

A Descriptive Study of the Leadership Styles Commonly Found in South African Small to Medium Enterprises.

Final Research Report

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Abstract:

Leadership plays an important role in society and especially within a business, as it forms the nucleus of a business and influences the performance and strategic management of the business. Therefore, the leadership style implemented in a business can have great effects. The purpose of this study is to determine what are the most common leadership styles in South African small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) by reviewing existing literature and conducting further research on the topic. Upon reviewing the literature the researcher found that there is little academic research on the leadership styles utilised in SMEs, specifically in the South African context. Therefore, the study identified and sought to address this gap in the body of knowledge by determining the most common leadership style in South African SMEs. The study made use of quantitative data collection, through survey questionnaires, due to the study's positivistic world-view and by being descriptive in nature. The study specifically focused on the situational, transformational and transactional leadership styles. The findings produced by the study indicate that situational leadership is the most common style, however, South African SMEs make use of a combination of styles instead of a single style. Therefore, opening the topic up to further research.

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, individuals such as Nelson Mandela, Alexander The Great, Charlemagne, Abraham Lincoln and Adolf Hitler have all had one thing in common. That is, strong leadership capabilities. In order to direct, what some might call their natural talents, they made use of leadership styles to assist in shaping history. In the more modern context, there are still many leaders across the globe that implement a leadership style, many of whom can be found within the business sector. This research document represents a descriptive study into the leadership styles most commonly found in South Africa's small to medium enterprises. The study's primary aim was to analyse small to medium enterprise owners or managers in South Africa to determine which leadership style is most common among them.

1.1. Background (Contextualization)

Historically leadership used to be very authoritative in nature as the kings and leaders of that time were either born into the royal family or claimed authority through a divine right or simply because they had more military might (Ahmed, 2016). Even in business, the most widely used leadership style was quite authoritative (Stone and Patterson, 2005). However, as can be seen over the last two centuries of research into leadership, leadership in business has evolved to take on different styles, such as transactional, transformational and situational leadership styles (McCleskey, 2014), that create a more comfortable environment for work and both encourages and empowers employees (Stone and Patterson, 2005). This contrasts the discouragement that might often be caused by authoritative leadership (St. Thomas University, 2018).

Leadership is present in many aspects of life, such as politics, business, warfare, family and education (Kukreja, 2019). Its importance is also evident based on its usage throughout history and is still well-known across the globe today. In fact, the author, John C. Maxwell stated that "The single biggest way to impact an organisation is to focus on leadership development." (AZ Quotes, 2019). Therefore, if leadership in business is as important as Maxwell states then the different styles of leadership should be equally as important.

Simon Sinek, an author on leadership, has also stated that "Leadership is a way of thinking, a way of acting and, most importantly, a way of communicating." (AZ Quotes, 2019). Based off of Sinek's description, the leadership style that a leader adopts will influence the way that leader thinks, acts and communicates.

1.2. Rationale

Leadership fulfils a crucial role within businesses by assisting in determining the mission and vision of an organisation while also facilitating the execution of strategies to help achieve the brand's vision (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). Without it, the organisation would lack strategic management (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). Jabbar and Hussein (2017) even go so far as to state that leadership can be seen as the nucleus of the organisation. With leadership being so critical to businesses, it may be reasonable to expect leadership styles to also be of great importance within business. In fact, according to Yang (2008), there is a correlation between business performance and leadership styles. Sorenson (2000) also states that there is a correlation between business outcomes, as well as employee satisfaction, and leadership styles. Hence why the topic of this study was selected.

With the importance of leadership and its different styles - within a business - in mind, this study aimed to describe which leadership styles are commonly found in small to medium enterprises in South Africa. The study holds value as it may provide insight into which of the theoretical leadership styles are most commonly applied – knowingly or not – in real working environments.

Despite the amount of academic research that has been conducted on leadership and its different styles, at the time of conducting this study, there was little research on which styles are the most common in small to medium enterprises (SMEs). This study sought to address this gap in the body of knowledge.

While this particular study was only relevant to the South African market, the study could be replicated in other countries due to the topic being flexible in nature.

1.3. Problem Statement

There are many theories regarding different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional and situational leadership. However, while many of these theories are based on research, at the time of conducting this research there has been little academic research on which of these theories is most commonly being used in small to medium enterprises. This is especially true in the South African context.

This gap in the body of knowledge is problematic since it implies that the link between leadership theory and what is truly being practised is not as clear as it could be.

Therefore, this study sought to describe which leadership styles were currently being used by South African small to medium enterprise owners or managers in order to identify the most commonly used style.

1.3.1. Research Question

Which leadership styles are commonly used by the leaders of small to medium enterprises in South Africa?

1.3.2. Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1):

Transactional leadership will be the most common leadership style used in South African small to medium enterprises.

The above hypothesis was based on the similarities between situational leadership and transactional leadership highlighted in the review of literature. Specifically, the similarity in being task-oriented. Due to the potential overlap of these leadership styles, it was assumed that respondents that lean toward these two styles were likely to be in the majority should the results not disproportionately lean toward transformational leadership. Furthermore, transactional leadership was specifically chosen, for the hypothesis, based on the *Fairness Instinct*, written by L. Sun (2013). Sun (2013) states that fairness is a human instinct. Due to transactional leadership's focus on mutual gain (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012) it lent itself the most toward maintaining fairness, hence its use in the hypothesis.

1.4. Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in the body of knowledge, discussed earlier in the rationale and purpose statement, by describing which leadership styles are most commonly used by small to medium enterprise owners or managers in the South African context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptualisation

Although there were many research studies on the different styles of leadership, there appeared to be little research done on which styles are most common in the leadership of small to medium enterprises in South Africa.

Within this study, there are three key concepts that have been identified: Leadership, leadership styles and small to medium enterprises. The following is an attempt to define these concepts as well as the relevance of these concepts.

2.1.1. Leadership

In 1993, Rost (1993) found that there are 221 different definitions for the concept of leadership, a number that has certainly increased between 1993 and 2019. This complicated the process of finding a single definition of leadership that was relevant to this study. However, in 2006 Winston and Patterson (2006) developed an in-depth definition of leadership that encompasses over 90 different dimensions of the concept. Winston and Patterson (2006) define leadership as the following: A leader is an individual that selects, prepares and influences followers, that have their own diverse set of skills, by directing them to the organisation's mission and objectives, which in turn causes the followers to expend their own physical, spiritual and emotional energy in an effort to achieve the mission and objectives of the organisation.

Defining the concept of leadership is important to the study as research was conducted on the leadership styles employed by the leaders of small to medium enterprises. Therefore, it was imperative that an understanding of the concept was reached in order to identify the leaders within these enterprises.

2.1.2. Small to Medium Enterprises

According to Gbandi and Amissah (2014), the definition of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) is different depending on the country in question and it is difficult to find a universally agreed-upon definition. It was with this in mind that the European Union, in 2003, decided to embrace a universally agreed-upon definition of SMEs (Gbandi and Amissah, 2014). The definition states that SMEs refers to companies that have less than 250 employees and revenue below 50 million Euro in turnover (Gbandi and Amissah, 2014).

Even though this particular study was only relevant to the South African market and the definition provided by the European Union may not be the most applicable, the study still aimed to be

replicable in other countries due to the flexibility of the topic. The definition provided by the European Union will allow future researchers to replicate the study in different countries. Therefore this study continued to use the currency identified in the original definition (Euro).

Pinpointing an exact definition of SMEs was valuable to the research as it assisted in identifying enterprises that could be approached to participate in the research study.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation

With regard to this study, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) served as the theoretical foundation. The theory was first developed by Icek Ajzen as an extension to the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991:181). Ajzen developed this theory due to the imperfections of the theory of reasoned action in addressing behaviours over which people don't have full volitional control (Ajzen, 1991:181).

Similar to its predecessor, the theory of reasoned action (TRA), TPB centres its focus on individuals' intention to perform certain behaviours (Ajzen, 1991:181). The theory states that the intentions of an individual to perform certain behaviour serves as an expression of how hard the individual is willing to try to perform that behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:181). According to Ajzen (1991:181), intention fully expresses itself in planned behaviour in the following general rule: The behavioural performance is more likely dependent on the strength of the intention. However, Ajzen (1991:181) also states that intention can only fully express itself in this manner if the individual has full volitional control (behavioural control) over the behaviour (i.e. whether the individual can decide to perform the behaviour at will). Behavioural control is influenced by factors such as skill, access to resources, time and the co-operation of others (Ajzen, 1991:182).

Another factor taken into account by the theory is the perceived behavioural control of an individual i.e. whether they believe they can perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:183). In fact, the addition of this factor is what differentiates the TPB from the TRA (Ajzen, 1991:183). The TPB states that perceived behavioural control along with the intention to perform a behaviour can be used to directly predict the achievement of the desired behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:183). Ajzen (1991:185) also states that if the behaviour or the situation provides the individual with complete behavioural control then intentions alone should suffice in predicting behaviour.

In the TPB Ajzen (1985:11) states that human social behaviour follows the direction of well-developed plans and bases this off the general consensus that the majority of humans' behaviour is goal-directed. For example, before attending a concert the individual would invite a date, purchase

the tickets, change into appropriate attire, collect the date and attend the concert (Ajzen, 1985:11). According to Ajzen (1985:11), all of these activities were designed and planned in advance even though certain activities may be so habitual that they are performed automatically.

In the case of this study, a leader in SME's might recognise the need to adopt a certain leadership style and would then implement this style according to its suggested behaviour. In both examples, however, an action would not be taken if it is not believed to be either a good action or the best action to take in the situation. With that in mind, the TPB was more relevant to this study since intention alone is enough to predict the behavioural achievement. In a scenario where there is complete behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991:185), then behavioural achievement may be used to gain insight into the intent of the leaders of SME's. Specifically, with regard to their belief that their current leadership style is the best for the situation. In essence, TPB assisted the study in describing how the theory behind different styles of leadership is applied in real working environments.

Furthermore, the study was also underpinned by the situational leadership theory, transformational leadership theory and transactional leadership theory. However, these theories were discussed in greater depth in the review of literature.

2.3. Review of Literature

According to McCleskey (2014), three of the most common leadership styles include *situational leadership*, *transactional leadership* and finally *transformational leadership*. The following sections of the literature review aimed to understand and review the literature on these concepts:

Situational Leadership

According to Graeff (1997) and Grint (2011), the situational leadership theory (SLT) quite simply recommends that effective leadership requires the leader to have a logical understanding of a situation and a fitting response to that situation. The situational leadership theory was originally developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969; 1979; 1996) and proposed a leadership style that adapts and relates to the maturity level of the leader's followers. According to Bass (2008), the SLT has been identified by many different authors as a behavioural theory. Due to that, and the fact that the SLT developed from a person-oriented versus task-oriented set or continuum (Bass, 2008; Graeff, 1997; Conger, 2011) there are two main behaviours for situational leaders: being task-oriented or person-oriented. This aids in solidifying situational leadership as a behavioural leadership approach (McCleskey, 2014). With that being said, task-oriented leadership provides followers with well-defined roles, instructions, processes and formal channels through which they

should communicate (Bass, 2008; Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996). Whereas person-oriented leaderships shifts the focus on having empathy for employees, reducing conflicts due to emotion, seeking harmony in team relations as well as regulating and ensuring equal participation from all followers (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard 1969; 1979; 1996; Shin, Heath and Lee, 2011). According to Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004), servant leadership places its focus on the employees of an organisation. This means that servant leadership aligns with the person-oriented behaviour of situational leadership. Traditionally speaking research regarding leadership viewed leadership as a set of internal qualities that a leader is born with (Bernard, 1926). According to Horner (1997), the goal with this view was to identify a set of desirable traits that were inherent to leaders in order to be able to assess people and place them in positions of leadership. However, Horner (1997) also states that no specific traits were ever found and this line of thought was flawed because it had ignored the environmental and situational influences that shaped leaders. Situational leadership seems to address this flawed line of thought as it does consider the possibility of leadership being influenced by the situation that it is in.

Despite addressing this flawed line of thought there are some authors that have still criticised the SLT. Nicholls (1985) identified flaws with the SLT in terms of the consistency, conformity and continuity of the theory. Bass (2008) agrees with this and states that the theory lacks internal consistency as well as having too many ambiguities and contradictions. A more general criticism of leadership styles is also that no specific leadership style has ever been universally effective and many of the theories rely on hypothetical leadership types that prove to be difficult to identify (Glynn and DeJordy, 2010).

Transformational Leadership

Within the field of leadership, there are few ideas that have been discussed or studied to the extent that transformational leadership has experienced (Diaz-Saenz, 2011:299). Studies on transformational leadership have linked the idea to the success of CEOs (Jung, Wu and Chow, 2008), the effectiveness of middle management (Singh and Krishnan, 2008) and even military success (Eid, Johnsen, Bartone and Nissestad, 2008). The theory of transformational leadership was identified as a single part out of a dichotomy of two leadership styles: transactional and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978). According to Burns (1978), a transformational leader can be defined as an individual that lifts the level of consciousness, in followers, about the value of specific desired results and the approaches of reaching the specific results. Bass (2008) adds to this definition by stating that transformational leaders are able to persuade followers to surpass their self-interests to instead focus on the interests of the organisation, all while raising the low-level

concerns (found in Maslow's hierarchy of needs) of the followers to higher-level concerns such as a need for achievement and realising one's full potential. Bass (1985) made use of empirical evidence to modify the original construct for transformational leadership and over time four components or factors of transformational leadership developed. These components are the following: Individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, idealised influence and finally intellectual stimulation (McCleskey, 2014). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), many researchers regularly group inspirational motivation and idealised influence together under charisma. While transformational leadership is seen as separate from the charismatic leadership style, charisma, nevertheless, does still form a part of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; 2008; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Diaz-Saenz, 2011). The ideal transformational leader would exhibit each of the four components to a specific extent with the goal of realising the desired organisational outcomes through the leader's followers (Bass 1985; Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Idealised influence encompasses a dichotomy of facets found in the relationship between a follower and a leader (Bass and Riggio, 2006). The first facet is that of the attributes credited to the leader, by the followers that want to mirror those attributes (Bass and Riggio, 2006). The second refers to when the leader inspires the followers through their behaviour and actions (Bass and Riggio, 2006). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), inspirational motivation refers to behaviour that aims to influence followers by challenging them and providing them with a shared meaning. Bass and Riggio (2006) also view intellectual stimulation as a process in which the leader improves the levels of innovation of the followers by reframing existing problems, challenging assumptions and using new frameworks or lenses to view old challenges. Individualised consideration refers to the leader acting as a mentor for followers with the goal of assisting them in self-actualization (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Despite the numerous additions and modifications that have been made to transformational leadership, there are still some authors that criticise transformational leadership. Yukl (1999; 2011) argues that the theory behind transformational leadership lacks sufficient consideration for the impact of situational variables. Situational variables are, of course, an aspect that situational leadership is specifically designed to address, as discussed previously.

Transactional leadership

As discussed earlier, transactional leadership, along with transformational leadership, are part of a dichotomy of leadership styles identified by Burns (1978). Burns (1978) describes the relationship between the leader and followers, in transactional leadership, as a series of transactions of fulfilment that is aimed at boosting both individual and organisational gains. This is confirmed by Bass (1985; 1990; 2000; 2008) as the main focus of transactional leadership is the exchanges or transactions

that occur between followers and their leader. According to Sadeghi and Pihie (2012), these exchanges allow leaders to accomplish a myriad of organisational related objectives and tasks by inspiring followers through the use of contractual agreements which rewards behaviour that leads to the achievement of organisational goals. Followers, in turn, benefit from transactional leadership in that it allows them to work towards their own self-interest along with minimising workplace anxiety and providing followers with clear objectives to work toward (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012).

While transactional leadership may appear to be very beneficial at first glance, Burns (1978) recognises that transactional leadership places a considerable focus on short-term relationships that are often shallow and can lead to the development of resentment between the leader and followers. Transactional leadership is also often criticised for disregarding situational variables (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010; Yukl, 1999; 2011; Beyer, 1999). As discussed earlier, the leadership style that best addresses these situational variables is the situational leadership style.

Differences and Similarities

While each of the above-mentioned leadership styles may be distinctly unique, similarities between them do exist. The task-orientation discussed in the situational leadership style is similar to the transactional leadership style due to both of these shifting the focus of the leader on their exchanges with followers and achieving desired organisational objectives and tasks (Bass 1985; 1990; 1999; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Burns 1978). Similarly, person-oriented leadership is comparable to transformational leadership (Conger, 2011; Burns, 1978; Bass 1985; 1990; 1999) due to person-oriented and transformational leadership both shifting the focus of the leader onto their followers by inspiring and intellectually stimulating them (Bass, 2008; McCleskey, 2014).

While there are similarities between the leadership styles, there are also differences. For example, situational leadership theory proposes that the leader use the exact leadership style necessary for the organisation's current situation (Bass, 2008; Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996) whereas transformational leadership proposes a more general leadership style that works in several situations (Yukl, 1999; 2011).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

Research is essentially a tool used by humans to understand the world around them, however, this understanding can be influenced by a world view (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2001:3). These world views that influence research are often referred to as paradigms, especially in the social sciences (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:19). Paradigms are used to determine what type of questions or observations a study aims to make, as well as, the processes and values that the research must adhere to (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:19). Before a research paradigm can be assigned to a study the researcher must first consider the study in terms of its epistemological and ontological stance (Kelly, Downing and Millar, 2018:12). Epistemology refers to beliefs regarding the way in which knowledge is developed and more importantly the way in which researchers study the world (Kelly, et al., 2018:12). Whereas ontology refers to beliefs regarding the nature of reality and what constitutes it (Kelly, et al. 2018:12).

The positivistic, also known as positivism, research paradigm was adopted throughout this research study. Positivism is a proponent of applying the methods of natural science to study various phenomena, including social phenomena (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:24). The root word of positivism is 'positive' since positivists have a positive outlook on science (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:24). Early positivists held the belief that positivism would enlighten people and improve the world because of it (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:24). The aim of the positivistic paradigm is to approach research through only considering observable, verifiable and objective facts in an effort to make sense of the world (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:25).

3.1.1. Epistemological Positivist Paradigm

In terms of its epistemological position, positivism believes that valid knowledge can only be derived out of empirical and objective evidence (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 25). Positivist also see a clear separation between non-science and science because they hold the belief that knowledge is the outcome of empirical observation only (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:25). In the positivistic paradigm, knowledge is obtained through the meticulous and careful observations and testing of hypotheses (assumptions) against reality (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:25).

3.1.2. Ontological Positivist Paradigm

The ontological position of positivism holds the belief that there is a single physical and social external reality that is objective in nature and is controlled or guided through laws (du Plooy-Cilliers,

2014:25). The positivist paradigm views this reality as both observable and measurable, therefore making it known, and that researchers are obligated to reveal the laws that govern this reality (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:25). Positivists believe that reality has order and consistency, which allows for predictions (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:26). Furthermore, positivism ascribes to objectivism (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:26).

Based off of the problem and purpose statements described earlier in the document this research study lent itself more to the positivistic paradigm as the study aimed to either prove or disprove the previously identified hypothesis. In addition, the study aimed to objectively describe the most common leadership style in SMEs without allowing any bias toward certain leadership styles to taint the outcome of the study. Finally, the common occurrence of leadership styles in SMEs aligned itself to the belief of positivists that reality has order and consistency, as previously discussed.

3.2. Research Approach

Due to the nature of the study and the positivistic world view that guided the study, a quantitative research approach was made use of. The research approach refers to the way in which the researcher chooses and collects information, as well as, how the information is analysed and interpreted in order to fulfil the purpose of the research study (Davis, 2014). The quantitative approach specifically refers to the explanation of phenomena through the collection of numerical data and analysing this data through methods that are mathematically based, such as statistics (Mujis, 2011).

3.3. Research Design

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was to describe which leadership styles are most commonly used by small to medium enterprise owners (if they are actively leading employees) or managers in the South African context. Therefore, the aim of the study was descriptive in nature. Descriptive research seeks to describe phenomena or situations systematically as well as to provide information on the situation (Davis, 2014). A descriptive study also lends itself more to the epistemological position of positivism, as it seeks to gain knowledge through observing and describing phenomena. A descriptive study also values an objective description (Davis, 2014), which aligns with the epistemological position of positivism that guided this study. This research study thus aligned itself with the above descriptions of a descriptive study.

Within the research design, there are two approaches to reasoning: Deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning (Bezuidenhout, 2014). Deductive reasoning refers to the researcher reasoning

from general to more specific assumptions and may also be referred to as top-down theorising (Bezuidenhout, 2014). This is because it can be visualised as an inverted pyramid, that begins with the researcher exploring the theory at a broad level –focusing on general aspects of the theory – to applying the theory to a particular topic (Bezuidenhout, 2014).

This study made use of deductive reasoning, as the study sought to apply the theory related to different styles of leadership to the topic of small to medium enterprises by describing which theories are applied in real working environments.

With regard to data collection, the study was designed as a cross-sectional study. This is due to the fact that cross-sectional studies do not span over a number of years but instead take a snapshot of a singular moment in time (du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje, 2014), as was the case with this study. For its data collection tool, the study made use of a survey. This is due to the tool's propensity toward quantitative research and the nature of the questions that were directed toward respondents (du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje, 2014).

3.4. Research Plan

3.4.1. Population

The population for this research consisted of all small to medium enterprises in South Africa. These enterprises were identified by the characteristics described earlier in the European Union's definition of a small to medium enterprise. To clarify, the aforementioned characteristics are the following: The enterprise must have less than 250 employees and should not have revenue (turnover) that exceeds 50 million Euro.

Unfortunately, the population in its entirety far exceeded the scope of this research study and therefore an *accessible population* was established. The *accessible population* consisted of small to medium enterprises found in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The aforementioned characteristics of the population still applied to the *accessible population*.

To further ensure that the right members of the population were identified for the study, the following inclusion and exclusion criterion was used:

Criteria for inclusion:

- The enterprise must have less than 250 employees.
- The revenue (turnover) of the enterprise must be below 50 million Euro.
- The head office of the enterprise must reside in Gauteng.

Criteria for exclusion:

- The enterprise should not only consist of one individual.
- The enterprise should not have a revenue (turnover) of over 50 million Euro.
- The head office for the enterprise should not reside outside of Gauteng.

3.4.2. Unit of Analysis

Since the purpose of this study was to describe which leadership styles are most commonly used by small to medium enterprise owners (if they are actively leading employees) or managers, in the South African context, the unit of analysis were *individuals*. These individuals refer to the leaders from each small to medium enterprise that participates in this study.

3.4.3. Sampling

The sampling method that was used in the study is non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is useful in instances where it is difficult to access the entire population (Pascoe, 2014), as was the case with this study. A combination of the following non-probability sampling methods was made use of:

Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling refers to including elements in the sample that are convenient to gain access to (Pascoe, 2014). This sampling method was used due to the time constraints and scope of the study in order to ensure that the research was completed in a timely fashion.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling refers to choosing the elements, that are desired to form part of the sample, based off of predetermined characteristics (Pascoe, 2014). This sampling method was used in order to ensure that only elements that are useful to the research and that align with the population characteristics were included.

The study made use of a combination of the above-mentioned sampling methods in order to complete the research within the time constraint through convenience sampling. However, convenience sampling can be heavily biased (Pascoe, 2014). In order to ensure that respondents in the study still contributed to the research, purposive sampling was also made use of.

The **sample size** consisted of 42 respondents (n=42) despite the study having an intended sample size of 20 (n=20). The size of the sample was determined based off of the sample size guidelines provided by the *Independent Institute of Education* (IIE). However, more than 20 respondents were

contacted to ensure that the study reached a minimum of 20 respondents. These steps were taken as there was a possibility of respondents withdrawing their participation or providing inadmissible responses.

3.5. Data Collection

As discussed earlier, the study made use of surveys as the data collection method. This is due to the propensity of surveys to quantitative data collection. Surveys are also a popular data collection tool amongst researchers (du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje, 2014) and assisted in achieving the goal of this study while also enhancing the validity of the research. According to du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014) surveys also provide several advantages such as being rather inexpensive and less time consuming, as well as, being able to gather a lot of data from a single respondent.

To ensure that the survey remained aligned with the purpose of the research a cross-sectional design was used for the survey. A cross-sectional survey design simply refers to collecting data from respondents only once (du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje, 2014). The survey took the form of a self-administrated online mail survey, meaning the survey was conducted online while being distributed either via e-mail or through online messaging. To ensure that the survey was without error and that it would be easily completable a pre-test was conducted. The pre-test included the survey being completed by two individuals - that are not included in the sample – yet was still representative of the sample. These individuals were asked to provide feedback on the survey. Once feedback was received, any necessary changes to the survey were made. Furthermore, the survey was inspected by the study's supervisor to ensure that it upheld the institution's high standards. Please refer to appendix 3 for the study's ethical clearance document, which states that the study was approved by the institution.

Before the surveys were distributed, potential respondents - that fit the inclusion and exclusion criterion - were identified. This was done to incorporate purposive sampling. These respondents were then sent a message, kindly asking for their participation, along with a URL that directed them to the survey. These messages were sent via WhatsApp from the researcher's personal phone number as well as volunteer data collectors' phone numbers. This was done due to the study making use of convenience sampling. WhatsApp was chosen as the distribution channel. It proved to be the most convenient channel for reaching the potential respondents, as the researcher and volunteer data collectors already had confident access to the potential respondents' phone numbers.

The survey itself was created and hosted through the use of *SurveyMonkey's* survey software. *SurveyMonkey's* software was used as it has built-in data analysis functions and allowed the use of Likert scales, unlike its competitor, Google Forms. The version of the software that was made use of was free and thus addressed any financial constraints concerning the study.

Please refer to appendix 2 for a description of the survey questionnaire and all the questions. The introduction to the survey provided respondents with the necessary context and informed them that completion of the survey would serve as their consent toward their responses being used in the study. Respondents were also informed that their identity will be kept anonymous and that their information will be kept confidential. They were also informed of their ability to withdraw their participation without needing to provide any reason. Finally, the introduction communicated that there are no direct benefits or risks associated with the completion of the survey. All of the above was communicated to ensure that high ethical standards were maintained and that respondents had peace of mind.

3.6. Data Analysis

Due to the study making use of *SurveyMonkey's* software - the quantitative data, that was gathered in this study, was analysed through the use of *SurveyMonkey's* built-in analysis functions. These functions display the data through bar charts.

As mentioned in appendix 2, each of the survey questions refers to a specific leadership style, with three questions dedicated to each leadership style. All of the questions made use of Likert scales that indicated respondents' level of agreement with a statement that described the relevant leadership style. The level of agreement ranged from strongly agreeing, agreeing, taking a neutral stance, disagreeing and strongly disagreeing.

The data was interpreted by determining the number of respondents that lean toward a specific leadership style. The direction respondents' leaned towards was determined through analysing the number of respondents that overall either strongly agreed with a statement or simply agreed with it. For example, if 10 respondents responded with "strongly agree" to all three questions that are related to situational leadership then it would be determined that 10 respondents of the sample size make use of situational leadership. If, however, 5 respondents simply responded with "agree" then it would be determined that while 10 respondents certainly make use of situational leadership, 5 respondents also lean toward situational leadership.

4. Research Findings

The following are the findings that were collected through the data collection method described earlier, along with an analysis of the data. In total, the survey questionnaire received 42 responses for each of the nine statements. The relationship between the statements and leadership styles are made clear in Table 1:

Statements	Related Leadership Style
Statement 1	Situational Leadership
Statement 2	Situational Leadership
Statement 3	Situational Leadership
Statement 4	Transformational Leadership
Statement 5	Transformational Leadership
Statement 6	Transformational Leadership
Statement 7	Transactional Leadership
Statement 8	Transactional Leadership
Statement 9	Transactional Leadership

Table 1: Relationships between leadership styles and questionnaire statements.

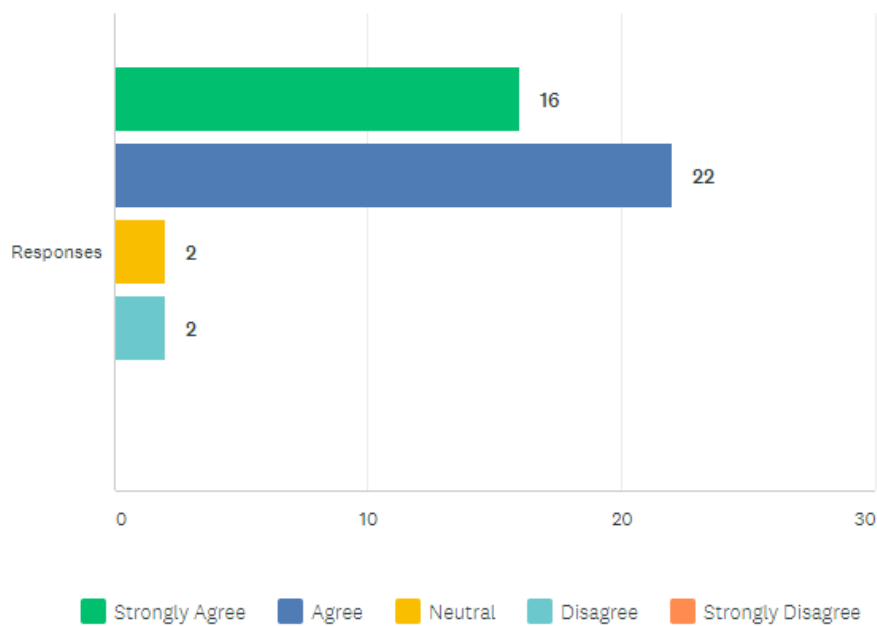
For more in-depth information on the survey questionnaire please refer to the second appendix.

4.1.1. Situational Leadership

As can be seen in figure 1, the majority (52%) of the responses for the first statement simply agreed with the statement. However, a significant portion of the respondents (38%) strongly agreed with the statement. The minority (10%) either took a neutral stance or disagreed with the statement.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I provide my employees with well-defined roles, instructions, processes and formal channels through which they should communicate."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	38.10% 16	52.38% 22	4.76% 2	4.76% 2	0.00% 0	42	1.76

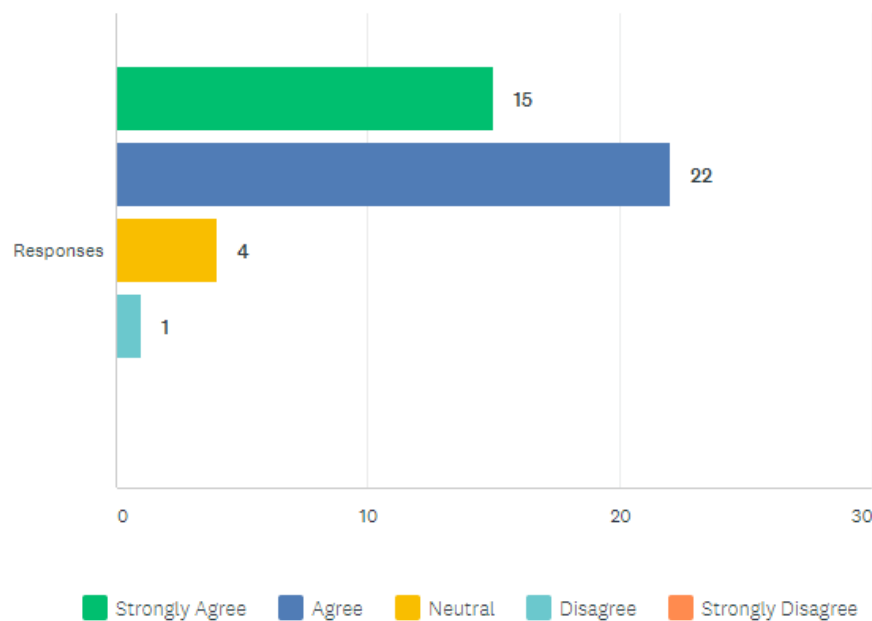
BASIC STATISTICS					
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	
1.00	4.00	2.00	1.76	0.75	

Figure 1: Situational Leadership – 1st Statement.

As for the second statement, that can be seen in figure 2, the majority (52%) of respondents agreed with the statement. While 36% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. Interestingly, 10% of respondents took a neutral stance on the statement, with only one respondent disagreeing.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I try my best to have empathy with my employees and seek to reduce conflict and create harmony in the team while regulating and ensuring equal participation from all employees."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	35.71% 15	52.38% 22	9.52% 4	2.38% 1	0.00% 0	42	1.79

BASIC STATISTICS

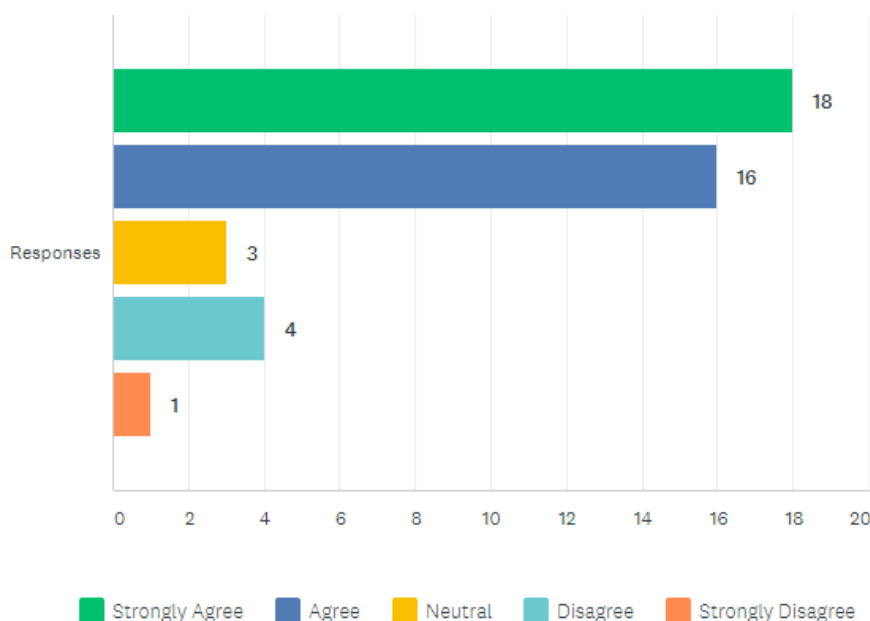
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	4.00	2.00	1.79	0.71

Figure 2: Situational Leadership - 2nd Statement.

The third statement saw majority of the respondents (43%) strongly agree with the statement, while 38% simply agreed. 7% responded with a neutral stance, whereas 10% disagreed with the statement. Finally, one respondent (2%) strongly disagreed.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I adapt my leadership style to the maturity level of each of my employees."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	42.86% 18	38.10% 16	7.14% 3	9.52% 4	2.38% 1	42	1.90

BASIC STATISTICS

Minimum 1.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 2.00	Mean 1.90	Standard Deviation 1.04
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Figure 3: Situational Leadership - 3rd Statement.

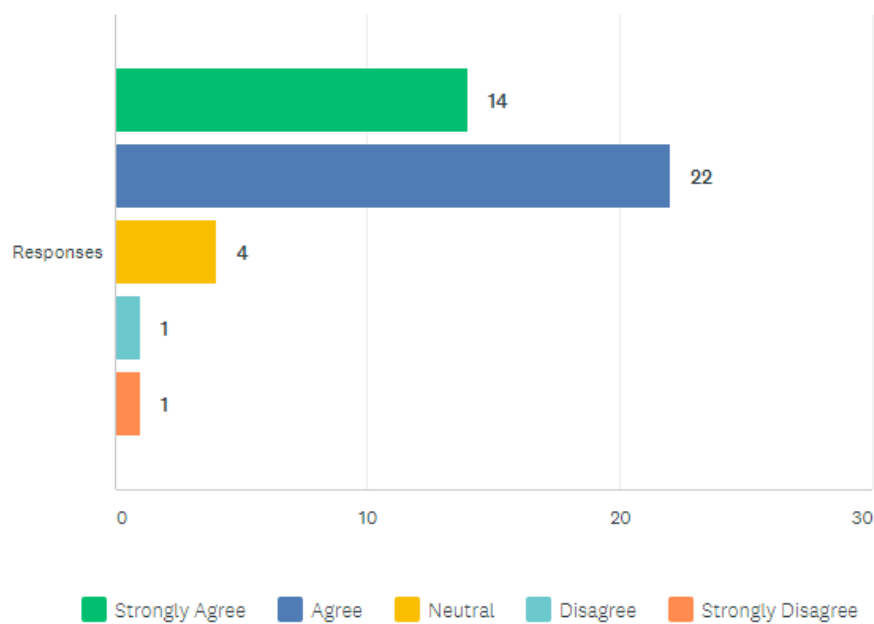
Together, the three statements had a total of 126 responses (42 per statement). Out of the 126 responses, 49 responded with a strong agreement. While 60 responded simply in agreement. Therefore, 106 of the responses (87%) were in agreement with situational leadership.

4.1.2. Transformational Leadership

Majority of respondents were in agreement with the fourth statement, as can be seen in figure 4. 52% of respondents simply agreed along with 33% of respondents strongly in agreement. 10% of respondents took a neutral stance, whereas one respondent (2%) disagreed and another (2%) strongly disagreed.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I like to persuade my employees to look past their own self-interests to instead focus on the interests of the organisation."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	33.33% 14	52.38% 22	9.52% 4	2.38% 1	2.38% 1	42	1.88

BASIC STATISTICS

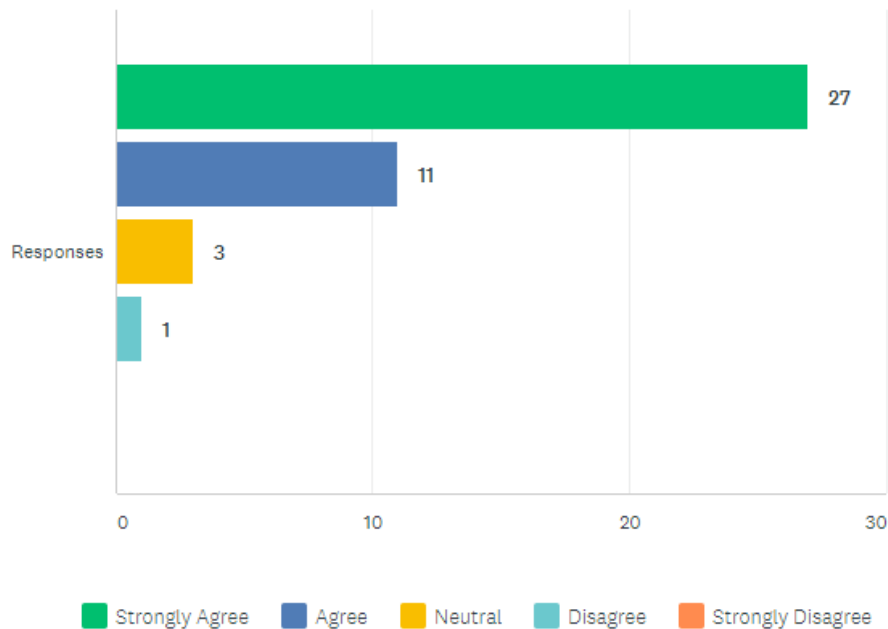
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 2.00	Mean 1.88	Standard Deviation 0.85
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Figure 4: Transformational Leadership - 4th Statement.

64% of respondents strongly agree with the fifth statement, as can be seen in figure 5, while 26% simply agree. 7% take a neutral stance. One respondent (2%) simply disagreed with the statement.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I try to inspire my employees through my behaviour and my actions."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	64.29% 27	26.19% 11	7.14% 3	2.38% 1	0.00% 0	42	1.48

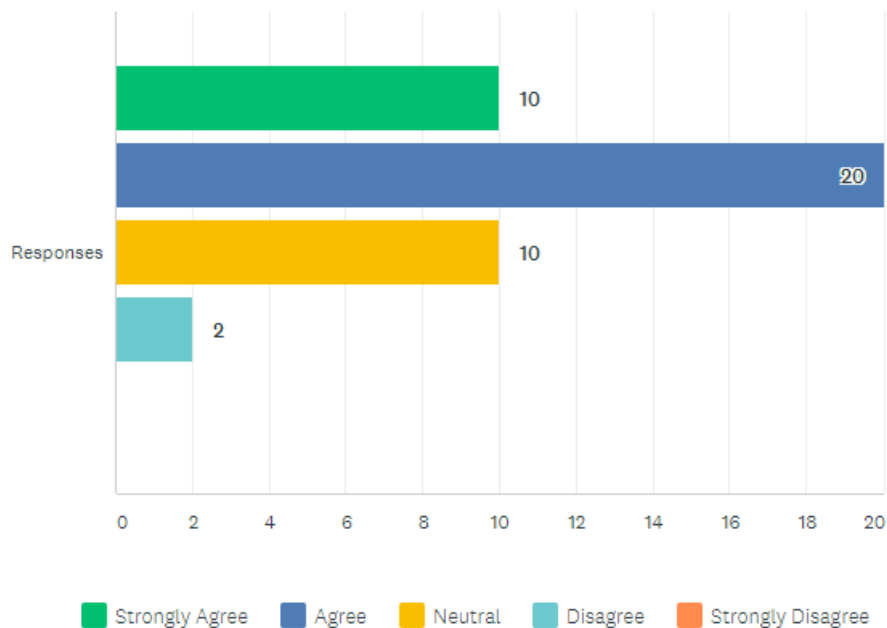
BASIC STATISTICS					
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	
1.00	4.00	1.00	1.48	0.73	

Figure 5: Transformational Leadership - 5th Statement.

As can be seen in figure 6, the majority of the respondents (48%) simply agreed with the sixth statement. Whereas 24% strongly agreed. 24% of respondents also took a neutral stance, while 5% simply disagreed.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I try to improve the levels of innovation amongst my employees by framing existing problems differently and challenging their assumptions."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	23.81% 10	47.62% 20	23.81% 10	4.76% 2	0.00% 0	42	2.10

BASIC STATISTICS						
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
1.00	4.00	2.00	2.10	0.81		

Figure 6: Transformational Leadership - 6th Statement.

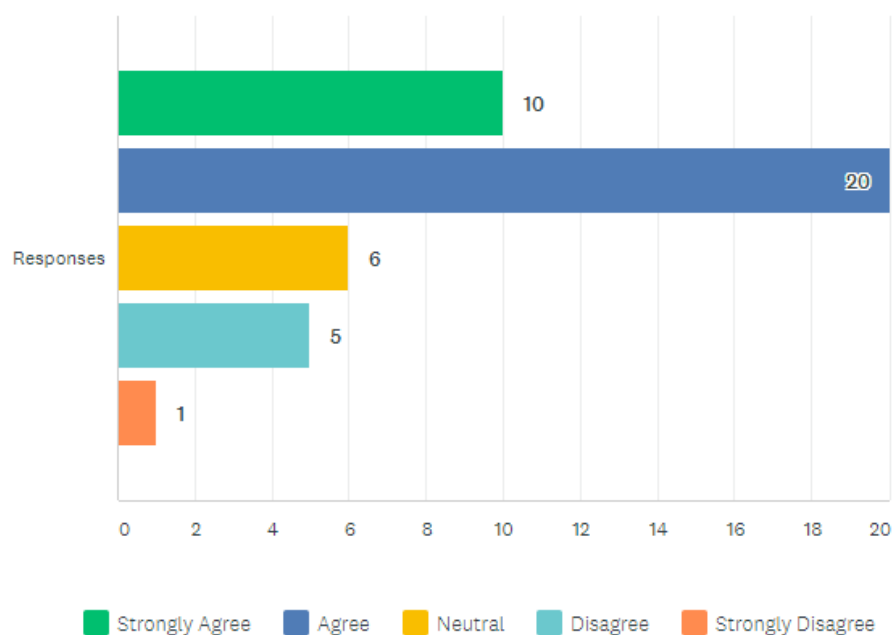
Collectively, the three transformational statements had a total of 126 responses (42 per statement). Out of the 126 responses, 51 responded (40%) with a strong agreement. While 53 responses (42%) were simply in agreement. Therefore, 104 responses (83%) were in agreement with transformational leadership.

4.1.3. Transactional Leadership

The seventh statement saw the majority of the respondents (48%) simply agree with the statement, while 24% of respondents strongly agreed. 14% took a neutral stance. 12% of respondents simply disagreed, while one respondent (2%) strongly disagreed with the statement, as can be seen in figure 7.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I try to enter into 'transactions' with my employees where I reward them for their good performance in achieving organisational goals."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	23.81% 10	47.62% 20	14.29% 6	11.90% 5	2.38% 1	42	2.21

BASIC STATISTICS

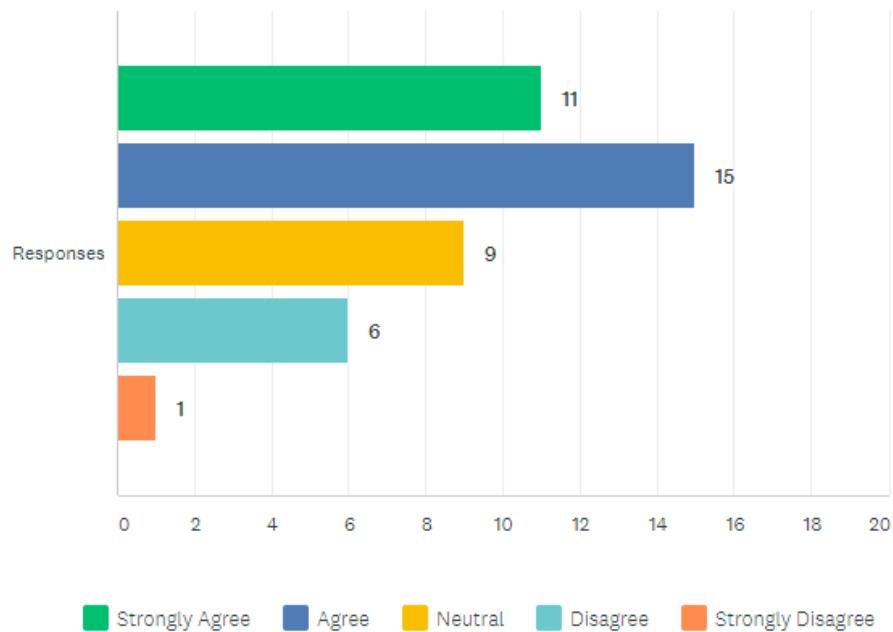
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 2.00	Mean 2.21	Standard Deviation 1.01
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Figure 7: Transactional Leadership - 7th Statement.

The second last statement saw majority of respondents (36%) simply agree with the statement, while 26% strongly agreed. 21% of respondents maintained a neutral stance, whereas 14% simply disagreed. One respondent (2%) strongly disagreed, as can be seen in figure 8.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I like to allow my employees to work toward their own self-interests as long as they maintain good performance in achieving the organisation's goals."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	26.19% 11	35.71% 15	21.43% 9	14.29% 6	2.38% 1	42	2.31

BASIC STATISTICS

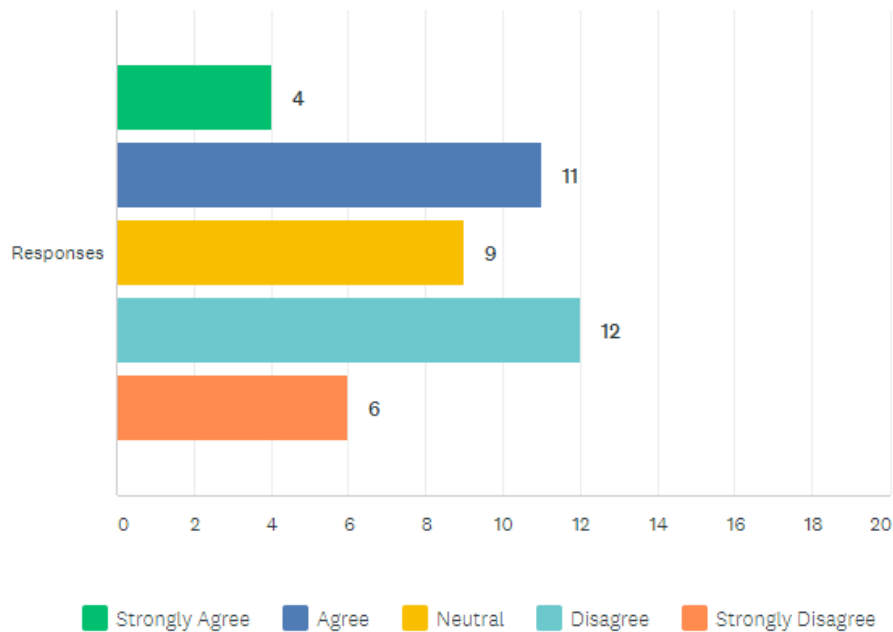
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 2.00	Mean 2.31	Standard Deviation 1.08
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Figure 8: Transactional Leadership - 8th Statement.

The final statement, as is seen in figure 9, created quite a divide between respondents, as 12 respondents (29%) disagreed with the statement, whereas 11 respondents (26%) agreed with the statement. 10% of respondents strongly agreed, while in contrast, 14% of respondents strongly disagreed. A significant portion of respondents (21%) maintained a neutral stance on the statement.

How much do you agree with the following statement: "I tend to punish employees that underperform."

Answered: 42 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE (1)	AGREE (2)	NEUTRAL (3)	DISAGREE (4)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (5)	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Responses	9.52% 4	26.19% 11	21.43% 9	28.57% 12	14.29% 6	42	3.12

BASIC STATISTICS				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	3.00	3.12	1.22

Figure 9: Transactional Leadership - 9th Statement.

In total the three transactional statements had 126 responses (42 per statement). Out of the 126 responses, 25 responded (20%) with a strong agreement. While 46 responses (37%) were simply in agreement with the statements. Therefore, 71 responses (56%) were in agreement with transactional leadership.

4.2. Interpretation

Based off of the above findings, the respondents leaned toward situational leadership by 87%, whereas they leaned toward transformational and transactional leadership by 83% and 56% respectively. Contrary to the hypothesis mentioned earlier, transactional leadership was not the most common in South African SMEs. In fact, transactional leadership was the least common. Instead, situational leadership was the most common, with transformational leadership in, a close, second position.

Apart from the rankings of the styles, the overlap between the different styles was also unexpected. The researcher assumed that respondents would be in agreement with a specific leadership style and in disagreement with the remaining styles, however, that was not the case. Respondents were mostly in agreement with both situational and transformational leadership. While transactional leadership garnered a more negative response. This is in contrast to what the researcher assumed, however, the existing literature does somewhat support this, as there are similarities between the styles, as mentioned in the review of literature. Such as the similarities between the person-oriented view of situational leadership and transformational leadership shifting the focus of the leader onto their followers and intellectually stimulating them (Bass, 2008; McCleskey, 2014). Therefore, a practical explanation can be provided as to why the respondents leaned toward multiple leadership styles.

However, theoretically speaking, the three leadership styles are separate from one another and have well-defined characteristics that set them apart, as can be seen in the review of literature. Such as situational leadership focusing on adapting the leadership style to the situation (Bass, 2008; Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996), whereas transformational leadership makes use of a more general approach (Yukl, 1999; 2011). Therefore, this study's findings suggest that in the context of South African SMEs the lines between these leadership styles may be more blurred than what one might expect. It appears that there is no one leadership style made use of in South African SMEs. Instead, due to the close results of both situational and transformational leadership, leaders in these SMEs appear to make use of a combination of leadership styles.

4.3. Validity and Reliability

4.3.1. Validity

Validity refers to whether the measurement within the study truly measured what the study set out to measure (Koonin, 2014). To enhance the validity of the research paper the following steps have been taken:

Ensured that statements are based on valid literature:

The statements used within the survey questionnaire was based upon the literature identified in the review of literature to ensure that the leadership styles of respondents would be accurately described.

Ensured any and all survey responses are not inadmissible:

The survey questionnaire made use of close-ended questions to ensure that no inadmissible responses to the survey questionnaire were given. This was done to avoid reducing the sample size due to inadmissible responses.

Ensured that only valid respondents participated in this study:

This was achieved through the inclusion and exclusion criterion discussed earlier in the document. Ensuring the validity of respondents would ensure that the study truly measured what it set out to measure.

4.3.2. Reliability

Reliability is associated with the findings of the study and in essence, is defined as whether the research would produce the same results if it were to be conducted in a different location and by a different researcher while using the same research method (Koonin, 2014). To enhance the reliability of the study the following steps were taken:

Ensured the research purpose, question and rationale were clearly stated:

This allows other researchers to clearly know and understand the rationale behind the study as well as what the study aimed to achieve in order for other researchers to replicate the results.

Ensured that the terms 'small to medium enterprises' and 'leaders' have a universal definition that is clear and easy to understand:

This ensures that other researchers identify and measure the correct elements in order to replicate the results. This is achieved through the use of the European Union's universally accepted definition of small to medium enterprises.

Distributed surveys to more than 20 respondents:

As discussed earlier, this was done to combat the possibility of the sample becoming smaller than the recommended size of 20 due to inadmissible responses or respondents that decided to opt-out of the study. This ensured that the sample is as representative of the population as possible within the sampling guidelines of the IIE.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study addressed the research question by determining that situational leadership is the most common leadership style and by doing so also proved the hypothesis wrong. However, the study also determined that situational leadership is not used in isolation, rather a combination of leadership styles are used in South African SMEs, with situational leadership being the most prominent within these combinations. The study also addressed the gap in the body of knowledge by determining that what is truly being practised in South African SMEs does not necessarily align with leadership theory.

The study was successful in answering the research question, rejecting the hypothesis and addressing the research problem that were set at the beginning of the study. The study was also successful in achieving its goal of addressing the gap in the body of knowledge by determining which leadership style was the most common, as it did determine that situational leadership was the most common style. However, the study unexpectedly addressed the gap in the body of knowledge by determining that the practical application of leadership styles might differ from the leadership theory, as South African SMEs combine leadership styles. Furthermore, the study did, unfortunately, fail

with regard to being representative of the total population. The study did also not take into account the gender of respondents, which may have skewed the results.

5.1. Implications for Future Practices

The findings of this study have potential implications in the field of leadership theory, as the findings suggest that what is truly being practised in South African SMEs and the theory regarding leadership styles, does not necessarily align, as the SMEs do not make use of a single leadership style. This could potentially guide future researchers in determining if South African SMEs are perhaps using their own leadership style that combines situational, transformation and transactional leadership styles. The study might also inspire further research into how leadership theory is applied practically in working environments. Further research into the exact combination of leadership styles used in South African SMEs can also be inspired by this study.

Furthermore, the study has both academic and managerial implications as further research can be conducted on what effect a combination of leadership styles may have on the performance of a small-to-medium enterprise.

Finally, the study can give direction to future and existing SME owners with regard to what leadership styles are commonly used for enterprises that are either small or medium and can inspire future research into how this combination of leadership styles in SMEs compares to the leadership styles utilised in large enterprises.

5.2. Ethical Implications

Good ethics are valuable to the research process due to it serving as a code of conduct – in terms of morals – that provides the researcher with a standard for behaviour while conducting the research (Louw, 2014). While conducting this study the researcher had to consider the following ethical procedures identified by Louw (2014):

It is first and foremost imperative that all respondents that wished to participate in the study provided the researcher with informed consent. The researcher was required to ensure that respondents understand exactly what would be required of them, as well as, how their identity and any sensitive information would be kept anonymous and confidential respectively. Furthermore, the respondents were also required to understand how the results of the study would be used. All of the above-mentioned implications were achieved through the introduction to the study at the beginning of the survey questionnaire, where respondents were told that their information would be kept anonymous

and that their answers would be kept confidential. The introduction also explained what would be required of them and what the results would be used for.

It is crucial that respondents' physical and psychological comfort was prioritised during their participation in the study. The physical and psychological comfort of respondents was prioritised by informing them of their ability and freedom to opt-out of the study at any point and without any explanation required.

No incentive should have been provided through participation within the study, due to the possibility of the incentive interfering with results. Respondents were informed of the lack of incentive in the consent form. Should any potential respondent have insisted on receiving an incentive they would have been respectfully declined and asked to not participate in the study, in order to ensure that they did not interfere with the results.

Finally, no information may have been falsified by the researcher, nor may the researcher have attempted to distort any of the results.

5.3. Limitations

According to Enslin (2014), limitations within research refer to constraints that are out of the control of the researcher. Unfortunately, this study had the following limitations:

The time to conduct the research was constrained:

A constraint in time was likely to influence the sample size and depth of the research, as the limited time with which to complete the research may have forced the researcher to collect data from fewer respondents as well as conduct and analyse the research in a more shallow manner. This constraint was addressed by adhering to the sampling guidelines set forth by the IIE as the guidelines are designed to assist researchers in completing the research in time.

There was a lack of resources to assist in conducting the research:

There was specifically a constraint on the available financial resources. This constraint may have also influenced the sample size and depth of the research, as fewer financial resources constrain the researcher's ability to hire human resources which may assist in conducting the research. Again, this constraint was combatted through adhering to the sampling guidelines of the IIE.

The study was geographically constrained:

This was due to the previously discussed time and resource constraints that limited the study to the Gauteng province of South Africa. This was addressed by enhancing the validity and reliability of the study to ensure that other researchers may be able to replicate the study in the eight remaining provinces of South Africa.

The study was limited in its representativeness of the overall population:

This was due to all of the previous limitations' influence on the sample size and depth of the research. This limitation was addressed as best as possible by distributing the survey to more than 20 potential respondents in order to ensure that sample was as representative as possible and that should any potential respondent not wish to participate or perhaps opt-out of their participation that there will still be a minimum of 20 respondents. The study received 42 responses, which is more than double the minimum requirement set out by the IIE guidelines.

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Appendix 1 – Originality Report

RESM8419_2019_ALL_VGPT - RESM8419_VGPT1

Research Report 1

Simeon Barnard on Fri, Oct 25 2019, 4:45 PM

6% highest match

Submission ID: 1f0a10b9-11b2-4b60-a332-b0bcb53ad507

Originality File.docx

Word Count: 8,414 | 6%

Attachment ID: 2264318938

Citations (7/7)



- 1 Another student's paper 
- 2 <http://digitalknowledge.cp...> 
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- 5 <https://jotags.org/2019/vol...> 
- 6 Another student's paper 
- 7 <http://iiespace.iie.ac.za/bit...> 

Appendix 2 – Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire will start with the following:

“Hello and welcome to the survey for my research study into common leadership styles found in South African small to medium enterprises. My name is Simeon Barnard and I am an Honours student at Vega Pretoria. By participating in this survey you agree to the following:

Any information you provide in your answers will be used for the purposes of this study alone.

Your identity will be kept anonymous and all information will be kept confidential.

Should you wish to withdraw from participating in this survey you may do so at any point and without any reason given.

There are no direct risks or benefits associated with participation in this study.

With all of that being said, I greatly appreciate you taking the time out of your day to participate in this survey. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. My contact details are as follows:

Simeon Barnard

+27729119727

simeon.barnard@gmail.com”

After the introduction to the survey there will be a short description of the questions that respondents will need to answer:

“For the following questions, you will be required to state your level of agreement or disagreement with the relevant statements. Please keep in mind there is no right or wrong answer. Simply answer based off of your own personal approach to leadership.”

After the short description the following questions will be asked through the use of Likert Scales:

Questions	Related Leadership Style
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I provide my employees with well-defined roles, instructions, processes and formal channels through which they should communicate."</i>	Situational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I try my best to have empathy with my employees and seek to reduce conflict and create harmony in the team while regulating and ensuring equal participation from all employees."</i>	Situational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I adapt my leadership style to the maturity level of each of my employees."</i>	Situational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I like to persuade my employees to look past their own self-interests to instead focus on the interests of the organisation."</i>	Transformational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I try to inspire my employees through my behaviour and my actions."</i>	Transformational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I try to improve the levels of innovation amongst my employees by framing existing problems differently and challenging their assumptions."</i>	Transformational Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I try to enter into 'transactions' with my employees where I reward them for their good performance in achieving organisational goals."</i>	Transactional Leadership

How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I like to allow my employees to work toward their own self-interests as long as they maintain good performance in achieving the organisation's goals."</i>	Transactional Leadership
How much do you agree with the following statement: <i>"I tend to punish employees that underperform."</i>	Transactional Leadership

All of the above questions are based on the characteristics and descriptions of the three leadership styles found in the review of literature.

The following images serve as an example of what respondents will see when viewing the survey questionnaire:

Leadership Styles in South African SMEs

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the survey for my research study into common leadership styles found in South African small to medium enterprises. My name is Simeon Barnard and I am an Honours student at Vega Pretoria. If you have received this link to the survey then it is likely that you have already agreed to participate in this survey.

If, however, you somehow did not receive the consent form, yet received the link to the survey, I ask that you kindly contact me at simeon.barnard@gmail.com to inform me of the situation so that I may send a consent form to you.

Just to remind you of the agreed-upon procedures in the consent form:

Your identity will be kept anonymous and all information will be kept confidential.

Should you wish to withdraw from participating in this survey you may do so at any point and without any reason given.

There are no direct risks or benefits associated with participation in this study.

With all of that being said, I greatly appreciate you taking the time out of your day to participate in this survey. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. My contact details are as follows:

Simeon Barnard
+27729119727
simeon.barnard@gmail.com

1. For the following questions, you will be required to state your level of agreement or disagreement with the relevant statements. Please keep in mind there is no right or wrong answer. Simply answer based off of your own personal approach to leadership.

☐ Sounds good! I'll be as honest as possible.

* 2. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I provide my employees with well-defined roles, instructions, processes and formal channels through which they should communicate."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 3. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I try my best to have empathy with my employees and seek to reduce conflict and create harmony in the team while regulating and ensuring equal participation from all employees."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 4. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I adapt my leadership style to the maturity level of each of my employees."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 5. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I like to persuade my employees to look past their own self-interests to instead focus on the interests of the organisation."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 6. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I try to inspire my employees through my behaviour and my actions."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 7. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I try to improve the levels of innovation amongst my employees by framing existing problems differently and challenging their assumptions."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 8. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I try to enter into 'transactions' with my employees where I reward them for their good performance in achieving organisational goals."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 9. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I like to allow my employees to work toward their own self-interests as long as they maintain good performance in achieving the organisation's goals."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 10. **How much do you agree with the following statement:** *"I tend to punish employees that underperform."*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix 2 – Ethical Clearance Letter



August 27, 2019

Student name: Simeon Barnard

Student number: 15017686

Campus: Vega Pretoria



Re: Approval of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Strategic Brand Communication Proposal and Ethics Clearance



Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.



Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and we hereby provide you with ethical clearance to proceed with your data collection.

There may be some aspects that you still need to address in your proposal. If this is the case, feedback will be provided to you in writing. You will need to address these aspects in consultation with your supervisor.

In the event of you deciding to change your research topic or methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure that all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued in such instances.

We wish you all the best with your research!

Yours sincerely,

Amalia van Schalkwyk
Supervisor
Coordinator

Simeon Barnard
Campus Postgraduate

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Annexure 1: Final Research Report Summary Document Table

Title: A descriptive study of the leadership styles commonly found in South African small to medium enterprises.

Research Purpose	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To address the gap in the body of knowledge by describing which leadership styles are most commonly used by small to medium enterprise owners (if they are actively leading employees) or managers in the South African context.	Which leadership styles are commonly used by the leaders of small to medium enterprises in South Africa?	To address the gap in the body of knowledge and to see which of the theories of leadership styles is applied in real working environments.	Ajzen (1985; 1991) Bass (1985; 1990; 1999) Bernard (1926) Burns (1978) Hershey and Blanchard (1969; 1979; 1996)	Theme 1 Situational Leadership Theme 2 Transformational Leadership Theme 3 Transactional Leadership	Paradigm Positivism Epistemological Position Valid knowledge can only be derived out of empirical and objective evidence. Ontological Position There is an objective reality that is governed by laws. Ascribes to objectivism.	Quantitative.	Survey Questionnaires	To ensure that participants provide informed consent. To communicate that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. To prioritise participants' physical & psychological comfort. To not provide participants with an incentive. To not falsify information.	Situational leadership is the most common style in South African SMEs. However, the SMEs make use of a combination of leadership styles and not just situational leadership. Situational leadership is the most prominent in the combination.	Further research could be done into whether the SMEs use their own leadership styles. Further research could be done into the effect of this combination on the performance of SMEs. Further research could be done into how this combination of leadership styles.
						Population				
						All SMEs in South Africa that have less than 250 employees and have a revenue of less than 50 million Euro. The head offices reside in Gauteng and the enterprise consists of more than one individual.				
Research Problem	Secondary Questions OR Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	Key Contributions	
There is a gap in the body of knowledge in terms of there being little academic research into the leadership styles used in SMEs in South Africa.	n/a	Leadership & Small to medium enterprises	The Theory of Planned Behaviour			Non-probability sampling. Convenience & Purposive sampling. A sample size of 20.	Unit of Analysis Individuals Data Analysis Method Microsoft Excel	Time & Resource Constraints. Geographically constrained. Limited representativeness	Contributes to the body of knowledge by addressing the gap. Gives existing and future SME owners direction regarding the leadership styles commonly used for businesses with their size.	Further research could be done into the effect of gender on leadership styles in South African SMEs.

