71104	0,03591
IWPQ_TP	Employee	66	4,0568	0,80717	0,09936
	Supervisor	29	4,2155	0,82571	0,15333
	Manager	91	4,1951	0,79390	0,08322
	Senior Management	95	4,2079	0,73083	0,07498
	Top Management	111	4,0428	0,85205	0,08087
	Total	392	4,1333	0,80057	0,04043
IWPQ_CPerf	Employee	66	3,9621	0,84216	0,10366
	Supervisor	29	4,1092	0,60957	0,11319
	Manager	91	4,1484	0,79677	0,08352
	Senior Management	95	4,3351	0,68395	0,07017
	Top Management	111	4,3514	0,82461	0,07827
	Total	392	4,2168	0,78475	0,03964
IWPQ_CProd	Employee	66	4,0909	0,90153	0,11097
	Supervisor	29	4,1034	0,77781	0,14444
	Manager	91	4,1071	0,84257	0,08833
	Senior Management	95	4,1237	0,69465	0,07127
	Top Management	111	4,2365	0,69645	0,06610
	Total	392	4,1448	0,77315	0,03905
IWPQ	Employee	66	4,0366	0,68204	0,08395
	Supervisor	29	4,1427	0,60022	0,11146
	Manager	91	4,1502	0,64182	0,06728
	Senior Management	95	4,2222	0,55836	0,05729

	Top Management	111	4,2102	0,64578	0,06129
	Total	392	4,1650	0,62807	0,03172

Years of service

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
SAEES_OS	0 to 5 years	30	4,0800	0,80275	0,14656
	6 to 10 years	47	3,8468	1,04608	0,15259
	10 years and longer	316	4,1323	0,88521	0,04980
	Total	393	4,0941	0,90237	0,04552
SAEES_OC	0 to 5 years	30	3,8778	0,88942	0,16238
	6 to 10 years	47	3,8901	0,96639	0,14096
	10 years and longer	316	3,9815	0,95309	0,05362
	Total	393	3,9627	0,94844	0,04784
SAEES_SI	0 to 5 years	30	3,5778	0,99302	0,18130
	6 to 10 years	47	3,5142	0,88522	0,12912
	10 years and longer	316	3,5158	1,06106	0,05969
	Total	393	3,5204	1,03435	0,05218
SAEES_IM	0 to 5 years	30	3,6750	1,22325	0,22333
	6 to 10 years	47	3,8883	0,98606	0,14383
	10 years and longer	316	3,9043	1,06390	0,05985
	Total	393	3,8849	1,06678	0,05381
SAEES	0 to 5 years	30	3,8026	0,84246	0,15381
	6 to 10 years	47	3,7848	0,76387	0,11142
	10 years and longer	316	3,8835	0,85038	0,04784
	Total	393	3,8655	0,83870	0,04231
SLQ_AC	0 to 5 years	30	3,9417	0,42893	0,07831
	6 to 10 years	47	4,0213	0,69905	0,10197
	10 years and longer	316	4,0854	0,57651	0,03243
	Total	393	4,0668	0,58289	0,02940

SLQ_EH	0 to 5 years	30	3,7000	0,75986	0,13873
	6 to 10 years	47	3,8582	0,87296	0,12733
	10 years and longer	316	3,7827	0,82674	0,04651
	Total	393	3,7854	0,82618	0,04168
SLQ_W	0 to 5 years	30	4,3083	0,54410	0,09934
	6 to 10 years	47	4,3989	0,60939	0,08889
	10 years and longer	316	4,3513	0,60588	0,03408
	Total	393	4,3537	0,60073	0,03030
SLQ_PM	0 to 5 years	30	3,9444	0,71161	0,12992
	6 to 10 years	47	3,9645	0,67828	0,09894
	10 years and longer	316	4,1635	0,66956	0,03767
	Total	393	4,1230	0,67711	0,03416
SLQ_OS	0 to 5 years	30	4,3500	0,58575	0,10694
	6 to 10 years	47	4,5213	0,57064	0,08324
	10 years and longer	316	4,3869	0,67175	0,03779
	Total	393	4,4001	0,65444	0,03301
SLQ	0 to 5 years	30	4,0489	0,36763	0,06712
	6 to 10 years	47	4,1528	0,45307	0,06609
	10 years and longer	316	4,1540	0,45955	0,02585
	Total	393	4,1458	0,45229	0,02281
PSQ_Y_IT	0 to 5 years	30	0,6667	0,72615	0,13258
	6 to 10 years	47	0,2500	1,08096	0,15767
	10 years and longer	316	0,6527	0,84622	0,04760
	Total	393	0,6056	0,87681	0,04423
PSQ_Y_AE	0 to 5 years	30	1,1667	0,72461	0,13229
	6 to 10 years	47	0,9404	1,11095	0,16205
	10 years and longer	316	1,1408	0,86407	0,04861
	Total	393	1,1188	0,88770	0,04478
PSQ_Y	0 to 5 years	30	0,9167	0,58096	0,10607
	6 to 10 years	47	0,5952	0,97669	0,14247
	10 years and longer	316	0,8968	0,72123	0,04057
	Total	393	0,8622	0,75143	0,03790
PSQ_B_IT	0 to 5 years	30	0,3250	0,71964	0,13139
	6 to 10 years	47	0,3351	0,94879	0,13840

	10 years and longer	316	0,5388	0,87235	0,04907
	Total	393	0,4981	0,87308	0,04404
PSQ_B_AE	0 to 5 years	30	1,0800	0,86678	0,15825
	6 to 10 years	47	1,0085	1,02826	0,14999
	10 years and longer	316	1,2332	0,79167	0,04453
	Total	393	1,1947	0,83045	0,04189
PSQ_B	0 to 5 years	30	0,7025	0,68037	0,12422
	6 to 10 years	47	0,6718	0,82892	0,12091
	10 years and longer	316	0,8860	0,69034	0,03883
	Total	393	0,8464	0,71016	0,03582
IWPQ_TP	0 to 5 years	30	4,1583	0,67429	0,12311
	6 to 10 years	47	4,1383	0,81895	0,11946
	10 years and longer	316	4,1274	0,81125	0,04564
	Total	393	4,1310	0,80079	0,04039
IWPQ_CPerf	0 to 5 years	30	4,3333	0,59532	0,10869
	6 to 10 years	47	4,1525	0,77773	0,11344
	10 years and longer	316	4,2136	0,80156	0,04509
	Total	393	4,2154	0,78424	0,03956
IWPQ_CProd	0 to 5 years	30	4,0667	0,82507	0,15064
	6 to 10 years	47	4,1809	0,68901	0,10050
	10 years and longer	316	4,1479	0,78076	0,04392
	Total	393	4,1457	0,77237	0,03896
IWPQ	0 to 5 years	30	4,1861	0,50393	0,09200
	6 to 10 years	47	4,1572	0,60093	0,08766
	10 years and longer	316	4,1630	0,64334	0,03619
	Total	393	4,1641	0,62753	0,03165

Qualification

		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
SAEES_OS	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,9892	1,08212	0,17790
	Diploma	72	4,1500	0,98710	0,11633

	UG degree	63	3,8540	0,93271	0,11751
	PG degree	220	4,1627	0,82377	0,05554
	Total	392	4,0944	0,90351	0,04563
SAEES_OC	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,8604	1,14498	0,18823
	Diploma	72	4,0486	0,97602	0,11502
	UG degree	63	3,7381	0,95354	0,12013
	PG degree	220	4,0159	0,89823	0,06056
	Total	392	3,9626	0,94965	0,04796
SAEES_SI	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,4640	1,26573	0,20808
	Diploma	72	3,6551	0,94087	0,11088
	UG degree	63	3,1005	0,97942	0,12340
	PG degree	220	3,6038	1,01384	0,06835
	Total	392	3,5191	1,03539	0,05229
SAEES_IM	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,8243	1,29752	0,21331
	Diploma	72	3,9583	1,03801	0,12233
	UG degree	63	3,6706	1,10335	0,13901
	PG degree	220	3,9318	1,02392	0,06903
	Total	392	3,8846	1,06813	0,05395
SAEES	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,7845	1,10419	0,18153
	Diploma	72	3,9530	0,84507	0,09959
	UG degree	63	3,5908	0,81298	0,10243
	PG degree	220	3,9286	0,78142	0,05268
	Total	392	3,8652	0,83974	0,04241
SLQ_AC	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,0338	0,58382	0,09598
	Diploma	72	4,0868	0,62540	0,07370
	UG degree	63	3,9802	0,56494	0,07118
	PG degree	220	4,0909	0,57609	0,03884
	Total	392	4,0670	0,58362	0,02948

SLQ_EH	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,8649	0,75955	0,12487
	Diploma	72	3,9398	0,73866	0,08705
	UG degree	63	3,7354	0,99129	0,12489
	PG degree	220	3,7303	0,80774	0,05446
	Total	392	3,7823	0,82495	0,04167
SLQ_W	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,2162	0,62960	0,10351
	Diploma	72	4,4236	0,56550	0,06664
	UG degree	63	4,3532	0,62643	0,07892
	PG degree	220	4,3523	0,60041	0,04048
	Total	392	4,3527	0,60116	0,03036
SLQ_PM	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,9640	0,71052	0,11681
	Diploma	72	4,1528	0,72500	0,08544
	UG degree	63	4,1005	0,80463	0,10137
	PG degree	220	4,1530	0,60718	0,04094
	Total	392	4,1267	0,67395	0,03404
SLQ_OS	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,4527	0,61191	0,10060
	Diploma	72	4,4340	0,59929	0,07063
	UG degree	63	4,2460	0,81133	0,10222
	PG degree	220	4,4239	0,62770	0,04232
	Total	392	4,3999	0,65526	0,03310
SLQ	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,1063	0,36604	0,06018
	Diploma	72	4,2074	0,39387	0,04642
	UG degree	63	4,0831	0,56977	0,07178
	PG degree	220	4,1501	0,44639	0,03010
	Total	392	4,1457	0,45286	0,02287
PSQ_Y_IT	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	0,4459	1,02763	0,16894
	Diploma	72	0,5000	0,85888	0,10122
	UG degree	63	0,7698	0,80360	0,10124

	PG degree	220	0,6170	0,87337	0,05888
	Total	392	0,6040	0,87732	0,04431
PSQ_Y_AE	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	1,1000	0,63509	0,10441
	Diploma	72	1,2903	0,61648	0,07265
	UG degree	63	1,1444	0,73216	0,09224
	PG degree	220	1,0668	1,02054	0,06880
	Total	392	1,1235	0,88405	0,04465
PSQ_Y	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	0,7730	0,68813	0,11313
	Diploma	72	0,8951	0,61912	0,07296
	UG degree	63	0,9571	0,62367	0,07857
	PG degree	220	0,8419	0,83197	0,05609
	Total	392	0,8637	0,75180	0,03797
PSQ_B_IT	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	0,2162	0,98630	0,16215
	Diploma	72	0,4444	0,91276	0,10757
	UG degree	63	0,5397	0,75830	0,09554
	PG degree	220	0,5500	0,86820	0,05853
	Total	392	0,4974	0,87411	0,04415
PSQ_B_AE	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	1,2378	0,71428	0,11743
	Diploma	72	1,2944	0,77348	0,09116
	UG degree	63	1,2571	0,58880	0,07418
	PG degree	220	1,1459	0,91279	0,06154
	Total	392	1,1997	0,82535	0,04169
PSQ_B	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	0,7270	0,68481	0,11258
	Diploma	72	0,8694	0,71265	0,08399
	UG degree	63	0,8984	0,49006	0,06174
	PG degree	220	0,8480	0,76561	0,05162
	Total	392	0,8486	0,70970	0,03585
IWPQ_TP	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	3,9527	0,98749	0,16234

	Diploma	72	4,2292	0,71914	0,08475
	UG degree	63	3,9246	0,87602	0,11037
	PG degree	220	4,1898	0,76006	0,05124
	Total	392	4,1320	0,80158	0,04049
IWPQ_CPerf	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,0315	0,98275	0,16156
	Diploma	72	4,2153	0,78345	0,09233
	UG degree	63	4,1720	0,83814	0,10560
	PG degree	220	4,2568	0,73167	0,04933
	Total	392	4,2143	0,78491	0,03964
IWPQ_CProd	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,1959	0,77535	0,12747
	Diploma	72	4,1250	0,74824	0,08818
	UG degree	63	4,1825	0,81469	0,10264
	PG degree	220	4,1341	0,77355	0,05215
	Total	392	4,1460	0,77332	0,03906
IWPQ	Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Std 7-8 | Gr 9-10 | Certificate	37	4,0601	0,72591	0,11934
	Diploma	72	4,1898	0,62864	0,07409
	UG degree	63	4,0930	0,69998	0,08819
	PG degree	220	4,1936	0,58910	0,03972
	Total	392	4,1641	0,62833	0,03174

ANNEXURE F: iFEEDBACK

University of South Africa

Pretoria

RE: Data Collection Services Sylvia Baloyi

To whom it may concern

We were contacted by Sylvia Baloyi in 2020 to conduct an online survey for purposes of her Doctoral research. The proposed topic of her research A model of employee engagement, leadership and followership for work performance across levels in South African Organisations. The early discussions indicate that the data collection requirement calls for 300 South African respondents. We are acutely aware these details may change after ethics confirmation.

iFeedback will utilize our or source the relevant database to conduct the reach. The databases chosen for our research projects adhere to data quality and the ethical practice standards. Each respondent will be provided with an informed consent as an opening page to the survey. The online service is password protected and will not be accessed by any third parties. Anonymised data will be provided to Sylvia Baloyi in the form of an Excel sheet.

All ethics requirements where physically possible will complied with and if we notice problems with the proposed methodology, we will feedback to Sylvia Baloyi to address this with the ethics committee.

iFeedback comply with the SAMRA ethics requirements when conducting student research.

Regards

Adriaan Buys

iFeedback

iFeedback Consulting (Pty) Ltd – Reg. no. 2013/171267/07 | VAT no. 4460265632 | Director: Adriaan Buys

Tel: 021 201 1444 | adriaan@ifeedback.co.za | www.ifeedback.co.za

ANNEXURE G: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

Rephrase it! Academic Text Editing

17 Fallopius Street, Bloemfontein
+(27) 076 081 0730
info@rephraseit.co.za

26 July 2026

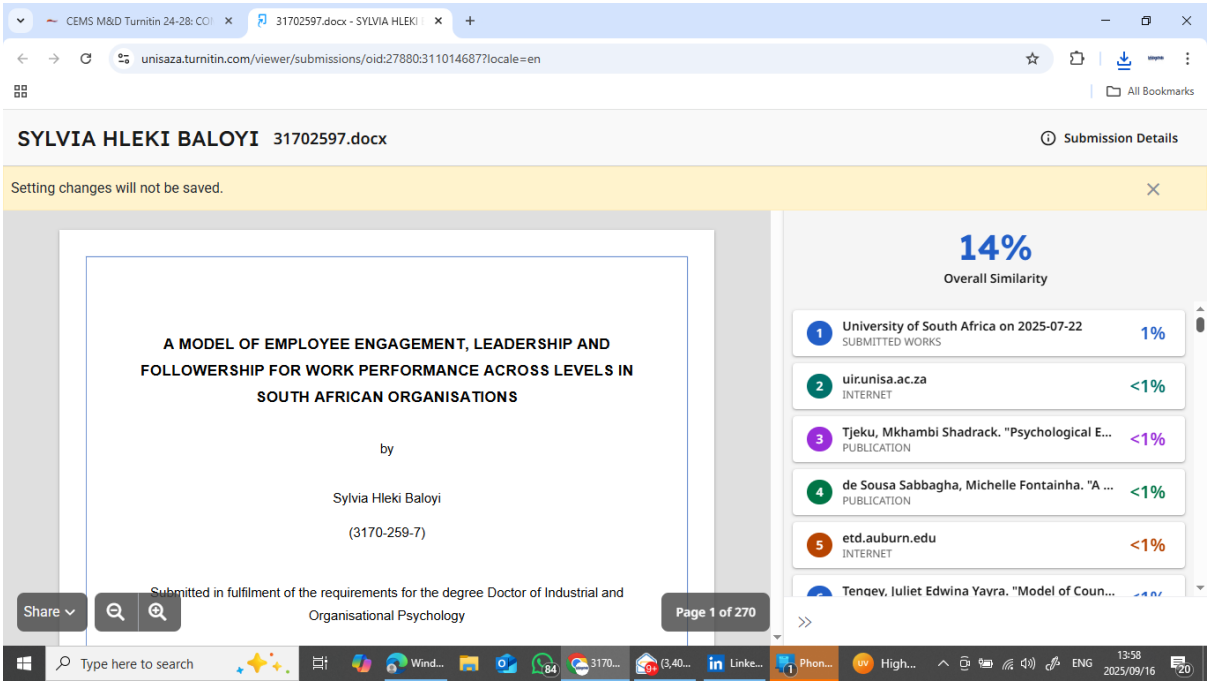
Student: **Sylvia Baloyi**
Student number: **3170-259-7**

I declare that I language edited the doctoral thesis titled, *A Model of Employee Engagement, Leadership and Followership for Work Performance across Levels in South African Organisations*

During the editing process, I looked for and corrected spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraph and syntax errors. Where I noticed inconsistencies or unclarities in the text, I made comments to draw the author's attention to the inconsistency or unclarity. I also made suggestions where changes could be made. Lastly, I double-checked the references in the text and in the reference list to make sure that they are consistent throughout. Where sources or source information were still missing, I indicated such to the author so that she could locate and add the missing information.

Disclaimer: The ultimate responsibility for accepting or rejecting the changes and recommendations rests with the student and I cannot be held responsible for any layout or language issues that might have emerged as a result of subsequent amendments to the text.

Yours sincerely

Johannes Pieter Odendaal

ANNEXURE H: TURNITIN REPORT