



The Relationship between Leadership Behaviour and Work Engagement – A Literature Review

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Abstract

Leaders in educational and training institutions or organisations are not different from leaders in other organisations, and therefore are faced with the same challenge of maintaining the corporate objectives of their organisations. The emphasis is on how business organisations can create effective leadership behaviour that fosters increased employee work engagement in order to achieve set business outcomes. Many studies have shown that a leader's leadership behaviour or style and employee's work engagement are two of the most important factors responsible for business success. Also, many researchers have observed that the leader's leadership behaviour considerably influences employee's work engagement. For any organisation to achieve its corporate goals and objectives, it must clearly understand and align these two important constructs. Therefore, theories of leadership, employee work engagement and relationship between these two constructs are reviewed in this study.

Keywords: Leadership; leadership behaviour; work engagement.

1. Introduction

According to Nelson and Shraim (2014:120), it is essential that organisations understand and relate to their employees on a personal, individual level so they can align individual and group competencies toward creating and sustaining competitive organisational culture and performance. The need to embrace new thought patterns and leadership methods therefore becomes imperative (Nelson & Shraim, 2014:120). The adoption of such new thought patterns and leadership methods can inspire employees to apply productive energy whilst increasing devotion and contentment with their organisation and their roles at work (Nelson & Shraim, 2014:120). The challenge that organisations and their managers face (Nelson & Shraim, 2014:120), is thus the identification of leadership behaviours needed to identify, attract, engage and inspire employees for enhanced performance in the workplace.

This research work will focus on the review of relevant literature. Previous studies on the topic were obtained for review purposes. The review focused on relevant journals, dissertations, thesis, conference and seminar papers on the relationship between leadership behaviour and work engagement. The review examined previous studies conducted internationally as well as studies conducted in the South African context. This research aims to discuss leadership, leadership theories, leadership behaviour, work engagement and the relationship between leadership behaviour and work engagement.

2. Definition of Leadership

Historically, research on leadership has concentrated on themes or variables, such as the leadership quality, ability or effectiveness (Adlam, 2003: 205-206). These many themes reveal the complexities embedded in the term leadership and explain the rationale behind the various approaches that have been employed by scholars to provide useful insight into the term leadership and effectiveness (Adlam, 2003:204).

According to Anderson *et al.* (1998:269) leadership is perceived as prompting submission/obedience, reverence/respect and collaboration. This means (Oyetunji, 2006:20) that the leader obtains the cooperation of followers through the exertion of power. In the same vein, Schermerhorn *et al.* (2000:287) defined leadership as one of relational influence that causes the individual or group to do the bidding of the leader. However, Maxwell (1999:108) opined differently, contending that to build relationships that enhance productivity, the leader focuses on what sort of motivational and influential attitudes can be injected into people as opposed to what [sort of efforts and outputs] can be extracted from them, so as to build the kind of relationship that promotes and increases productivity in the organisation.

However, since the emergence of a shift from rigid, controlling leadership (in which the leader tends to direct others and make decision for others to implement) to a more flexible, encompassing form of leadership, the perception and discussion of leadership has centred around being motivational, inclusive and empowering (Oyetunji, 2006:20). For example, leadership according to Jaques and Clement (1991:4-5), was a process in which an individual creates a target and direction for others, carrying them along in the same direction with absolute competence and commitment to the course. Following in the same context, leadership according to Dubrin (1998:2) is wrapped in the leader's ability to inspiringly generate follower confidence and support in a bid to achieve organisational goals.

More recent definition of leadership along this pattern of thought include:

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003:39), and Hoy and Miskel (2001:393) defined leadership as improving the organisation through people-organisation transformation.

House *et al.* (2004), according to Armstrong (2009:4), defined leadership as "the ability to motivate, influence and enable individuals to contribute to the objectives of organisations they belong to".

Ivancevich *et al.* (2008), cited in Armstrong (2009:4), defined leadership as the "process of influencing people to enable the achievement of relevant goals".

Leadership, according to Armstrong (2009:4), involves motivating people to perform at their absolute best towards a specified result. It entails the development and communication of a vision for the future, motivating and inspiring people as well as enlisting their participation and engagement (Armstrong, 2009:4).

Leadership, as described by McShane and Glinow (2010:360), borders on how a leader influences, encourages and leads the subordinates towards organisational effectiveness and success.

Leadership (Malik, 2013:209-210) also is defined as the process of influencing individual or group activities towards the accomplishment of defined goals and objectives.

From the above definitions, it is seen that leadership from the old lens is seen as top-down exertion of power and control, while the new concept embodies the nurturing of follower respect, concern as well as acknowledging the powerful, knowledgeable, creative contribution of the followers to the organisation (Oyetunji, 2006:21).

In conclusion, the new leadership concept considers transformation and empowerment as its main focus with the leader serving as the continual generator of new, effective and productive people-organisation ideas (Oyetunji, 2006:21). The leader provides vision-executing strategies and inspires the followers to achieve organisational objectives through the deployment of organisation-aligned and own initiatives (Oyetunji, 2006:21).

3. Review of Leadership Theories

Understanding leadership from a scientific point of view began during the industrial revolution with the first viewpoint focused on the traits of leaders (Wu, 2004:237). Later, leadership approach shifted from the inherent traits of leaders to a leader's characteristics and the situations surrounding the leader and then into the more modern theories of leadership.

According to Malik (2013:210) notable classification of leadership theories include:

Doyle and Smith (1999) who divided leadership theories into four categories: trait theory, behavioural theory, contingency theory and transformational theory;

Burmeister (2003) who divided leadership theories into three areas: the trait area, the behavioural area and the contingency area;

Schermerhorn *et al.* (2000:287), and Hoy and Miskel (2001:409) divided leadership theory into traditional and new leadership perspectives. They categorised trait, behavioural and situational or contingency theories under traditional leadership perspectives, and charismatic and transformational leadership theories under the new leadership perspectives;

Fairholm and Fairholm (2009:6) identified four leadership theories: Trait theory, behavioural theory, situational theory, and the newly conceptualised values theory (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:6). These classifications of leadership theories are explored below.

3.1 Trait theory

The trait theory is regarded as the first modern theory of leadership, examining the leader's traits or character. Trait theory (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:7) focuses on the capabilities, endowments and personality of the leader. The trait theory concentrates on the individual with top positions who influenced their societies in many meaningful ways – “the great people of their time” (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:7).

The trait approach arose from the “Great Man” theory in a bid to identify the core characteristics that define successful leaders (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:6). This approach identified crucial leadership traits, and individuals in possession of

such traits would then be placed into positions of leadership (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:6). The proponents of trait theory believed that great leaders were born, not developed (Daft, 2005) cited in Malik (2013: 210).

A major flaw of the trait approach is the lack of specific traits that guarantee effective leadership; the fact that with every study carried out, new traits were always discovered; and in spite of the many years of research devoted to the theory, traits identified were never consistent (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:6-7). Although the recurring nature of certain traits were pronounced, the inconsistency of results as observed in other studies, made them generally inconclusive (Bolden *et al.*, 2003:6-7). Due to the inconclusive nature of the results generated from research on trait theory, scholars began investigating other variables that could provide more reliable results, such as the behaviour of a leader (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007 and Luthans, 2008) cited in Malik (2013:210).

3.2 Behaviour theory

Behaviour theory assumes, like trait theory, that leadership is a focal point of organisational well-being (Oyetunji, 2006:29). However, the rationale (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:9) behind the behaviour theory is that focusing on research that studies noticeable behaviour instead of dwelling on traits, may be more academically beneficial. This theory stresses the investigation of a leader's actions or behaviour instead of focusing on a leader's personal traits or characteristics (Oyetunji, 2006:29).

Researchers who studied the behaviour theory targeted top management in order to gain full insight into management/leadership practice (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:9). This decision was premised on the assumption that top management were perceived in most cases as leaders and the duties they performed was considered to be leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:9).

Studies on leadership as carried out by Ohio State University and the University of Michigan in 1945, were considered fundamental to the development of behaviour theory in leadership research (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:9; and Hersey & Blanchard, 1988:91). Several studies were carried out, aimed at identifying and understanding leader behaviours linked to effectiveness. The findings highlighted two key types of leader behaviours: employee-centred/consideration and production-centred/initiating structure (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:9). The employee-centred leader pays close attention to the feelings of subordinates, striving to create a pleasant environment for them, while a production-centred leader is focused on task completion (Schermerhorn *et al.*, 2000:288-289). The conclusion, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1988:91-92), is that it is important that a leader rank high on both consideration and initiating structures.

Although the behaviour theory allows people to copy the works and style of other leaders, the behaviours cannot be generalised (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:10). This led researchers to begin considering leadership as an entity totally separate from the leader: leadership was considered as a combination of acts, attitudes and ethics that resonate with the individual leader intimately and personally (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:10). Thus, much of the confusion between leadership and management theory emanated from behaviour theory (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:10).

Behaviour theory, like trait theory, contributed significantly to the theory of leadership, but neither of these theories on their own nor together is sufficient to fully understand the concept of leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:10). This gap therefore led to the next leadership theory, which included the situational dimension of leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:10).

3.3 Situational theory

This theory resulted from the belief that behaviour theory is inadequate for the complex work environment, based on the fact that specific behaviours are only exhibited in specific situations (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11). Although there exists a leadership theory called “contingency theory” (Fiedler, 1967), it is mostly also referred to as situational leadership theory because it attempts to portray leadership behaviour according to what different leaders do in different situations, as a result of environmental influences (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11).

This therefore makes the situational context a crucial factor to be considered when attempting to define leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11). Two basic hypotheses, according to Hoy and Miskel (2001:403), are proposed in this theory:

- “Leadership traits and characteristics of the situation combine to produce leader behaviour and effectiveness”;
- “Situational factors have a direct effect on effectiveness”.

Situational theory contends that a leader’s action is influenced by unique situations, and as a result the behaviour of leadership must correspond with such situations (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11). This led researchers to investigate a number of factors that could dictate leadership style and also different situations that would warrant different leadership behaviours (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11). Some of the factors observed include: “organisation size, worker maturity, task complexity and variety”, as well as other “so-called critical contingencies” that they believed could condition leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:11).

Situational theory according to Blanchard and Hersey (1969) classifies leadership style into two dimensions: directive and supportive leadership. Likewise Robert House (1971; 1996) developed the path-goal theory, which dwells significantly on the leader’s behaviour and recognises four leader behaviours: directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented-behaviour (Maas, 2014:6).

Situational theory, when considered together with the trait and behaviour theories, provides important research opportunities with regard to understanding what makes for effective leadership (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:13). However, these three theories failed to identify and relate to the emotional and “inspirational attachment” that leaders generate in their followers, irrespective of the situation (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:13). Situational theory, according to Fairholm and Fairholm (2009:13), failed many scholars because of its myopic view of leadership, reducing leadership to the phrase “it all depends”.

Therefore, to answer the question of uncertainty with regard to the make-up of an effective leader, scholars viewed the term leadership as being different from the word leader, describing leadership as a theory of social relations or an organisational viewpoint (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:13). These research studies, aimed at rethinking the concept of leadership and leadership effectiveness, focused on issues such as follower or subordinate dynamics, relationships, motivation, organisational change, organisational culture and power so as to fully grasp the factors that influence leadership effectiveness (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2009:13). Thus, the new leadership perspectives were born.

3.4 The new leadership perspectives

The earlier approaches to leadership shed some light onto the concept of leadership and leadership effectiveness (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:409), but they failed to offer conviction with regard to understanding the meaning of leadership as

well as leadership effectiveness (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:18-28). It is therefore clear that leadership effectiveness transcends the possession of personal traits, the leader's behaviour and the ability of the leader to alter behaviour per situation (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:18-28).

The need for the best leadership style, filled with capabilities to improve the performance of organisations, became pertinent and the new leadership perspectives: charismatic and transformational theories emerged (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:18-28). These new leadership approaches are fundamental to people-organisation transformation in order to accomplish set organisational goals (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:18-28).

3.4.1. Charismatic Approach

In 1947, Max Weber introduced the charismatic leadership approach (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:410; and Lussier & Achua, 2001:375). Weber used the term charisma to describe followers' perception of leadership influence based on the endowment of exceptional characteristics (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:410; and Lussier & Achua, 2001:375). Charisma is defined as the art of engineering major attitudinal changes in the members of an organisation, thereby increasing their commitment levels toward the realisation of organisational targets (Lussier & Achua, 2001:375).

Scholars in support of Weber's view contended that before labelling an individual a charismatic leader, the social situation must demand such a persons' leadership qualities (Lussier & Achua, 2001:375-376). Other scholars contended that charismatic leadership is a product of both the leaders' attributes and the situation.

3.4.2. House's Charismatic Leadership Style

House and his partners noted that charismatic leadership is not predicated on personal characteristics of the leader. Instead, the personality characteristics enhance the development of charismatic relationships (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:411). Their theory considers charisma as the leader's ability to influence the views, standards, behaviour and performance of others, through the leader's personal behaviour and example, suggesting that the leader and the follower are key to building a charismatic relationship (Hoy & Miskel, 2001:411).

Charismatic leaders are in control when they control others, and they thrive in relationships where people are dependent on them (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:69). On a negative level, charismatic leaders are characterised by: empty promises, imitation of transformational leaders' behaviour, lack of a vision to communicate to followers, inconsistency in their actions, and a pretence to be trustworthy (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:69).

3.4.3. Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership is largely based on interactions between a leader and the members of a group or team, and it uses reward and punishment to regulate behaviour (Bass, 1998:121). The transaction is fuelled by the followers' expectation to fulfil self-interests and their leader's desire to meet organisational targets (Bass, 1998:121). In this kind of leadership, the leader specifies the tasks necessary to accomplish defined needs, rewards good performance and punishes mistakes (Ubben *et al.*, 2001:14-15).

Ubben *et al.* (2001:14) believed this kind of leadership kills the commitment of subordinates, because they only perform assigned tasks as instructed. Lussier and Achua (2001:383) explained that a transactional leader strives to uphold stability, thus creating the perception, according to Leithwood and Jantzi (2000:114), that this form of leadership is actually more management rather than leadership.

Sub-factors of transactional leadership, as identified by Bass (1985:135-136), include: “contingency reward, management by exception and laissez-faire”. Contingency reward (Bass, 1998:6) means rewarding the completion of an agreed-upon or assigned task, and such rewards could be in the form of commendation, acknowledgement and endorsement for promotion.

Bass (1998:7) explained that management by exception could be either “active or passive”. Active management by exception is displayed when the leader looks out for subordinates’ deviation from set rules and standards in order to correct them, while passive management by exception is displayed when the leader steps in only if the standards are not met (Bass, 1998:7). Laissez-faire leadership refers to the leader relinquishing responsibility and avoiding decision-making, thus creating a no-leader, lawless environment (Bass, 1998:7). One major advantage with transactional leadership is that things get done the right way (although this may not be the right things getting done), because of its inherent effective management potential (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003:69).

3.4.4. Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is intrinsically the same as transactional leadership, except that the transformational leader acknowledges the “contracted service”, but also arouses and satisfies the greater needs of subordinates, and seeks to “engage the whole person” (Burns, 1978:4). This results in a relationship characterised by shared motivation and elevation, whereby followers transition into leaders and leaders into “moral agents” (Burns, 1978:4; and Norris *et al.*, 2002:85). Sergiovanni (1999:86) and Wilmore and Thomas (2001:116) pointed out that transformational leadership is defined by the leader’s willingness to share power with the followers, rather than exerting power over them.

Bass (1985:17) described transformational leadership as an “expansion of transactional leadership”, which transcends exchange, but also utilises one or more features of transformational leadership, which are: “idealised influence/charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration”. A transformational leader will inspire followers to go the extra mile for the good of everyone concerned (Bass & Avolio, 1994) cited in Dibley (2009:33).

Bass and Avolio (1996) cited in Dibley (2009:34), explained that transformational leadership occurs when leaders:

- Influence and convince subordinates to look at their work from different viewpoints;
- Succeed in entrenching team and organisational vision and mission in followers;
- Raise the potential and ability of followers through appropriate media, and
- Stimulate followers to embrace corporate benefit above self-interests.

Bass and Avolio (1998:137) noted the superior effectiveness of the four styles of leadership embedded in transformational leadership compared to that of transactional leadership in enhancing the growth and performance levels of subordinates.

4. Review of Work Engagement Theories

The idea of work engagement first started to gain popularity around 1990, after Kahn (1990) published his study of psychological states of individual engagement and disengagement at work (Murphy, 2014:183). Before Kahn’s study, the attention was on the negative ends of psychology, of which the concept of burnout was at the forefront (Murphy,

2014:183). Nevertheless, as more research on human and personal psychology was carried out, concepts shifted toward more positive facets of well-being amongst workforces, with an emphasis on human qualities; and ideal working conditions and work engagement, seen as the inverse of burnout, developed as another field with an academic underpinning (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002b:71-92).

4.1. Definition of work engagement

The term work engagement was first used by Kahn (1990:694). Kahn referred to engagement as the workers' "self in-role", wherein they immerse their self in their work roles, thus making themselves feel "attentive, connected, integrated and focused in their work environment" (Kahn, 1990:698). Saks (2006:602), in summarising several academic literature, defined work engagement as "a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with individual role performance", while Andreassen *et al.* (2007:619) described work engagement as "a relatively stable emotional condition".

In the Human Resources development literature, Shuck and Wollard (2010:103) described engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioural state directed toward desired organisational outcomes". These definitions imply that engaged employees are characterised by commitment, dedication, and are devoted to their "work roles cognitively, psychologically and behaviourally" (Rana *et al.*, 2014:251).

However, the most broadly used definition of engagement (Albrecht, 2010) is that of Schaufeli *et al.* (2002a:465), who defined engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption."

4.2. Theories of work engagement

4.2.1. Maslach and Leiter's concept of burnout

In order to fully understand the concept of work engagement, it is essential to note that it has its origin in the concept of burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) described burnout as the wearing out of engagement, and they concentrated on burnout as a response to business-related anxiety as well as the weakening of engagement with work (Moodley, 2010:50). In their initial approach, Maslach and Leiter (1997) studied work engagement from the point of view that burnout and work engagement are two ends of the same work wellness concept, and observed that a few workers reacted adversely to work stress, which brings about burnout (Moodley, 2010:50).

Later, scholarly work by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998:36) described a prominent feature of burnout as an assiduous negative, work-cognate perspective in ordinary people, while Maslach *et al.* (2001:399) depicted burnout as "a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job". They noted that the main dimensions of the workers' response are an overpowering fatigue, feelings of distrust, detachment from the job, a sense of futility and lack of achievement (Maslach *et al.*, 2001:399).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), is utilised for the measurement of burnout (Dibley, 2009:53). At the onset, according to Maslach and Leiter (1997), a high burnout score on the MBI was regarded as an opposite sign of a low work engagement score (Moodley, 2010:50). "Energy, involvement and efficacy", according to Maslach and Leiter, formed the concept of engagement, while their direct opposites, "exhaustion, cynicism and lack of proficient efficacy", formed the concept of burnout (Moodley, 2010:50). They

suggested that low scores on MBI measurements translated to high scores in the applicable work engagement measurement (Moodley, 2010:50). Storm and Rothmann (2003:62-64) maintained this belief, noting that worker engagement was the positive aberrance, and employee burnout was the negative abnormality with regard to employee well-being.

4.2.2. Kahn's work engagement theory

The term work engagement was first used by Kahn (1990:694), who referred to it as workers' positive attitude at their workplace. Kahn noted that aside from psychological presence, workers expressed themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally at their workplaces. In his pioneering and foundational work, Kahn referred to engagement as workers' "self in-role", wherein they immerse their self in their work roles, thus making themselves feel "attentive, connected, integrated and focused in their work environment" (Kahn, 1990:698).

Kahn (1990:703-717), also cited in Siddiqi (2015:277), stated that work engagement was dependent on three important factors: (1) the purpose workers attached to their work role; (2) the psychological safety workers enjoyed to ensure that their work would not have any undesired result; and (3) the accessibility and availability of job resources that were required to perform one's required role.

4.2.3. Broaden-and-build theory: positive emotions and engagement

Just around the time of the emergence of positive psychology, Barbara Fredrickson (1998) developed the "Broaden-and-Build Theory" (Murphy, 2014:187). This theory dealt with the concept of positive emotions and what impact it has on individuals (Murphy, 2014:187). The theory supported the existence of positive emotions and their cumulative effect over time, thus, in a sense supporting well-being (Murphy, 2014:187). The theory suggests that positive emotions such as "joy, interest, contentment, pride and love", permit a person to thrive and accumulate individual resources that are "physical, intellectual, social and psychological" (Fredrickson, 2001:218-226).

The outcomes of different longitudinal studies have provided some evidence to develop this theoretical framework – it has been observed that job resources produce positive emotions, and positive emotions impact on personal resources, such as "self-efficacy and task persistence" (Murphy, 2014:187). The Broaden-and-Build theory has facilitated the study of self-efficacy and personal resilience, which, consequently, produces positive emotions, the accomplishment of "upward-gain spirals", and the promotion of sustained well-being (Murphy, 2014:187).

4.2.4. Schaufeli's work engagement theory

The investigative work of Schaufeli *et al.* (2002b:74) prompted the rise of a second particular way to deal with work engagement. Schaufeli *et al.*, (2002b:74) upheld the conceptualisation that work engagement was the inverse of burnout, yet insisted that the work engagement in its entirety is hypothetically divergent (disparate) and exclusive from burnout, and consequently, cannot be measured by the same instrument. They separated engagement from burnout by "operationalising" and characterising engagement as autonomous (free) from burnout, and designed the Utrecht Work Engagement scale (UWES) along this line.

Burnout and engagement are then seen as a dichotomy of wellness, that is, engagement can be differentiated from burnout (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002b:74-78). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010:10), the phrases employee engagement and work engagement are commonly used synonymously, but the latter is preferred. This is because work

engagement is direct and deals with the employees' relationship with their work, while employee engagement could include an employees' relationship with the organisation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010:10).

Vigour refers to "one's readiness to devote effort in one's work, while exhibiting high levels of energy and, mostly, remaining resolute in the face of difficulty or failure" (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002a:465). Dedication refers to "a strong involvement with one's work, encompassing feelings of enthusiasm, pride, challenge, significance and inspiration" (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002a:465). Absorption refers to "being completely immersed in one's work to the extent that time appears to pass rapidly and one finds it difficult to detach oneself from work" (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002a:465).

4.2.5. The job-demand-resource (JD-R) theory

The job-demand-resource (JD-R) model has also been used extensively in research on work engagement (Moodley, 2010:53). Jackson *et al.* (2006:263:274) pointed out the differences between the two components of job characteristics, namely, job demands and job resources. Job demands, such as the amount of work and time periods, are considered the source of burnout (Moodley, 2010:53). Job resources are subjective components, such as "physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job", and are thought to empower self-improvement and to be the source of employment engagement (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001a:280; and Jackson *et al.*, 2006:265). This notable difference suggests that burnout and work engagement are not "inversely-related concepts, but mutually exclusive concepts" (Moodley, 2010:53).

4.2.6. Conservation of resources theory

The conservation of resources theory presents a model that allows for the comprehension of stress and effective adjustment to work-related factors, suggesting that the individuals who attain and preserve the four primary assets ("objects, conditions, personal characteristics and energies") will be able to handle stressors (Murphy, 2014:186). As a result of these possessions, powerlessness will be reduced and anxiety diminished (Murphy, 2014:186). The theory also proposes that the more assets a person has, the more probable the individual will proceed to amass and increase extra assets, generating "resource caravans" (the linkage of accumulated resources), and eventually creating "gain spirals" (Murphy, 2014:186). Likewise, this can happen in the opposite direction and is called "loss spirals" – a situation where assets are exhausted and burnout results (Murphy, 2014:186).

To establish the applicability of gain spirals to work engagement, Salanova *et al.* (2010:118-131) carried out six longitudinal studies on resources and work engagement. Results of these studies uncovered "reciprocal" connections between the following linkage concepts: "work engagement and job resources; work engagement and personal initiative; personal resources/job resources and work-related flow (akin to engagement); personal resources and task resources; and job/personal resources and work engagement". Additionally, some resources have inherent ability to enhance engagement; for example, mentoring and the provision of feedback can increase employee confidence, thus creating engagement (Murphy, 2014:186). The reciprocal associations between these notions of resource caravans and gain spirals are in line with the conservation of resources theory (Murphy, 2014:186).

4.2.7. Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory is established in the conviction that people, through their abilities, have the capability to control their lives and that an individual's feeling of self-efficacy gives the force and inspiration to guarantee that one's activities can produce the expected results (Murphy, 2014:186). Similarly, combined self-efficacy is the

combined influence to accomplish anticipated results (Murphy, 2014:186). A significant part of the literature on self-efficacy has focused on job performance; nevertheless, there is huge backing to demonstrate that efficacy predicts engagement, and that persons or groups with larger amounts of efficacy are more engrossed in their work (Murphy, 2014:186).

However, seeing as these results are void of causation, Salanova *et al.* (2010:118-131) carried out longitudinal studies to develop causal and reciprocal interactions between efficacy and engagement. They found a causal and reciprocal relationship between efficacy and engagement, as well as between efficacy and positive emotions, and accordingly, these constructs were then able to predict engagement (Salanova *et al.*, 2010:118-131).

4.3. Discriminant ability of work engagement

To establish the validity of work engagement as an independent construct, it would need to have “discriminate ability; that is, the ability to discriminate against other, adjacent constructs must be established” (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006:119). As a result, the authors analysed the relevant contrasts amongst engagement and other related ideas, including “involvement and commitment”, and found that work engagement is a different and unmistakable concept from other academically contiguous concepts, precisely, “job involvement and organisational commitment” (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006:119). However, they noted that there is a more prominent relationship between work engagement and organisational commitment than between work engagement and job involvement (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006:123).

The findings of Hallberg and Schaufeli were reinforced by Christian *et al.* (2011), who carried out a meta-analysis of numerous work engagement studies and in the process, discovered that the concept of engagement was separate from other concepts such as “organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and involvement” (Christian *et al.*, 2011:89). Work engagement has likewise been differentiated from workaholism, another related construct (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2008:173). Employees who are engaged are different from workaholics in their ability to disengage from work. Workaholics remain attached to their work, even when not at work, a situation regarded as work-obsession, while engaged employees, even though they work hard, are energetic, dedicated and enthusiastic, are not obsessed with their work (Bakker *et al.* 2008:190-191).

5. Review of Relationship between Leadership Behaviour and Employee Work Engagement

Several studies in the past have attempted to investigate the relationship between leadership and work engagement. The results of these studies show that leadership behaviour and work engagement are significantly related (McHugh, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Tordera *et al.*, 2008:68; Malik, 2013; Nelson & Shraim, 2014; Freeborough & Patterson, 2015).

McHugh (2001) described the impact that a positive organisational (characterised by influential leadership) behaviour has on employees. This impact includes work engagement and high performance, which ultimately creates a state of total well-being for the organisation, as well as the employees (McHugh, 2001:45, 55, 56).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004:298, 311) noted that leadership’s role in shaping the performance of their employees cannot be ignored, because leadership facilitates and motivates the performance of every employee. Leadership, as they noted, can directly influence employee performance in a positive or negative manner. Also, Schaufeli and

Salanova (2007:162) noted the contagious nature of engagement (from one employee to another) and stressed the positive impact that leaders might have on individual and collective engagement, based on their managerial capabilities.

Tordera *et al.* (2008:68) considered leadership as a very vital construct that helps in generating positive outcomes from employee work, thus ensuring satisfaction and motivation among workers. The achievement of organisational goals (Malik, 2013:211) to a great extent, is based on the leadership behaviours of managers, because such behaviours affect both work satisfaction and positive employee work outputs.

Researchers who have specifically investigated and discussed the relationship between leadership style – transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, authentic leadership and employee work engagement, have found both constructs to be positively related (Freeborough & Patterson, 2015:53).

Building on the pioneering work of Kahn (1990), May *et al.* (2004:77) showed that supportive supervisor relations were positively correlated with engagement, with this relationship mediated by psychological safety, while Saks (2006:613), in researching precursors and outcomes of employee engagement, also found a positive connection between supervisor support and engagement.

From a viewpoint of the job demands-resources model, Bakker and Demerouti (2007:315) discovered that supervisor support lessened the impact of the potential negative influence of job demands on engagement. In the same vein, Xu and Thomas (2010:410) confirmed the constructive relationship between supportive leadership, as reported by followers, and the levels of engagement of the same followers, noting the positive reaction of direct reports to leaders who exhibit team-support behaviours. Examples are: showing real enthusiasm for members' self-development and commending team achievements. Employees consequently respond to this support with higher levels of engagement (Xu & Thomas, 2010:410).

Schyns *et al.* (2008:649), in examining “supportive leadership climate”, found that “a workplace supportive leadership climate” is fundamentally connected with job satisfaction, which is widely regarded as antecedent of work engagement. According to Xu and Thomas (2010:401), leadership that provides a supportive, trusting atmosphere stimulates workers to completely immerse themselves in their task duties.

In a study of the relationship between transformational leadership style of officers and the levels of their followers' work engagement in the South African, Dibley (2009) found a positive and significant relationship between the two constructs.

Roux (2010) in an exploratory study examined the relationship between authentic leadership and work engagement of employees in a large liquor producing company in South Africa. The results of a Pearson correlation analysis, stepwise multiple regression analysis, and the soft approach to structural equation modeling (SEM), indicated significant relationships between authentic leadership and work engagement (Roux, 2010:77-78).

Mendes and Stander (2011) carried out a survey research in a chemical organisation in South Africa, to investigate the role of leader behaviour in work engagement and retention. Using the leader empowering behaviour questionnaire and the Utrecht work engagement survey, they found that leadership behaviour is positively related to work engagement (Mendes & Stander, 2011:6).

In Hamman's (2012) research, the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement amongst knowledge workers in a South African organisation was examined. Hamman's results contradicted popular findings that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with employee engagement at a statistically significant level. Hamman also noted that transactional leadership showed higher predictive qualities than previously found in extant literature.

A case study assessing the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and work engagement in a chemical industry in South Africa conducted by De Klerk (2013) showed that the two variables were closely related in the organisation. De Klerk's findings showed that leadership empowerment behaviour had significant predictive value towards work engagement. (De Klerk, 2013:30-35).

Malik (2013:218), in a study investigating the relationship between leader behaviours and employees' job satisfaction, using the Path-Goal theory, found that a linear combination of leader behaviours, i.e., directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented are significantly related with job satisfaction, which in itself is an antecedent to work engagement. Furthermore, Sarti (2014:10-12) reported a positive correlation between participative leadership and the work engagement dimensions of vigour and dedication, but not for absorption. A positive correlation between directive and the work engagement dimensions of vigour and absorption, but not dedication was also reported (Sarti, 2014:12).

Hayati et al. (2014) in a survey study to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement in governmental hospitals nurses, found that the effect of transformational leadership on work engagement and its facets was positive and significant. It was also observed that transformational leaders model a behaviour which is generally accepted and imitated by subordinates.

Nelson and Shraim (2014) examined the impact of three types of leadership behaviour (laissez-faire leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership) on work engagement within a Kuwaiti services company. The results indicated a significant but small positive relationship between both transactional and transformational leadership behaviours and work engagement, and a significant negative relation between laissez-faire leadership behaviour and work engagement (Nelson & Shraim, 2014:119).

Some of these studies (Freeborough & Patterson, 2015:53) question the relationships between these constructs and call for a greater understanding of whether there are positive relationships, why those relationships exist, whether the constructs are distinct or overlap each other, and how they influence one another.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to review scholarly research on leadership, leadership theories, style or behaviour, work engagement, theories of work engagement, and the relationship between leadership behaviour and employee work engagement. Schaufeli and Salanova (2007:168) noted the special role of "considerate" leadership in cultivating work engagement among their followers by managing the social psychological processes involved in their daily work routine, and described leaders as key social resources for the development of engagement of their employees. Many studies have investigated the relationship between leadership behaviour and employee work engagement and regardless of what categories of leadership behaviour or style are used in the measuring instruments, almost all of them indicate that leadership behaviours and employee work engagement are significantly related.

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