

Employee expectations and perceptions of leadership styles in a chemical manufacturing facility in South Africa

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to praise our Lord for giving me the strength to complete this study. Through very difficult times, He carried me and brought me to a great victory physically, mentally and spiritually.

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people who stood by my side and made all this possible:

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ABSTRACT

The study was performed to determine the difference between the leadership style employees perceive from their manager or supervisor, and what leadership style they expect from their manager or supervisor in a chemical manufacturing facility in South Africa. Participants of two specific departments, which form part of the organisation, were used as respondents for this study.

The study followed a cross-sectional design at a single point in time. Purposive total population sampling was used due to accessibility to the population and the population size.

A questionnaire, specifically for the study, was designed by the researcher in order to find comprehensive information regarding the employees' perceptions and expectations about the leadership styles they perceive in the workplace and what they expect from their managers in the specific departments in the organisation.

A total of 370 questionnaires were electronically distributed to the identified respondents who formed part of the two departments of the identified organisation. An online survey distribution platform was used to reach respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirty email addresses returned undeliverable and 81 questionnaires were electronically submitted and all 81 were usable ($N=370-30=340$; $n=81$), representing a response rate of 23.8%.

The research data was analysed by means of frequency analysis, cross-tabulation and correlation coefficients.

The statistical results indicated that most of the population perceive a democratic leadership style where the minority indicated that they perceive a *laissez faire* leadership style. Respondents perceiving a democratic style also expect this leadership style from their managers, and a smaller portion of the respondents perceive a different style from what they expect in the workplace.

Key terms: leadership style, employee perception, employee expectation, autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, *laissez-faire* leadership style

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CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is to determine the leadership style employees perceive and expect in the workplace and whether they perceive what they expect. This chapter is a presentation of the research area, how the study is motivated and how the study contributes to the field of study, as well as benefits to the organisation. In this chapter, the problem statement of the research study is presented and the primary and secondary objectives are given. An explanation, of the research methodology to attain the objectives of this study, is presented. This chapter also includes some of the study limitations as well as the benefits of this research study. The chapter concludes with a structure layout, describing the content of what to expect in each of the chapters.

1.2 Background to the research area

Understanding leadership styles has become an important topic for research, in recent times, as the style a manager applies in an organisation can influence the success of the business. Managers need to be influential enough to ensure tasks are accomplished and goals are achieved, contributing to a successful organisation (Pour *et al.*, 2012; Sirbu *et al.*, 2015).

Retention of employees is one of the challenges managers face today with the total cost of employee turnover ranging from 90% to 200% of an annual salary. Recruitment, selection and training, as well as various other factors, contribute to these costs. The reasons employees leave their jobs might be due to their manager's behaviour (Reina *et al.*, 2018:5).

A survey conducted by Bhattacharya (2008:1), which included 10 000 job seekers, found that 42% of employees left their jobs because of their dissatisfaction with their manager (Bhattacharya, 2008:1)

Baruk (2015:5) emphasises the necessity for employees' subjective assessment of leadership styles applied to them as they are the receivers of tasks and actions, and the employees are contributors to the organisation's image and shaping of that image in particular.

The climate and effectiveness of the environment in the workplace are shaped by the perceptions of the employees and their leaders. Managers must realise that all individuals have different perceptions, because perception is how all individuals interpret their experiences. It becomes a

difficult task to attain meaningful objectives in a work environment – then, the perceptions of quantity, quality and schedules are different for the employees and the leaders (Otara, 2011:21).

Most research studies, about employee perceptions and management styles, describe the employees' perceptions of their managers. Researchers fail to consult employees about their expectation to measure the gap between expectation and perception. This motivates this study to determine the leadership styles the employees experience in the workplace and what leadership style they would like to be applied to them. Although literature identifies several management and leadership styles, this study will only focus on three of the most described leadership styles in literature, which are the autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles.

1.3 Motivation of the study

In understanding the leadership styles that exist in the organisation and understanding what is preferred by the employees, better manager-employee matches can be made to ensure positive employees, job satisfaction, better performance and reduced employee turnover, as these are some of the factors shown to be influenced by the leadership style managers apply to their subordinates.

This study aims to understand what employees perceive as their manager's leadership style and the leadership style they expect from their managers. This understanding will allow better performance from the employees and assist the organisation to make better choices when appointing new managers. An overall satisfactory working environment for employees will benefit organisations, resulting in better performance and effectiveness.

Organisations and literature will benefit from this study to understand the difference in employee perceptions and their expectations with regard to leadership styles and ways to close the gap should there be a significant difference between perception and expectation. Although studies in literature focus on leadership factors, this study has a focus on leadership style.

This study will be looking into previous research in literature and using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, distributing questionnaires (online) to the population, which followed a total population sampling method. Data will be analysed by using an online survey platform SPSS data analysis. The statistical distribution of the questions answered will be discussed, followed by a conclusion and some recommendations.

1.4 Problem statement

One of the reasons employees leave their jobs is because they do not like their boss or supervisor. In customer-oriented organisations, a customer will return based on their interaction with the employee. According to Agrusa *et al.* (2006:84), customer turnover is directly affected by employee turnover and occurs when customers cannot relate to the employees. In these cases, the company is affected negatively (Agrusa *et al.*, 2006:83-94).

Manager and leadership styles are important factors affecting job satisfaction in the organisational environment. What an employee expects from the manager or supervisor is an important question to be answered in research. "Job satisfaction is not only position held in workplace but also physical, social environment and relations between managers and colleagues, group culture and management style". All these factors have a different effect on an individual's level of job satisfaction (Tepret & Tuna, 2015:673-679).

The information processing perspective has grown from the recognition that the attributes followers perceive from leadership are an essential part of forming opinions, which become reality. The basic tenants of an information processing perspective hypothesise that "leadership exists in a social context" and that "leadership is conferred only through the perceptions of others". As perceivers observe and process the actions and characteristics of others, some of the behaviours can be attributed to leadership. This indicates that leadership is not assumed by how an individual behaves, but how a follower perceives the individual as a leader (Anderson *et al.*, 2017:245-260).

In organisations, perceptions are made known through communication. It is important for leadership to understand the dynamics of perception, which can be utilised as an instrument in leadership. The reality of your ability and effectiveness to be a leader is often created by people's observations. Perception is created by observations and becomes people's reality. Followers might have a different perception of leaders who actually believe they are using their perception as effective and efficient leaders. When people find themselves in situations, instead of reacting to the reality of the situation, they tend to react to their observations, which is their perception of the reality. To be the best that we can be, perception is used as a tool to cultivate our desire to be better. To be an effective leader, it is important for leaders to understand the importance of perception and how to use this skill effectively. Because perception is communicated through actions, a leader must communicate in a way that followers can understand. Leaders might have good intentions towards their employees, but if they do not communicate this in the right way, the followers might perceive something different to the leader's intention. Leaders must use communication as an instrument to create positive perceptions and change the perceptions of employees when the perceptions are undesirable. To have the right perception, one becomes

competent and productive, and being able to get along with all employees cultivates diversity. When managers start hearing their employees and really understand what their employees expect from them, dissatisfaction towards leaders will be illuminated. Likewise, employees should hear what their leaders have to say and not what they expect them to say to create a more satisfying working environment (Otara, 2011:21-23).

The problem this study aims to address is to determine the difference between the employees' perceptions of the leadership style of their supervisors and their expectation in the technical department of the specific organisation in this study. If the gap between perception and expectation is big, it can be an indication of dissatisfaction. By analysing the gap, recommendations can be made to the employer to train their managers and supervisors on the importance of managing perceptions.

1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

1.5.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this research is to determine the difference between the leadership style employees in the organisation perceive from their manager or supervisor, and what leadership style they expect from their manager or supervisor.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

- To determine what the employees perceive as their manager's leadership style
- To determine the leadership style that employees expect from their manager or supervisor
- To determine the gap between what employees, in the organisational department, perceive and expect from their manager's leadership styles

1.6 Hypothesis and research questions

There is a gap between what employees perceive and what they expect in terms of their manager's leadership style. The size of the gap can be quantified, and actions can be put in place to minimise such a gap.

1.6.1 Primary research question

What is the magnitude of the gap between employee perception and expectation regarding the leadership style of their manager or supervisor?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions

- What leadership styles are perceived by employees?
- What leadership style do employees expect from their manager or supervisor?
- How much does the perception differ from the expectation?

1.7 Research design

1.7.1 Literature review

This chapter will consist of a literature review relating to leadership styles and employee perceptions and expectations. Effects that leadership styles have on employees and organisations will also be discussed with reference to previous studies. The three classic leadership styles will be included in this study (Bailey, 2018; Maloş, 2012; Spiske & Hassan, 2020). Although other leadership styles are popular in the literature, this study will only focus on the three basic leadership styles listed below.

- Different leadership styles
 - Autocratic leadership style
 - Democratic leadership style
 - Laisses-faire leadership style
- Effects of leadership style on employees
- Factors relating to satisfaction
- Factors relating to employee turnover
- Factors relating to performance

The literature review conducted for this study consulted sources that include articles, research documents, books and relevant peer-reviewed scientific journals obtained from the following credible search engines available from the NWU databases:

- Google Scholar
- Emerald Insight

- EBSCOhost
- ScienceDirect
- ProQuest
- NWU online-library
- Internet articles

1.7.2 Empirical research

1.7.2.1 Research participants

The research survey questionnaire was distributed to the employees of the identified organisation's middle management, first-line management and subordinates in the specific business units in South Africa. The questionnaire was distributed to all the employees who were granted access to in the business unit of the organisation. These employees will represent the full population. The survey questionnaire was sent electronically to employees as follows:

- Water and Ash (Business unit)
 - Area managers
 - Foreman
 - Subordinates
- Technical Support (Business unit)
 - Engineering managers
 - Engineers
 - Subordinates

This covered all employees who were granted access to by the business units of the organisation and the identified organisation supplied the list of employees.

1.7.2.2 Research approach

Quantitative research is very effective to answer the “what” or “how” questions and focus on measurable data. Qualitative methods are effective to uncover behaviours and trends. Although it will quantify what people prefer, it will not provide insight into why they prefer something and how they feel, think or act. To understand the motivation behind certain preferences, a qualitative method should be used, which includes interviews and open-ended questionnaires (Goertzen, 2017:12).

Quantitative research is described by Bryman (2016:160) as the “collection of numerical data”, comparing the theory with the research. Although it is common that a hypothesis is deduced from the theory and is tested, it does not require the specification of a hypothesis, but instead, the theory reflects a set of concerns relating to the data collected. Hypothesis specification and testing are more likely to be found in scientific research, but are not completely omitted from survey research and are usually based on a cross-sectional design (Bryman, 2016:160-161).

This study will follow a quantitative research method as it will collect data in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire will only have closed-ended questions and the respondents' reasoning for selecting certain answers will not be investigated. The data collected from the questionnaires will be analysed using statistical methods, which include SPSS, and statistical information will be presented and discussed.

Research surveys, as instruments of data collection, are often related to cross-sectional design as a survey is regarded, by most people, to be closely related to questionnaires and structured interviews. When conducting survey design-based research, there are, however, many other research methods, including data collecting by structured observations, analyses of content, gathering official statistical data and using diaries. Cross-sectional research design is also explained as “the collection of data in a single point in time to be able to collect quantitative or quantifiable data with two or more variables” (Bryman, 2016:59).

A quantitative, cross-sectional research approach was followed for this study as the data and information collected from this study are at a specific point in time and will be presented numerically. Although data was collected by means of an online questionnaire, the questions were closed-ended, answerable as multiple choice and quantifiable. There are two variables, namely what employees in the business unit perceive and what they expect related to leadership styles applied to them by their managers.

Positivism is sometimes referred to as a “scientific method” or “science research”. It is based on the rationalistic, empiricist philosophy that originated with Aristotle, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Auguste Comte, and Emmanuel Kant. Positivism reflects a “deterministic philosophy” where a cause “probably” determines “effects” or “outcomes”. In the social world, positivism is applicable when assuming that “the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural world, that there is a method for studying the social world that is value-free, and that explanations of a causal nature can be provided.” Positivists aim to test a theory or define an experience “through observation and measurement to predict and control forces that surround us” and “is most commonly aligned with quantitative methods of data collection and analysis” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006:2-3).

Positivism best suits this study because an assumption was measured. Data was collected using questionnaires. The collected data was analysed using a statistical method and the outcome used to test whether the research is valid or not. The study did not consider the opinions and reasoning of the respondents, but only focused on what respondents select more frequently.

1.7.2.3 Research procedure

For the study to continue, the identified organisation was approached and permission was obtained to conduct research study. A meeting was held with the vice-president of human resources of the organisation and the vice-presidents of the identified business units were consulted via email. The goals and objectives of this study were explained and the benefits of the study towards the organisation were highlighted. Ethical and anonymity issues, during data collection, were also addressed in the communication. With the vice-presidents' buy-in, access was granted to the identified employees and the list of emails could be accessed from the company's database.

To ensure participants can easily participate in the research study and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, electronic questionnaires were designed and loaded onto SoGoSurvey by the researcher. Once the organisation's business units granted permission for the study to continue, the electronic questionnaires were distributed via a group email. An explanatory section of the email gave the identified respondents an overview of the study being conducted. The email included a link to the survey site and also included a quick responds code (QR code). Respondents were able to access the survey on their computers or via a smart device. By clicking on the link or scanning the QR code, the respondents could access the research survey questionnaire and all submitted responses are anonymous. Over a period of four weeks, three reminder group emails were sent to all respondents. Responses were gathered and stored in the SoGoSurvey database, which was exported to an Excel file. The researcher organised the data and sent it to the NWU Statistical Consultancy Services where data was analysed and explained.

The electronic questionnaires consisted of a cover letter to explain the study's research objectives. Respondents were informed that participation is voluntarily and that all responses will remain anonymous in hopes of obtaining open and honest responses from participants when presented with sensitive statements.

1.7.2.4 Measuring instrument

A measuring instrument to analyse the leadership styles perceived and expected is a research survey questionnaire. The researcher designed a questionnaire to assess the employees' perceptions and expectations of their managers' leadership styles at the identified business units of the organisation.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

- Section 1: Demographic information;
- Section 2: Employee perception
- Section 3: Employee expectation

Several characteristics of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were reviewed in aid of structuring the questionnaire design and statements. The selections of characteristics of the three leadership styles were compiled in specific statements for this study. Frequency selection was used in sections 2 and 3 to measure the respondents' perceptions and expectations of their managers' leadership style. For each question:

- a) Reference is made to an autocratic leadership style
- b) Reference is made to a democratic leadership style
- c) Reference is made to a laissez-faire leadership style

A copy of the research survey questionnaire can be seen in Annexure 1.

1.7.2.5 Data analysis methods

The responses from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS statistical program and the overall results per respondent were determined. If the respondent mostly selected statement A from the three options available, that was considered to be the overall preference and experience of the respondent.

After determination of the respondents' experience and preference, cross-tabulation of the results was used to indicate the percentage of respondents who experience what they prefer.

The Pearson chi-square was calculated to test the relationship between the employee experience and employee preference with the H0 that no relationship exists. Phi and Cramer's V were calculated to determine the strength of the relationship. Although Phi is used for 2xn tables, it was included for completeness' sake.

1.8 Possible limitations of the study

The respondents included in the sample population were from one organisation and only three levels of employees in the two business units were granted access to. Information gathered about the two business units might not be a representation of the organisation as a whole. Furthermore, using respondents from one organisation might not be representative of all middle management, first-line management and their direct reports in the organisation.

Respondents might not answer the questions truthfully and results from the survey can be inaccurate.

Formulation of statements and options, from which the respondents had to choose, might be leading where the respondent did not always have a choice to select none of the options should they not relate to any of the statements.

The objective of this study was to establish what the respondents perceive in the workplace and what they would want to experience. Determining the gap between perception and expectation was determined and no reason about why respondents make specific selections. Understanding reasoning of the respondents might give better insight into the gap that might exist.

1.9 Expected benefits

In understanding the leadership styles that exist in the organisation and understanding what is preferred by the employees, better manager-employee matches can be made to ensure positive employees, job satisfaction, better performance and reduced employee turnover, as these are some of the factors shown to be influenced by the leadership style managers apply to their subordinates.

1.10 Layout of chapters

Chapter 1: The nature and scope of the study

In this chapter, the study is introduced and the background of the study is given to explain employee perception and expectation of their manager's leadership styles. The purpose of this study is explained. Primary objectives and secondary objectives are specified with primary and secondary research questions. The hypothesis is stated, and the research methodology is described including research objectives in order to reach the primary objective of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter, literature is reviewed and evaluated to investigate the effect of management styles on employees, and how employees' perception influences their job satisfaction, turnaround and performance should there be a gap between what employees perceive and expect.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents the research approach followed by the researcher. It includes the research design, population, sampling and measuring instruments used. In this chapter, the method used for data collection and analysis is explained and ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter 4: Results

The findings of the study are presented. The biographical profile of the respondents who participated in this study is presented and discussed. Frequency analyses of the results will be evaluated, and the gap between the perceived leadership style and expected leadership style will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the results. Conclusions based on the results will be either accepting or rejecting the hypothesis. The limitations of the study will be presented and recommendations to the organisation will be stipulated. Areas of future research will also be presented.

1.11 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 was an introduction and overview of the background of the study. In this chapter, the problem statement, research objectives, research methodology and limitations were presented. This chapter concluded with the layout of the research study.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of the research study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Background

Organisational activities, organisational climate and labour productivity are all impacted by the type of leadership style applied by the leader and it has become more important to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of leadership styles and how employees perceive the manager's style. An effective leadership style will benefit the organisation; for example, by gaining an advantage in the market (Bucata & Rizescu, 2016:159).

Literature has proven that leadership style, and how it is perceived by employees, can affect employees on various levels relating to innovation, productivity, organisational effectiveness and efficiency (Bucata & Rizescu, 2016:159; Karimi *et al.*, 2011:1685-1690; Lukowski, 2017:105-136).

Leadership style has an immense impact on employees. Employees can be impacted by leadership styles to perform and grow, which leads employees to have a positive attitude towards achieving organisational goals (Mohiuddin, 2017:18).

Leadership can be defined as the ability to influence the attitudes of individuals and to be able to interact with groups or teams to achieve goals and where one person can get support from others to accomplish a common task. In a review done by Lukowski (2017:105-136), he focused on four dimensions of leadership when relating leadership style to innovation. The first dimension, he explains, as the people dimension, where *people* need to distinguish between the leader and the followers logically, and without this dimension, leadership is pointless. The second dimension is the *means* of leadership and a leader must fulfil certain activities to influence or direct the followers, and without a means or activities, there will be no leadership. Thirdly, he explains a dimension he calls *effect*, whereby the leader must induce a reaction (e.g. increase enthusiasm, commitment, implicit convictions) to have the followers follow and again, without this dimension, leadership will have no direction. Lastly, *goals* are associated with leadership, which can be plans or measurable targets and leadership give direction towards these goals. Without goals, no leadership will exist (Lukowski, 2017:105-136).

The quality of leadership is the most essential element of fundamental success, and leadership style plays an important role to improve the performance of employees, to motivate employees and provide employees with a sense job assurance. In recent times, practices that are regarded as dishonest and unprincipled have been reported in most of the organisations. Many reasons exist for organisations to combine and acquire, such as gratification, increased turnover, failure to fulfil mandatory responsibility and financial condition. The foremost reason for organisations is

to reach its specific objectives, indicating the need for their employees to be inspired and managed efficiently, a leadership team that is effective. Many organisations do not consider employee perception regarding specific leadership styles and the styles that leaders of the organisation should adopt. How well leaders understand and implement suitable leadership styles in their area will determine the extent to which members of the organisation will contribute in connecting the organisation's resources equally (Mohiuddin, 2017:18-30).

Because this study focuses on three main styles of leadership, understanding the difference in practice between autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style will be discussed from reviews in literature to understand what the characteristics displayed by managers and leaders who adopt one of the three leadership styles in the workplace are, and what some of the effects are that these leadership styles have on employees in the workplace.

2.2 THE DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

2.2.1 Autocratic leadership style

Bucata and Rizescu (2016:162) point out some characteristics relating to an autocratic leadership style. Most decisions are made by a single manager, laying down the tasks and methods for subordinates, and being the central authority of the formal authority. This is where a business is leadership centred, employees are only seen as 'workers' and the general objectives are not explained to the employees who must only execute instructions given by the manager. Employees are seen to be guided, controlled and constrained. In some cases, subordinates are criticised, and the managers are not allowed to be assessed critically as their leader. Autocratic managers regard human relations as least important and ignored. Although in some cases, this leadership style is effective in certain situations when quick decisions need to be made, this style generally creates tension, frustration, dissatisfaction, discontent, aggression and even causes valuable employees to leave an organisation (Bucata & Rizescu, 2016:159).

This type of leadership obtains compliance from the follower, using punishment, and reward and focus on supervision, organising and individual performance as well as a group. This manager will closely monitor the work of the employees and ensure compliance with the methods and procedures set out by the organisation (Sudha *et al.*, 2016:111-120).

Although an autocratic leadership style can be divided into directive and permissive, where directive autocrats tend to make decisions by themselves and monitor their subordinates,

permissive autocrats, also taking decisions independently, allow their subordinates some liberty to decide how they carry out tasks or follow the decisions (EDUCBA, 2018:3).

An autocratic leadership style characterises detachment between leaders and subordinates. They do not consider involvement from their subordinates and are more certain about the essential administrative obligation in regard to the organisational system. These leaders can be considered as oppressive and indicate less ingenuity. Only the leader will have full control over the subordinates. The actions of such a leader are considered to benefit the organisation and his actions will not be questioned. Suggestions from followers are something these leaders fail to consider and autocratic leaders assume that there is no need for delegates to participate in the decision-making process. This type of behaviour can lead to demotivated employees. Employees with this type of leaders can experience a feeling of pushing and hurting due to the harsh behaviour of their leaders. When an organisation is driven by an authoritarian leader, it can also provoke disagreements and conflict of views between delegates (Mohiuddin, 2017:24-25).

A study was conducted on the impact of leadership styles on organisational performance, using 20 randomly selected organisations. The organisational performance was measured using the respondents' perception of the organisation's performance compared to their competitors. A positive relationship was found to exist between an autocratic leadership style and organisational performance. This indicated that an autocratic leadership style promotes the performance of employees to the expected level of performance. The study indicated that leadership styles are a contributing factor in determining organisational performance. In the autocratic leadership style, employees have to follow orders, which works in favour of the organisation. Although a positive relationship was found between an autocratic leadership style and organisational performance, employees should be presented with opportunities. This will create an environment of inclusion and motivate employees to be more productive and innovative. Organisations should concentrate on applying democratic and transformational leadership styles to include employees in decision-making and problem-solving. This has proven to have positive effects on organisational performance (Al Khajeh, 2018:6-9).

An autocratic leadership style was also reported to be inappropriate because it results in low morale and motivation. This was reported in a study where 200 employees were requested to complete a questionnaire to determine the effect of leadership styles on employee performance in a non-profit organisation. It was found that employee performance, on complex tasks, decreased with an autocratic leadership style. This type of leadership style also has the ability to influence follower creativity and innovation. This study also confirmed that when a leader is an expert in his field, it might be useful to apply an autocratic leadership style. This can result in making better decisions in a short period of time. This leadership style would be most appropriate

in jobs where employees have a low level of skill and/or where time is limited (Abdul *et al.*, 2019:483-490).

For this study, the autocratic leadership style will only include the directive autocratic manager, and when referring to an autocratic leadership style, it will refer to a manager who makes the decisions and controls tasks and methods to reach organisational goals.

2.2.2 Democratic leadership style

Features characterising the democratic leadership style are where a manager has full confidence in subordinates and the manager will involve the employees individually or in groups when setting goals and how these goals should be achieved. Managers with a democratic style encourage suggestions and proposals from subordinates as well as motivate, convince, reward and encourage horizontal and vertical communication between employees. Building relationships to ensure a pleasant working environment is important to the democratic manager and is not only focused on formal authority but also personal gained authority. Objectives of the organisation will be shared with the employees and they will be consulted when issues arise. The democratic style also delegates authority and liability to subordinates, aiming to promote skills and development, including the development of their personality, of the individuals for future growth. A democratic leadership style yields a high level of satisfaction and contributes to an increased interest of subordinates towards tasks. This style is generally effective when employees are highly competent and hold a high level of responsibility and when employees have collective leadership skills. Democratic leaders like to ensure good relations between employee and manager, a healthy, comfortable environment and independence of group members (Bucata & Rizescu, 2016:163).

Democratic managers include subordinates in the decision-making process and before deciding, there must be a consensus. Communication from top-down and bottom-up is what distinguishes the democratic style from the autocratic leadership style. This leadership style is also effective when developing marketing strategies where the higher leadership can provide information about what needs to be achieved and the employees can come up with ideas and methods to reach these goals and objectives. This style is not regarded as the best style to apply when urgent decisions need to be made that are quite critical to the business (EDUCBA, 2018:6).

This is the most preferable leadership style in many organisations. A democratic leadership style promotes responsibility sharing during the course of action regarding daily tasks and during meetings. These leaders can delegate tasks and projects to their subordinates, empowering them

with authority and also motivating them to be committed to their responsibilities. Leaders with a democratic leadership style will not make important decisions without getting the dedication. They will give unaffected approval and delegate commitments. Employees' point of view is regarded as important while delegating tasks, and these leaders prefer to take employees' suggestions into consideration. This can be seen to take on tasks in teams where resources are distributed and organisations are not centralised. Democratic leaders believe that everybody contributes equally towards achieving results, regardless of their ability and/or skill. This type of leadership style can delay its direct procedure and outcome when urgent measures and action are required (Mohiuddin, 2017:23-24).

The democratic leadership style was found to be a determinant of the level of employee performance in an organisation. This type of leadership style is a powerful source of management development and considered to be effective. It is suggested that, when organisations are faced with new challenges, a democratic leadership style can be effective to improve performance. A democratic leadership style has also demonstrated an increase in employee performance and employee satisfactions. Employees are also more likely to cooperate and commit when led by a democratic leader. The need for leaders to follow strict rules and regulations can be reduced, leading to low employee absenteeism and turnover. The study on the literature of democratic leadership styles reported that a democratic leadership style substantially impacts organisational performance and recommended that this type of leadership style should be practised more in organisations and other areas. Employers should motivate employees to participate in decision-making, affecting both the employees and the organisation in general (Odumegwu, 2019:129-135).

In a study conducted to describe the role of democratic leadership and transformational leadership, it proved to have a significant relationship with the performance of employees of the banking institutions. It was reported that democratic leadership has a significant positive relationship towards the transformational leadership style and that there is a positive association between the employees' performance and a democratic leadership style. The growth of the organisation increases when the leadership style well suits the organisational goals and objectives. The leadership style applied can help organisations to understand employee needs, facilitating improved performance. This also motivates employees towards achieving goals (Agarwal, 2020:1-12)

For this study, a democratic leadership style is on a consultation basis where the employees, also to be referred to as subordinates, are included in decision-making. Democratic leaders value relationships, and employees have the freedom to come up with ideas and have value-adding

discussions with their manager where the manager considers the employees' input and takes the final decisions based on the 'majority vote'.

2.2.3 Laisses-faire leadership style

In the laisses-flair leadership style, the manager gives employees complete free reign from decision-making to how actions will be completed. The manager will supply some information, but then leaves the employees to do as they please. Here, the lack of engagement leads to a gradual decline in effectiveness as there is no guidance or structure given to employees with these types of managers. Although it seems like a 'do not care' leadership style, it does lead to a relaxed working environment (Bucata & Rizescu, 2016:163).

These managers are good in encouraging employees to develop their creative ideas and strategies to grow and develop. There are, however, times when the manager will 'plunge into action' when required. Employees can address their problems and solutions and the manager will keep himself informed about all activities and will step in when there is a hold-up of some sort. It develops a sense of responsibility and motivation, and employees feel loyal towards the organisation. This leadership style can also, in some cases, become difficult when having to take responsibility (EDUCBA, 2018:7).

This leadership style is also known as the 'hands-off' style. They provide 'little or no direction' and offer no guidance to employees. These leaders allow employees the freedom to do as they see fit. Employees are authorised and empowered to make their own decisions and set goals. They are also left to resolve problems and are not required to consult the leader to input or guidance. This leadership style will be effective when employees are highly skilled, experienced and educated and/or where employees take pride in their work, can be trusted and have the ambition to succeed without the assistance on the leader (Khan *et al.*, 2015:87-92).

This style is also described as avoiding making decisions and failing to take a managing responsibility and usually classified as being negative because it is seen as being avoidant (Sudha *et al.*, 2016:111-120).

A study was conducted to determine whether transformational and laisses-faire leadership styles are associated with anxiety among subordinates. A sample comprising 1 149 Norwegian employees was used, and the study was conducted over a six-month time interval between baseline and follow-up assessments. Results obtained indicated that transformational leadership is negatively correlated to state anxiety and that laisses-faire leadership is positively related to

state anxiety. This is an indication that a *laissez-faire* leadership style can cause anxiety in employees (Nielsen *et al.*, 2019:137-155).

Employees (60) were randomly selected to determine how the success of a Bangladesh organisation is impacted by leadership styles in 2019. The researcher designed and administered a questionnaire, with open- and closed-ended questions, to collect data. The results of the study indicated that a *laissez-faire* leadership style did not have a major effect on the performance of employees. This is confirming the tendency that adopting a *laissez-faire* leadership style is ideal when employees have a good understanding of their roles and have strong analytical skills as well as when managers trust their employees, not blaming each other for mistakes in any case (Jony *et al.*, 2019:28-38).

2.3 EFFECT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

The effect a leadership style has on employees and the effectiveness of applying a specific leadership style in a situation at the workplace can be demonstrated in various research studies.

A study conducted in 2015 on leadership styles, practised by managers of several universities and high schools from Timisoara in Romania, indicated that the authoritarian leadership style (autocratic) proved to be ineffective compared to managers using the democratic leadership style. In this study, the definition of leadership style was described as “the way of working with people” and a survey was sent out to employees of these institutions to determine what leadership styles they perceive from their managers. A democratic leadership style was experienced by 51% of the participants and indicated they were involved in decision-making. Democratic leadership style also turned out to be more dominant in the economic (61%) and agricultural (54%) profiles. Participants (68%) from the technological profile indicated that they are faced with an autocratic leadership style. These participants reported an autocratic leadership style to be ineffective as it generates tensions, dissatisfaction and frustration. Recommendations to the managers were to consider adopting a more open managerial policy to enable improved communication with employees and transparency when making decisions. Furthermore, it was found that a lack of communication, between managers and subordinates and also between employees, leads to the non-fulfilment of objectives, indicating that communication, relationship and negotiation skills also play a role in performance and success (Sirbu *et al.*, 2015:555-559). In this study, participants were also asked which leadership style they would adopt if they were managers. It was found that “73% of the participants from the theoretic high school said that if they were managers, they would adopt the democratic style. The same answer was given by the participants from the university

environment, but the percentages are different: 82% from the Agricultural University and 57% from the Economic University". "The participants from the technological high school would adopt a liberal style (51%) and only 47% would adopt a democratic style".

After determining what leadership style is perceived or experienced by employees, the logical next question would be about the significance of the employees' perception of the leadership style in terms of contentedness and satisfaction. This question was addressed in a study to determine the relationship between the perceived leadership style and the level of contentedness felt by employees, the level of satisfaction felt by employees, and the tendency of employees to recommend the organisation as an employer. The research included 500 participants, mainly in public universities, located in Poland, collecting data by requesting participants to complete questionnaires. It was found that 17.65% of all respondents felt very highly satisfied. Respondents who reported that they were very unhappy were found to be fewer than every one-hundredth and 18.45% were dissatisfied. Here, one in every third employee reported that they experienced their supervisor as applying a partially democratic leadership style. Some respondents (56.86%) indicated it as partially democratic. The rest of the respondents indicated it to be to a smaller, or greater extent, autocratic and the smaller group experienced it as completely autocratic. Here, it was concluded that the leadership style is closely related to the satisfaction, or the lack thereof, of employees. Certain elements of autocracy were found that suggest it does not evoke dissatisfaction and created a level of satisfaction where it was also reported that the democratic style frequently induces intense conflicting emotions. This indicated that dissatisfaction is not only because of the leadership style perceived, but also because of other factors. A perceived leadership style, as fully and partially democratic, here, had the strongest correlation to the highest level of satisfaction. To conclude: By applying an autocratic leadership style, employees will be partially dissatisfied; whereas, by applying a democratic leadership style, the employees will be highly satisfied. Between leadership style and satisfaction, indicating the level of satisfaction of the employees' met expectations, it was found that 61.17% of participants felt partial satisfaction and related to the percentage of participant regarding the leadership style as complete democratic.

Similarly, the respondents who experienced a fully autocratic style indicated that they did not feel satisfied. Summarising the results, it can be said that participants who perceive a completely or partially democratic leadership style are found to be completely satisfied or quite satisfied. Participants who experienced an autocratic leadership style reported to be unsatisfied or the level of satisfaction could not be determined. This concludes that if a manager applies an autocratic style, the level of an employee's satisfaction is more likely to decrease than to increase by applying a democratic leadership style and is different in comparison to the level of

contentedness. Finally, whether the participants would recommend the organisation as an employer, it was reported that participants who experience a fully democratic leadership style recommended working at the organisation in a more or less positive way, whereas participants who defined the leadership style as completely autocratic or partially democratic reported to be relatively determined not to be employed by such an organisation (Baruk, 2015:1-18).

Organisations need to determine leadership styles that best suit the business to improve performance and organisational prosperity. Effective leadership is crucial for organisational success and can aid organisations to improve operations and efficient resource utilisation. Leadership is an essential component for organisations' success as it helps to create a committed workforce, eager to take on challenges and drive improvement. Leaders also have the ability to increase organisational productivity, but the extent to which a leader builds success depends on the leader's leadership style and the manner in which the leader changes the environment for employees to perform at their best (Pavlos & Nikos, 2019:82-92).

Pavlos and Nikos (2019) conducted a study to determine the leadership style that managers adopt in the banking sector of Cyprus and to establish whether the employees consider the specific leadership style to be effective. The study comprised 493 participants, which included employees from different branches. Only autocratic and democratic leadership styles were assessed. They reported that the majority of employees experience an autocratic leadership style in the organisation, indicating that the respondents perceive an autocratic leadership style from their managers. Participants were also asked about how effective they will rate each leadership style. Participants indicated that a democratic leadership style is more effective. In their study, it was important to note that managers directed younger, less experienced employees more strictly than employees with more work experience who were treated more leniently by their managers. They argued that leaders observed in this study "adjust their leadership style according to the age groups of their subordinates" (Pavlos & Nikos, 2019:82-92).

2.4 LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction indicates the degree to which people are satisfied with their job (Tajedin *et al.*, 2017:147-154). Serumaga-Zake *et al.* (2015:164-183) reported that there exists an important relationship between employee satisfaction and job-related attributes as well as leadership (or manager) -related attributes. A number of important drivers of employee satisfaction include "a well-managed, supportive and prosperous work environment, on-going professional development, career growth potential, challenging and exciting work, teamwork,

acknowledgement of work well done, work life balance and the work culture". The study showed that leadership is an important determinant of employee satisfaction. Key drivers were indicated to be mostly job related, which means that leadership is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient factor to achieve overall employee satisfaction. It was found that both leadership and employee factors should be well balanced to achieve employee-leadership equilibrium, indicating employees should be well looked after by leadership to deliver mandates. It was also indicated that employees also plan to do what they are hired to do (Serumaga-Zake *et al.*, 2015:164-183).

Conclusions made by Serumaga-Zake *et al.* (2015:164-183) indicated that there is a direct relationship between overall employee satisfaction and leadership attributed and practices. Some of the attributes that drove overall employee satisfaction include open discussion and resolution of conflicts, good company culture, moral and ethical consequences of decisions are considered, satisfaction with pay compared to colleagues who do the same job, other employees adhere to agreements, and agreements between employees and leadership are adhered to within the company. When manager-related attributes were isolated from job-related attributes, the manager (leadership)-related attributes found as key drivers of overall employee satisfaction include talking about most important values and beliefs, explaining the vision of the company, talking optimistically about the future, providing assistance and giving feedback (Serumaga-Zake *et al.*, 2015:164-183).

A study conducted to examine how participative (democratic) and achievement-oriented (autocratic) leadership styles influence employee job satisfaction among employees reporting to middle-level managers found that a participative leadership style revealed a significantly significant relationship with job satisfaction of employees. It indicated that employee job satisfaction can be predicted by the level of participative leadership displayed by middle management. Considering achievement-oriented leadership style to be a leader that "gives the employees challenging performance targets" and "seeks continuous performance from their employees", expecting "high standard performance". In an environment where employees are open to autocracy, this type of leadership style can be effective and works well when the tasks are simple and clear. It was found that an achievement-oriented leadership style demonstrated a positive significant correlation with the level of job satisfaction of employees when leaders show that they are confident in the employees' ability to succeed when given challenging goals and when leaders constantly give feedback to employees (Mwaisaka *et al.*, 2019:45-69).

Another study, conducted on Greek bank employees, indicated that the employees' level of job satisfaction was moderate to high when they reported to be mostly satisfied with their immediate supervisors, the environment and the task they had to perform. They also reported a lower level of job satisfaction when considering employee progression and opportunities in the organisation.

The leadership style, displayed by the immediate supervisor, was found to be a predictor of job satisfaction and that leadership style displayed by the immediate supervisor had the biggest effect on employee job satisfaction. There was a positive correlation between the immediate supervisor and a transformational leadership style, whereby it was evident that employees wish for their supervisors to value their opinions, motivate them to express their individuality and inspire them to grow. This type of leadership is related to a democratic leadership style (Belias & Koustelios, 2015:101-110).

Al-Sada *et al.* (2017:163-188) expected that work motivation, job satisfaction and organisational commitment would be highly impacted by organisational culture and leadership style, but found this not to be the case. No significant relationship was found to exist between leadership style and organisational culture in relation to employee satisfaction, employee motivation and employee commitment. This study only indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between a supportive culture and job satisfaction, supportive culture and organisational commitment, participative-supportive leadership and job satisfaction, and directive leadership and job satisfaction (Al-Sada *et al.*, 2017:163-188).

According to Elshout *et al.* (2013:823-837), understanding the link between leadership style and employee satisfaction found that “employees felt that managers should not control or micromanage their employees and should rather give them more responsibility and autonomy”. The study revealed that the leader who demonstrated traits of a transformational leader could be related to employees who reported that they are highly satisfied and had a good record of attendance, whereas the transactional leader revealed the opposite. The main finding in the study indicated that “The worst department (department B) had a manager with a clearly identified transactional style, whereas the best department (department A) was managed by a paragon of transformational leadership” (Elshout *et al.*, 2013:823-837).

Abram and Grant (2008:11-23) reported that the four domains on employee satisfaction and include “worker attributes”, “role related attributes”, “facility characteristics” and “leadership competencies”. Employees’ perception of facility leadership was found to have the greatest effect on global job satisfaction. Level of employee satisfaction can be predicted by the leaders’ level of competence, and leadership competencies have a greater effect on employee satisfaction than worker attributes, role-related attributes or facility characteristics. Caring leadership competencies have the greatest effect on employee satisfaction followed by focused visionary, strategic management, supporting change and communication. Facility management demonstrates caring for employees and that they are valued by showing appreciation for their work. This is likely to improve job satisfaction in employees. They concluded that leadership with a “caring” attitude toward employees is critical (Abraham & Grant, 2008:11-28).

One study that involved 218 employees and used a questionnaire as research tool about leadership style according to the Likert theory and JDI questionnaires about job satisfaction, reported meaningful relationships between leadership styles and job satisfaction (Tajedin *et al.*, 2017:147-154).

A term defined as locomotion orientation describes aspects of “a person’s self-regulation concerned with the movement from one state to another”. Individuals with “strong locomotion concerns” want to act and “get started” on tasks “even if it means not considering all the available options”. In contrast, another self-regulatory mode, defined as the mode of assessment, involves individuals concerned about “critically evaluating entities or states”, such as goals or means in relation to alternatives. Often individuals themselves determine how they pursue goals in a manner that they perceive will be most effective in reaching their goals, whether it is locomotive or assessment. People in a position to control individuals or employees can also influence the direction of employees to reach their goals. The directions individuals take to reach goals and perform tasks are influenced by the diverse styles of leadership that can either support or disturb they dynamics of followers to pursue their goals (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2007:137-149).

Individuals with stronger locomotion orientation preferred a more forceful leader, also seen as directive or autocratic, whereas individuals with stronger assessment orientation preferred a leader who is more advisory or participative (democratic). A significant positive interaction exists between subordinates’ locomotion orientation and their supervisor’s directive leadership style, indicating an increased job satisfaction with an increase in their supervisor’s directive leadership style. There is also a significant positive interaction between subordinates’ assessment orientation and their supervisor’s participative leadership style. This indicates that the stronger the subordinates’ assessment orientation, the more their job satisfaction increases with an increase in their supervisor’s participative style. It was also shown that the level of job satisfaction decreases when the regulatory mode orientation of the employee and supervisor leadership style is misaligned (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2007:137-149).

An autocratic or directive leadership style significantly affects the commitment of employees towards the organisation. Job satisfaction was also shown to be negatively affected in a study conducted involving high school principals. A participatory or democratic leadership style has been reported to affect the commitment employees have towards an organisation and employee job satisfaction in a positive way. However, job satisfaction was not proven to facilitate the commitment of the headmasters’ commitment towards the organisation and a directive leadership style. Job satisfactions has a positive effect on headmasters’ commitment to the organisation when a participative leadership style is evident (Banjarnahor *et al.*, 2018:869-888).

2.5 LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Employee turnover is a worldwide issue and is becoming a concern. High turnover of employees can be challenging to organisations considering that employee turnover has a financial impact on organisations and operations are also impacted with employees leaving the company and the process to replace employees can be a timeous exercise. An organisation's competitive advantage can be negatively affected, contributing to the lowered confidence level of employees. Productivity and the quality of work are among a number of factors that affect organisations when employees leave the company. An employee's decision to leave an organisation is influenced by a number of factors and include the organisation's management, organisational structure, employee's attitude and potential, external job demand, employee's own assessment of job-related organisational decisions, pay, job satisfaction, experience in the organisation, job enrichment, job stability, job prospects, pay compensation, social support of the supervisor and organisational politics. The strong factors influence how an employee experiences job satisfaction and remains at an organisation, but it was demonstrated that leadership style had a negative relationship on employees and significantly affected turnover intention (Sulamuthu & Yusof, 2018:301-305).

In a study where leadership style effect on employees' turnover intention was measured, it was found that leaders using a transactional leadership style affect 19.8% of employees' turnover intention. Turnover intention was reported to be negatively affected by a transformational leadership style to an extent of 10.5%. It was found that laisses-faire leadership style of a direct supervisor can negatively affect employees' turnover intention to an extent to 70.3%. This study confirmed that the leadership style had a significant effect of an employee's turnover intention, whether positive or negative. Furthermore, it was concluded that immediate supervisors who exhibit a transformational leadership style or a transactional leadership style have the potential to reduce employee turnover intention. Immediate supervisors who exhibit a laisses-fair leadership style have a positive effect on the employees' turnover intention, resulting in employees much more likely to leave when reporting to leaders with laisses-fair leadership style (Sajid *et al.*, 2020:487-495).

"Abusive supervision is another factor that may be relevant in the turnover equation. Managers have much greater control over how they interact with employees than they do over many other human resource management practices" (Tews & Stafford, 2020:1318-1334).

Abusive supervision was referred to as a subordinate's "perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal; behaviours, excluding physical contact" in a study investigating the consequences of abusive supervision

(Tepper, 2000:178-190). Tepper also explained that “one individual could view a supervisor’s behaviour as abusive in one context and as non-abusive in another context”. Two subordinates can also perceive a specific supervisor’s behaviour in contrast to each other. In this study, it was reported that subordinates whose supervisors were more abusive according to the subordinate’s perception, were more likely to leave the organisation. They were also more negative towards their jobs and had a pessimistic view towards their life and the organisation. These employees were found to be emotionally stressed and experienced their work life and family life to be conflicting (Tepper, 2000:178-190).

Tews and Stafford (2020) demonstrated that when employees are confronted with abusive leaders, they are more likely to leave an organisation. It was also found that younger employees are more likely to leave an employer, due to an abusive leader, than older employees. This phenomenon might be seen because older employees have more responsibilities and commitments, whereas younger employees might not be bound by such responsibilities. Therefore, it will be advised that leadership should focus on the style of leadership they apply in the workplace to reduce negative or abusive leadership (Tews & Stafford, 2020:1318-1334).

When employees experience a feeling of unjust treatment, it also contributes to employee turnover, especially when employees feel overworked and underpaid. A feeling where an employee is of the opinion that he/she is producing work of good quality and standard, but does not get remunerated in accordance with the work delivery compared to other employees. Again, the perceived feeling of fairness develops psychological strain on the employee, which can lead to employees losing trust in their leadership. This lack of trust leads to accusations of lack of integrity, and directly affects employee turnover in the long run (Alkhawaja, 2017:23-25). It was also indicated that another reason for employee turnover relating to leadership style is the lack of alignment between an individual’s goal and the goals of the organisation.

From the literature review done by Alkhawaja (2017:28-29), it was concluded that it is important for leadership “viewed as an influential, adaptive and motivational relationship with self and others” to encourage environment that is motivating to their employees. Leaders should try to understand their followers’ qualities and needs. Even though financial benefits are great, an employee can still feel uninspired, even alienated because they do not feel part of a group or when the leader does not recognise the hardworking employees (Alkhawaja, 2017:28-29).

A study conducted that analysed the role of three organisational stressors on the relationship between leader member exchange (LMX) and turnover intention found that each of the stressors partially mediates the LMX-turnover intention relationship. In this study negative stressors were analysed and despite the negative impact of the stressors, the LMX-turnover intention relationship

remains significant. This study confirmed the significance of LMX to prevent organisational stressors to have a negative impact on turnover intention. These relationships play an important role in developing attitudes and emotions toward maintaining positive relationships. It was reported that the supervisor has an impact on the employee and how the employee perceives the organisational variables. Management's failure to encourage and cultivate positive relationships can be rectified by identifying the need for managers to be trained in leadership and the need for managers to improve their relationships with their subordinates (Claudia *et al.*, 2012:331-348).

Greggory (2019:8) stated that employees leave their employer for various reasons. While money is important, that is rarely the number one reason for leaving a company. Conducting a good exit interview can lead to uncovering the actual reasons for an employee to leave a company. These reasons include their immediate supervisor and the lack of potential to advance. Three main reasons were uncovered, which include money, conflict and people skills. In this article, Gregory explained that money, whether it is the first response, is a good reason, which is also regarded as a default answer. Conflict indicated the behavioural or personality conflicts with co-workers or supervisors and found this to be a common factor for people to leave a company. Although conflict can be seen as positive, conflict can become detrimental between personality styles. People can be trained to adjust to different behaviours and enable them to understand conflict and teach them skills to handle conflict. Lastly, he indicated people skills as an important factor that causes employees to resign. It was indicated that one of the main reasons why employees leave is due to management with poor people skills and employers should ask "are my line leaders good with people?" He also argued that managers were promoted because they did well in their previous roles, but it does not mean they have what it takes to lead a group of people. When employees were asked to name some of the top three favourable traits in their best manager, 90% liked it to people-based skills (Greggory, 2019:7-10).

An investigation into the relationship between leadership style, employee turnover and counterproductive work behaviours was done on employees from first-line supervisors to corporate officers. Employees were requested to complete questionnaires. Results indicated that the relationship between an autocratic leadership style and employee turnover intention was found to be significant. This implies that employees perceive that an autocratic leadership style from their supervisors will lead to a higher intention to quit. This finding supported findings of Caillier (2011) and Mbah and Ikemefuna (2011), stating that employees leave an organisation or consider alternatives if not consulted during decision-making processes (Puni *et al.*, 2016:1-8).

Puni (2016) also found that there is a significant negative relationship between democratic leadership style and turnover intentions. A significant negative relationship was also found to exist between a laissez-faire leadership style and turnover intention. With these findings, it can

be said that employees who perceive their leaders' leadership style as democratic or *laissez-faire* are less likely to leave the company or to quickly compare to employees reporting to an autocratic leader. Autocratic leadership styles induce turnover intentions and counterproductive behaviours in employees, whereas democratic and *laissez-faire* leaders decrease turnover intention in employees. This is because of an autocratic leader's reliance on production instead of people. The democratic leadership style indicated that employees are less likely to leave their employer and also shows that employees are less counterproductive. A *laissez-faire* leadership style has proven to have a negative effect on employee turnover, but employees with *laissez-faire* leaders showed more counterproductive behaviours due to the apathetic nature of this leadership style. It was also recommended to adopt democratic decision-making practices in organisations. This includes subordinates in decision-making, increasing self-belonging drive and commitment of employees toward organisational objectives (Puni *et al.*, 2016:1-8).

In contrast to the study conducted by Puni (2016), Monama (2015) reported both results that confirm and contradict results reported in previous studies. The objective was to determine whether a relationship can be established between employee turnover intention and the leadership style applied by the manager. Results indicated that 9% of the variance in turnover was contributed to autocratic and *laissez-faire* management styles. This study indicated the relationship between employee turnover and leadership style to be significant. Although previous studies reported that employees do not prefer autocratic leadership styles and link this leadership style to employee intention to leave, Monama (2015) established that employees stay in the organisation even if their managers display autocratic leadership styles. This is related to the concept that autocratic leaders are result-oriented, which keeps employees focused. *Laissez-faire* leadership style had a significant relationship with employee turnover intention, and it was found that employees expect their managers to guide them and give them feedback. Although they feel more empowered to perform their duties with a *laissez-faire* leader, "employees would rather leave the organisation than work in an environment that lacks discipline" when under pressure to meet customer needs (Monama, 2015:63-64).

2.6 LEADERSHIP STYLE AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND/OR PERFORMANCE

Employee performance can be defined as "the extent to which an organisational member contributes to achieving the goals of the organisation" (Islam & bin Mohd Rasad, 2006:163-176). It is the achievement by employees in carrying out a task to meet desired goals in accordance with organisational targets (Dewi & Wibowo, 2020:2037-2044).

The performance and growth of an employee are immensely impacted by leadership style, which leads to a positive attitude towards achieving organisational goals. Leadership style plays an important role in improving employee performance, motivation and job assurance (Mohiuddin, 2017:18-30).

Mohiuddin's study, to explore the influence of different leadership styles on employees' performances, investigated how autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional and participative leadership styles influence worker execution. The study reported that, when the employees are not confident with what is expected of them and employees who are less informed, an autocratic leadership style will be more effective. An autocratic style will also be beneficial in situations where employees misuse authority or when decision-making is done by a single person. For innovative problem-solving, achieving tasks and goals and conducting meetings for departments working on improvements, a democratic leadership style will be better suited for the situation. Participative leadership style will be suited in organisations with experienced and talented employees who are innovative and creative (Mohiuddin, 2017:18-30).

The leadership style has a major effect on employees' attitudes, behaviours and the commitment employees have towards an organisation. Committed employees are what organisations aim to attract and retain. Managers in organisations are required to adopt effective leadership styles to motivate employees to perform and achieve set goals. A good leader understands how important it is for the organisation that employees achieve organisational goals and to have employees who are motivated to achieve these goals. "Different leadership styles bring about different consequences, which have direct or indirect impact on the attitude and behaviours of the employees" (Velu *et al.*, 2017:59-69).

Iqbal *et al.* (2015) investigated the effect of the different leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and participative) on employees' performance. Their objectives were "to explore leadership styles that contributes to employee performance", "to explain the relationship between the effective leadership styles and performance of employees", "to know the significance of leadership styles in the employee performance" and "to develop the model that shows relationship among different styles and employee performance" (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015:1-6). It was reported that different situations required different leadership styles. In situations where decisions need to be made in a short period of time and where quick work is required, it might be most effective to apply an autocratic leadership style. In contrast, for highly motivated and aligned employees possessing similar levels of skill, a participative or democratic leadership style may be more effective. They reported that an autocratic leadership style creates a feeling of inferiority in employees to do tasks and make decisions as the leader is the only decision-maker and the one to give orders. Participative style of leadership has a more positive effect on employee performance where the employee feels

empowered and confident. Democratic leaders allow some discretionary power to employees resulting in their performance to be better than employees with an autocratic leader. Situations where autocratic leadership style will be appropriate are when employees are new, with employees misusing their authority and when one person is responsible for decision-making and implementation. A consultative style will yield better performance during creative problem-solving, during improvement meetings, training people for leadership roles and when in need of good performance of day-to-day tasks. When an organisation has competent and talented employees, during evaluation sessions, motivating top performers and when in need of innovative and creative work, it is more appropriate for the leader to have a more participative leadership style (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015:1-6).

Leadership style, applied in organisations, helps in the understanding of employees' needs, who work in different departments and at different levels. Providing employees with a better environment motivates them and performance is impacted positively to achieve goals. Organisations need to establish the leadership style required that will be appropriate for improved employee performance, leading towards organisational accomplishments. Results from a study conducted in the banking industry described that a democratic leadership style has a significant relationship with the performance of employees (Agarwal, 2020:1-14).

In contrast with some of the findings in literature, a study including employees in the district council of Kampala Capital City Authority, reported that there is no relationship between autocratic leadership style and employee performance. This phenomenon is related to other research findings where employees are obliged to obey, implement and do not disagree with their leaders. In these cases, supervisors are respected and obeyed. Here, the leaders make the decisions and subordinates are obliged to implement. It was also found that a *laissez-faire* leadership style, associated with unproductiveness, avoiding decision-making, uninvolved and not participating in decision-making, showed no relationship with employee performance. The study did, however, conclude that leadership style does have an impact on employee performance and involvement in the organisation, and that good leadership will yield better employee performance and involvement within the organisation (Asasirwe, 2019:34-37).

Goren (2018) conducted a study to determine the effect of leadership styles on employee productivity. The study revealed that the leadership style a manager applies can affect employee productivity. The results reported that the relationship between employee performance and an autocratic leadership style is positively significant as well as the relationship between employee performance and a democratic leadership style. Findings, however, indicated that no positive significant relationship exists between a *laissez-faire* leadership style and employee productivity. It was recommended that leaders be more aware of subordinates and organisational needs as a

whole and to encourage employees to see the opportunities and challenges around them in a more creative outlook (Goren, 2018:428-432).

The influence of leadership style on employee performance and turnover was determined in a study using interviews as the measuring tool. In the responses, it revealed that most of the participants felt their supervisors' leadership style impacted their motivation and performance. Most participants indicated that their immediate supervisor's leadership style motivated them to perform better in their environments. It was evident that some of the employees feel driven to exceed expectations and that they feel part of the team and share different perspectives that aid in problem-solving. Participants also indicated that they are more positive about not being micro-managed and they enjoy the freedom to work independently. Knowing that their supervisors empower them and support them also results in the employees to work harder. Allowing employees to do things the way they want also indicated that their supervisor's leadership style is motivating and they perform better. Motivation to feel the need to do something differently or be better was evident from the responses in the study. Although leadership styles can have positive effects on employees' motivation and performance, there are also negative effects that exist. The study reported instances where the employee was not motivated to do other work beyond expectation due to no recognition or any opportunities. Another participant indicated that performance is lacking as the supervisor's leadership style creates a feeling of "walking on eggshells". This employee indicated that this cultivates a feeling of holding back and the higher level of confidence in the past has been impacted (Hernandez, 2020:96-97).

Leadership style enhances the relationship between a leader and a follower and also has an impact on the performance of employees. The relationship between three leadership styles, transactional, transformational and laissez-faire, showed that as the level of transactional leadership increases, the level of team performance also increases. This leadership style is typically results-driven and can use rewards and punishments as a means to motivate employees to reach organisational goals. The laissez-faire leadership style received a lower ranking compared to the other two leadership styles in this study and this phenomenon was confirmed by the characteristics of a laissez-faire leader. This type of leadership style allows their employees the freedom to make their own decision and use initiative to complete tasks and solve problems. These leaders place no importance on the relationship between themselves and their employees, and also show no desire to improve organisational performance. Such a leader is satisfied with their own needs and is not involved with the activities of the employees. Employees who require leaders to tell them what to do, to set targets and expect results tend to lack ownership when reporting to leaders with a laissez-faire leadership style. The transformational leader motivates employees as they are inspiring, resulting in higher performance. Findings reported that

transformational and transactional leadership styles have a positive relationship with job performance. This positive relationship is also due to the quality of the relationship between the leader and subordinates (Ohemeng Frank *et al.*, 2018:274-296).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology used in the study will be defined in terms of the approach followed in conducting the research, the research procedure to select the target population and sampling method, the measuring instrument design, data collection method and the techniques used in the data analyses.

Ethical considerations will be addressed in this chapter considering the measuring instrument and data collection techniques.

A discussion on the measuring instrument will be presented in this chapter. A summary of the biographical characteristics of the participants will be presented, statistical data analysis methods are explained, and the research questions and hypothesis will be presented.

3.2 Research approach

Kothari *et al.* (2004:1) refer to research as “the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solution(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalisations for some theoretical formulation” (Kothari, 2004:1).

Quantitative research is very effective to answer the “what” or “how” questions and focus on measurable data. Qualitative methods are effective to uncover behaviours and trends. Although it will quantify what people prefer, it will not provide insight into why they prefer something and how they feel, think or act. To understand the motivation behind certain preferences, a qualitative method should be used that includes interviews and open-ended questionnaires (Goertzen, 2017:12).

Quantitative research is described by Bryman (2016:149) as “the collection of numerical data, comparing the theory with the research”. Although it is common that a hypothesis is deduced from the theory and is tested, it does not require the specification of a hypothesis, but instead, the theory reflects a set of concerns relating to the data collected. Hypothesis specification and testing are more likely to be found in scientific research, but are not completely omitted from survey research and are usually based on a cross-sectional design (Bryman, 2016:149).

The research methodology used for this study is a quantitative research approach to collect data in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire has closed-ended questions and the respondents' reasoning for selecting certain answers was not investigated. The data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using statistical methods, which include SPSS, and statistical information will be presented and discussed.

3.3 Research procedure

Primary data collection techniques were used as the most appropriate data collection method. Primary data collection is where the researcher collects the data himself using methods such as surveys, direct observation, interviews or logs. This method of data collection is very reliable because the researcher will know where the data comes from and how it was collected. It allows access to original and unedited information (Sachdeva, 2009:116).

For this study, an electronic survey questionnaire was used as a suitable method to collect primary data. Research surveys, as instruments of data collection, are often related to cross-sectional design as a survey is regarded, by most people, to be closely related to questionnaires and structured interviews. When conducting survey design-based research, there are, however, many other research methods, including data collecting by structured observations, analyses of content, gathering official statistical data and using diaries. Cross-sectional research design is also explained as "the collection of data in a single point in time to be able to collect quantitative or quantifiable data with two or more variables" (Bryman, 2016:154)

The identified organisation was approached and granted permission to access the employees of two specific business units. An appointment was made with the Vice-president: Human Resources, Vice-president: Water and Ash and Vice-president: Technical Support, where the goals and objectives of this study were explained. The benefits this study will add to the organisation were explained, and issues of ethics and anonymity were addressed in the discussions. After consent was obtained, the employees' information could be accessed from the organisation's information system.

In order to conveniently reach participants, an electronic survey questionnaire was prepared on SoGoSurvey.com by the researcher. Once permission was granted, the questionnaire was sent out via a group email. The email included an introduction to the study and the objectives this study intends to reach were described. The intent of the research study was defined and respondents were ensured that participation is voluntary and responses will be kept confidential. In the email was a link to the online survey questionnaire whereon respondents can click and be directed to

the online survey questionnaire. Furthermore, a quick response code (QR Code) was also added in the email for respondents who wish to scan the code and complete the survey questionnaire on their smart device.

A three-week period was allowed for respondents to complete the online survey questionnaire. After one week, a reminder email was sent out to all respondents and again after two weeks. All responses were gathered and stored at the SoGoSurvey data collection point and could be exported to an Excel format that was pre-processed and sent to the NWU Statistical Consultancy Services, where data was analysed and interpreted.

Electronic questionnaires were the best option to send to respondents due to the COVID-19 pandemic the world faced in 2020 and new regulations implemented in the country.

3.4 Ethical considerations

A research design that safeguards against causing mental or physical harm to participants should be highly valued. Ethical issues in research reflect important moral concerns about the practice of responsible behaviour. Careful consideration must be given to research situations where a possibility exists to possibly cause “physical or psychological harm, exploitation, invasion of privacy and/or loss of dignity” (Sachdeva, 2009:8).

The researcher followed the process of ethical clearance as set out by the NWU. Letters were sent to the business units to request access to the employees. An informed consent letter was attached to the participants’ email as background information and reasons for the study. Participation was confidential and no names were included or requested during the study. Participation was voluntary, and no employee was forced to answer any question he/she is not comfortable in answering.

The organisation will only receive a copy of the final dissertation on request. No information, excluded from the final report, will be made available to the organisation or any individual. Demographic information was only obtained with permission to describe the profile of the participants.

The NWU’s Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences approved this study to continue.

3.5 Target population and sampling

Sampling may be defined as “the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality on the basis of which a judgement or influence about the aggregate or totality is made” (Kothari, 2004:152).

The “universe” refers to the total units in the field of research, whereas the populations is the total units from which information is desired. All units in any field of study make up the universe and all the elementary units (based on certain characteristics) make up the population. Often times, no difference exists between the population and the universe and the two terms are taken as interchangeable. The population can be finite if it consists of a fixed number of units or infinite where it is theoretically impossible to observe all units. The sample is the elementary units or the group or cluster of such units that may form the basis of the sampling process, in which case they are called sampling units (Kothari, 2004:153).

3.5.1 Target population

The population identified for the research survey was two business units in a chemical manufacturing company in Secunda, Mpumalanga, South Africa. Accessibility to the population was granted by the vice-presidents of each department as well as the vice-president of the human resources department. Access was granted to employees from middle-management level downward, currently employed in the technical support department in the organisation. Access was also granted to middle management and first-line supervisor employees in the water and ash department within the organisation. The organisation is situated in Secunda, Mpumalanga, South Africa during the research year of 2020. Because access was only granted to two of the organisation’s departments, the whole group of employees was approached and requested to participate in the research study.

The units of analysis include all middle managers, who report to the senior managers in the technical support business unit, including their direct reports. Area managers, from the water and ash business unit, are included in this study with all foremen reporting to them. Both males and females of all age groups and ethnic backgrounds were included.

The survey was sent to the following employees

- Area managers
- Foremen

- Technical support employees, including middle managers, first-line managers and direct reports

3.5.2 Sample

A purposive (judgemental, selective or subjective), non-probability sampling strategy was followed to select the units of analysis. This selection strategy relies on the researcher's judgement to select the units of analysis. Different purposive techniques include the following (LAERD, 2012):

Maximum variation sampling:	Also described as heterogeneous sampling and used to capture a wide range of perspectives of the unit being researched.
Homogeneous sampling:	A homogeneous sample is typically selected when the research question has specific characteristics of a particular group of interest.
Typical case sampling:	Used when the researcher is interested in the normality/typicality of the units. It cannot be used to make generalisations to a population, but could be an illustration of other similar samples.
Extreme case sampling:	Used to focus on cases that are special or unusual, such as to highlight notable outcomes, failures or successes.
Total population sampling:	Selecting the whole population as the sample due to certain characteristics and can be used when the population is small, and a sample will not be representable.
Expert sampling:	When the research requires expert knowledge of a certain area of expertise.

Total population sampling was selected for this study as it fits the criteria that all units of analyses are individuals with their perceptions and expectations. The population is also relatively small, and should some units be excluded by using other sampling techniques, data might be inaccurate and insufficient to reach meaningful conclusions.

Total population sampling was also used due to accessibility to the population. Only two departments granted access to the researcher and all units who are allowed to be included in the study were requested to participate.

Results obtained from the study are only representative of the study population and assumptions and generalisations about the whole organisation will not be accurate. This will be a limitation to the study, and it is recommended to conduct the same research study on other business units to be able to include the organisation as a whole. For this study, findings will only represent the two business units.

The population of the two business units of the identified organisation made up the units of analysis and a sample size of 380 units was available. The sample included the whole population.

3.6 Measuring instrument

The measuring tool was an online survey questionnaire designed by the researcher to determine employee perception and expectation of management styles in their work environment. The questionnaire was developed based on the characteristics of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles as indicated in literature. The questionnaire was designed specifically for this study to find information regarding the perception and expectations of the selected employees.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

- Section 1: Demographic information
- Section 2: Employee perceptions
- Section 3: Employee expectations

The questions, in each section of the questionnaire, were structured for the participant to select one of three available statements. Each statement represented a different leadership style. For each question, the choices between answers, a), b) and c) correlated as follows:

- a) Autocratic leadership style
- b) Democratic leadership style
- c) Laissez-faire leadership style

For a respondent to select mostly (a) in section 2, it was assumed that an autocratic leader is his overall perception. If a participant selects mostly (b) in section 3, it is assumed that a democratic leader will be his overall or desired expectation.

The literature review conducted in this study gathered information of the characteristics of the three leadership styles. The questionnaire was then constructed, based on literature, to include the different characteristics in statements in the questionnaire.

For the questions in the questionnaire to be valid, characteristics of the three leadership styles was gathered during the literature review and questions were derived from the characteristics. Table 3-1, 3-2 and 3.3 indicates the questions and the resources used to structure the statements used in the questionnaire.

Table 3-1: Resources use for autocratic leadership style statements

QNr	Questions - Autocratic leadership style	Resources
6	My manager makes decision by himself	(Abdul <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Al Khajeh, 2018; Bucata & Rizescu, 2016; EDUCBA, 2018; Mohiuddin, 2017; Sudha <i>et al.</i> , 2016)
16	I would like my manager to make the decisions	
7	My manager knows it all and requires little input from me	
17	I would like my manager to be the most knowledgeable and not need suggestions	
8	My manager gives clear and exact orders	
18	I would like my manager to give clear and exact orders	
9	My manager punishes me when I make a mistake	
19	I would like my manager to punish mistakes	
10	My manager watches me closely when I perform tasks	
20	I would like my manager to monitor me closely when I perform tasks	
11	My manager motivates me using rewards and punishments	
21	I would like my manager to motivate me by rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour	
12	My manager gives me a sense of security	
22	I would like my manager to give me a sense of security	
13	My manager does not accept input from group members	
23	I would like my manager not to ask for inputs from the team or me	
14	My manager solves problems on his own	

24	I would like my manager to solve problems on his own	
15	My manager makes the best decisions	
25	I would like my manager to make the decisions; he is the best at it	

Table 3-2: Resources used for democratic leadership style statements

QNr	Questions - Democratic leadership style	Resources
6	My manager welcomes input to make decisions	(Agarwal, 2020; Bucata & Rizescu, 2016; EDUCBA, 2018; Mohiuddin, 2017; Odumegwu, 2019)
16	I would like my manager to listen to my input before making decisions	
7	My manager always include me to give suggestions	
17	I would like my manager to listen to my suggestions	
8	My manager give direction and support me with tasks and accept feedback	
18	I would like my manager to support me with tasks and give direction	
9	My manager give guidance when I make a mistake	
19	I would like my manager to guide me when I made a mistake	
10	My manager checks in once in a while and offer support on tasks	
20	I would like my manager to check in occasionally and offer support on tasks	
11	My manager motivates me by involving me	
21	I would like my manager to motivate me by involving me	
12	My manager gives me a sense of inclusion	
22	I would like my manager to give me a sense of inclusion	
13	My manager accepts inputs from group members and then make a decision	
23	I would like my manager to welcome inputs from the group before making decisions	
14	My manager includes me in problem solving	
24	I would like my manager to include me in problem solving	
15	My manager makes decisions based on group discussions	
25	I would like my manager to make decisions based on group inputs	

Table 3-3: Resources used for laissez-faire leadership style statements

QNr	Questions - Laissez-faire leadership style	Resources
6	My manager let me make my own decisions	(Bucata & Rizescu, 2016; Jony <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Khan <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Nielsen <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Sudha <i>et al.</i> , 2016)
16	I would like my manager to leave the decision making to myself	
7	My manager rely on me to decide the direction of decisions	
17	I would like my manager to follow my suggestions without questions	
8	My manager leave me to do my thing	
18	I would like my manager to leave me to do my thing	
9	My manager does not care if I make a mistake	
19	I would like my manager to not worry if I make a mistake, I can handle it	
10	My manager leaves me to do my job	
20	I would like my manager to let me do my tasks without checking up on me	
11	My manager do not motivate me, I must motivate myself	
21	I would like my manager not to motivate me, I can motivate myself	
12	My manager gives me a sense of independence	
22	I would like my manager to give me a sense of independence	
13	My manager let the group make the decisions	
23	I would like my manager to let the group and myself make the decisions on our own	
14	My manager leaves problems to be solved by me and/or the team	
24	I would like my manager to leave problem solving to the team and me and not interfere	
15	My manager leaves us to make decisions	
25	I would like my manager to leave decision-making up to me	

3.6.1 Section 1: Demographic information

This section of the questionnaire included gender, age group (years), role category of the participant's current position, employment duration (years) and highest level of education.

Biographic information was only used to obtain a profile of participants and the final dissertation will be provided to respondents upon request. This information was only be used to describe the composition of the sample and was not be used to compare groups or make any inferences about individuals.

3.6.2 Section 2: Employee perception

In this section, questions relate to what the employee perceives concerning his/her manager's leadership style. Here, questions are structured as multiple-choice, where the participant will only be able to select one of the three choices. The choices will relate to the different leadership styles set out in this study and will include characteristics of an autocratic leadership style, a democratic leadership style and a laisses-faire leadership style.

From all the different statements to choose from, the first statement will relate to an autocratic leadership style, the second statement will relate to the democratic leadership style and the third statement will relate to a laisses-faire leadership style.

Participants who mostly select the first option of statements (option a) will be considered to perceive an autocratic leadership style. By selecting mostly the second option, it indicates a perception of a democratic leadership style and the third statement relates to the laisses-faire leadership style. If a participant mostly selected the third statement, the conclusion will be that he/she perceives a laisses-faire leadership style as a general style of leadership from the manager/supervisor. Although there might be instances where an employee perceives another style in certain scenarios, the most selected statements will generalise a specific perception.

3.6.3 Section 3: Employee expectation

This section has the same statements as section 2. In this section, the participant must select what they would want to experience in the workplace. By selecting (a) in the majority of statements, it will be considered as the overall expectation and what the employee desires. If the participant mostly chose (a), this will be regarded and the participant's strongest preference.

3.7 Data analysis methods

The responses from the questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS statistical program and the overall result per respondent was determined. If the respondent mostly selected statement (a) from the three options available, that was considered to be the overall preference and experience of the respondent.

After determination of the respondents' experiences and preferences, cross-tabulation of the results was used to indicate the percentage of respondents who experience what they prefer.

The Pearson chi-square was calculated to test the relationship between the employee experience and employee preference with the H0 that no relationship exists. Phi and Cramer's V were calculated to determine the strength of the relationship. Although Phi is used for 2xn tables, it was included for completeness' sake.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the research methodology followed in this study. The research approaches were discussed and the research procedure described in detail, namely the steps followed to select the sample, gather data and methods used to analyse the data.

The following chapter presents the results of the findings with interpretations of the data by presenting the findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The results from this study are presented in this chapter. The Statistical Consultation Services, from the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus, analysed the data. Data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, Copyright© IBM Corporation and its licensors (<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/>)

Firstly, the demographical profile of the respondents will be presented. Descriptive analysis, more specifically frequency analysis, was used to explore the different leadership styles that the respondents perceive as well as prefer. A cross-tabulation (2-way table) was used to analyse whether the participants experience what they prefer from their leadership.

4.2 Demographic profile

The total population consisted of 370 identified respondents. Information about the respondents was obtained from the company's database. The request to participate in the study was sent out via email to all 370 identified respondents. Only 340 participants were reached and the other 30 emails returned back as undelivered.

From the participants reached via email, requesting them to complete the electronic survey questionnaire on employee perception and expectation, the following was found pertaining to the 340 respondents.

The response rate of participation was 23.8%, indicating that only 81 respondents submitted the electronic survey questionnaire. According to Marx (2009:12), responses in regard to research by scholars are relatively low. Overseas research response rates to questionnaires can range from 5 to 61%. In South Africa, response rates were found to be between 25 and 38% (Marx, 2009:12). According to these numbers, the response rate for this study was within measured international response rates, but measured lower than the typical range in South Africa. This lower response rate can be due to the COVID-19 pandemic period and respondents not having access to their emails or network connectivity required to complete the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Gender distribution

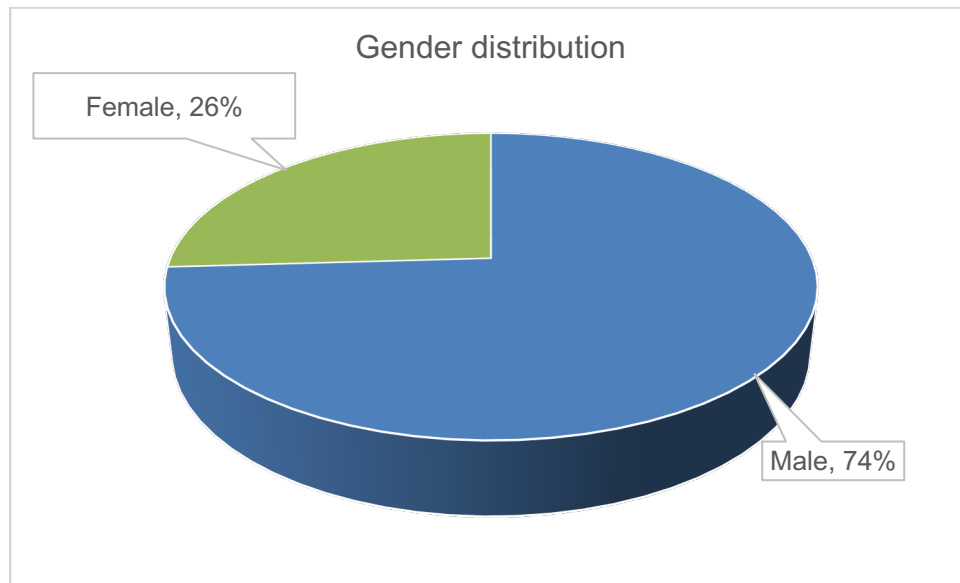


Figure 4-1: Gender distribution

Figure 4-1 indicates that the gender distribution of the respondents was 74% (60) males and 22% (21) females. The majority of respondents were males. This confirms the fact that the company, and specifically these business units, are male dominant. This might be because of the type of industry and that females are not interested to work in the company's technical and production environments. Males in the organisation might be more focused on a technical and operational field. The company might have a problem with the recruitment process. It can be recommended to the company to investigate whether the male dominance can be related to unfair recruitment practices or there might be a problem with the recruitment process in these specific areas of the organisation.

4.2.2 Age distribution

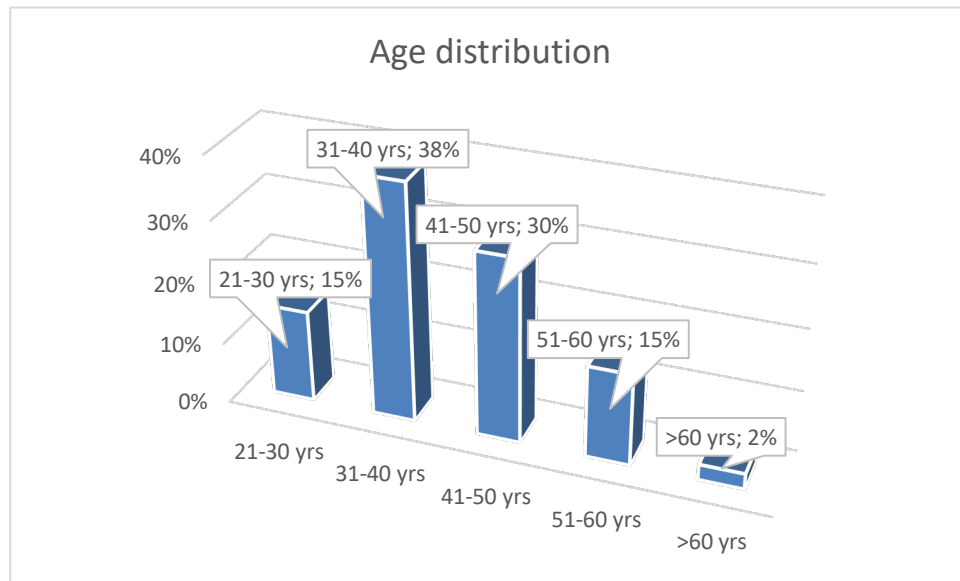


Figure 4-2: Age distribution

Respondents' age distribution is illustrated in Figure 4-3. The largest portion (38%) of respondents fall within the age group of 31 to 40 years. This is a good distribution for the company as employees within this age group have the potential to be developed by the company. These employees will have enough time to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to contribute more to the company. Developing this age group will benefit the future of the company in terms of knowledge and experience. From the data obtained, 30% of the respondents are between 41 and 50 years of age. This indicates that the company still has access to employees who can fulfil roles of coaching and mentoring. Depending on the time spent with the company, employees can transfer knowledge to the upcoming age groups, ensuring sustainability for the business.

4.2.3 Role category distribution

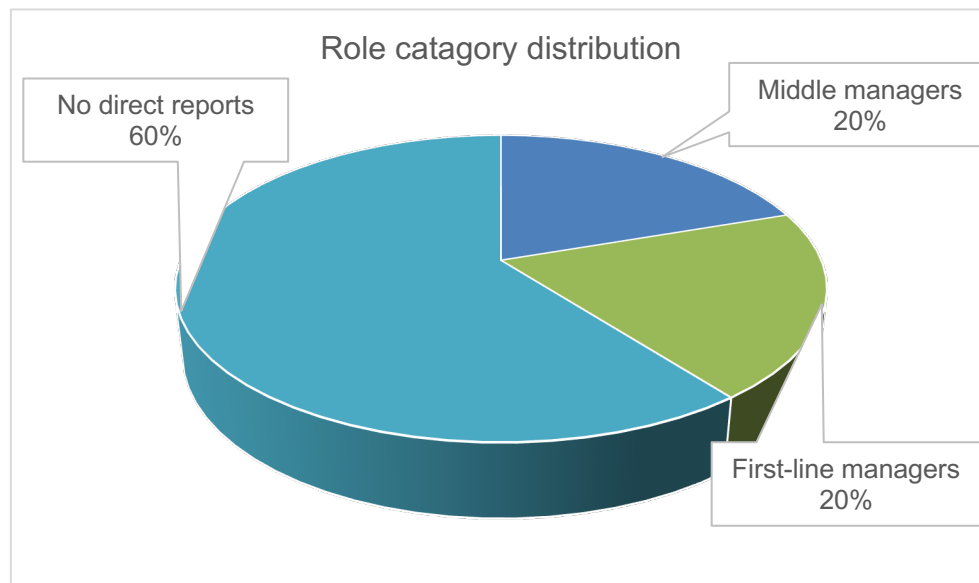


Figure 4-3: Role category distribution

Only middle management, first-line managers and direct reports were included in this study. Middle managers are also named area managers and have a specific area they manage with first-line managers reporting to them. First-line managers are foremen with employees reporting to them. The term 'direct report' is used to describe people who report to a manager. If a person has a direct report, he is considered to be in a management position. Someone with no direct reports is not classified as being in a management position.

From Figure 4-3, 60% of the participants have no direct reports, 20% are middle managers and 20% are first-line managers. This distribution is favourable to the study as the participants who are not managers and those who are managers are relatively equally distributed, meaning that the data will not be biased from employees who have no experience in management or only managers.

4.2.4 Employment duration distribution

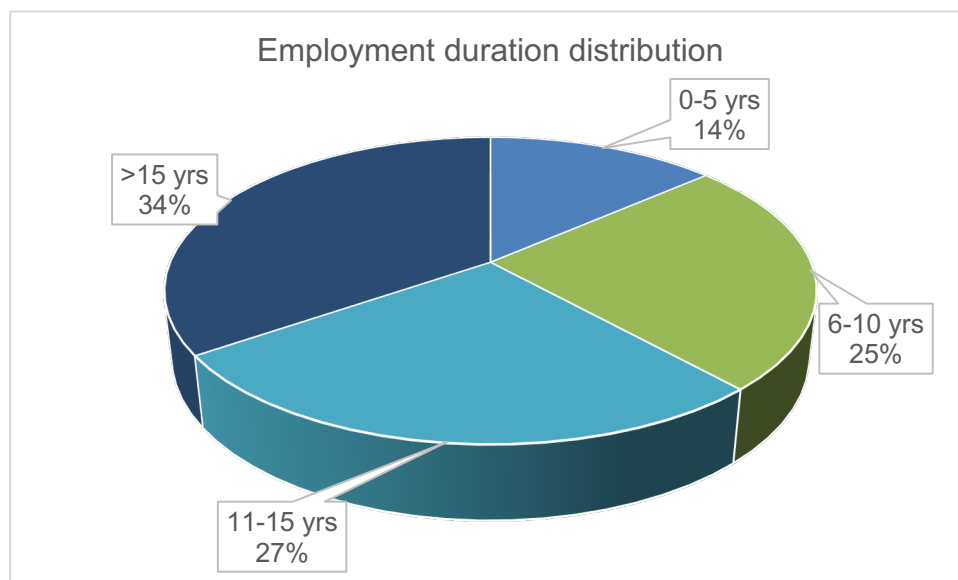


Figure 4-4: Employment duration distribution

Employment duration is illustrated in Figure 4-4. Employees who have worked for the company for five years or less are 14%, 25% have been employed by the company between six and ten years. Employees employed by the company between 11 and 15 years were found to be 27%, and the largest portion of the respondents has been with the company for more than 15 years.

Comparing the age distribution and employment duration in Figure 4-5, it indicates that employees between the age of 31 and 40 years have been employed by the company for a duration of less than 15 years. The larger portion of employees between the ages of 41 to 50 years stayed with the company between 11 and 15 years and longer. This age distribution and employment duration are a good indication that the company has relatively young employees with good duration of experience and knowledge to benefit the company in the future. New employees can be coached by the current workforce and be confident that knowledge and experience can be transferred.

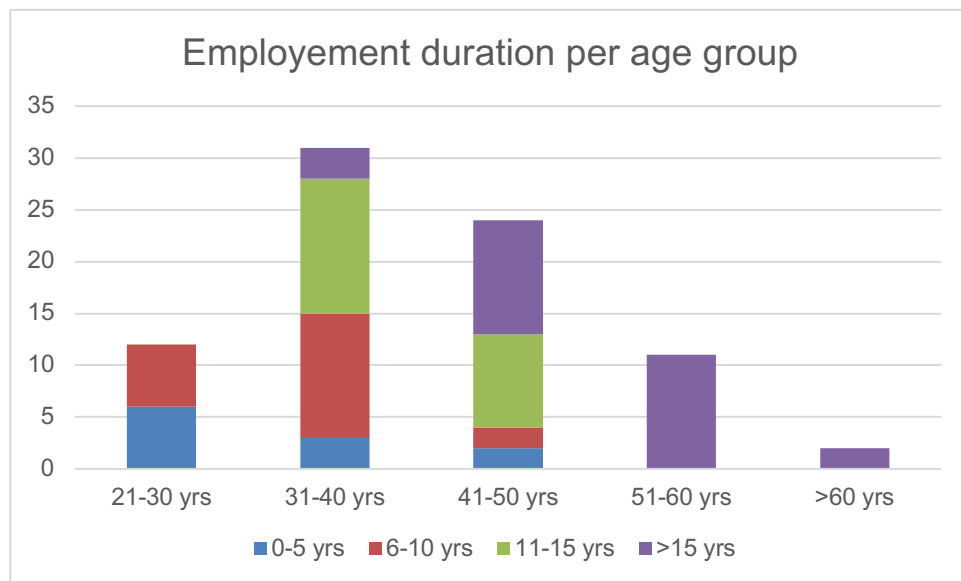


Figure 4-5: Employment duration per age group

The company can use the more experienced employees to mentor and coach employees with less experience and employees recently employed by the company. With the current employment duration distribution, the company is in a good position with 61% of employees working for the company for more than 10 years. This is also an indication that the company is doing well in employee retention and employees are not leaving the company. Leadership style perceived by the employees is one of the reasons people leave their employers (Jun *et al.*, 2017; Sulamuthu & Yusof, 2018).

4.2.5 Highest qualification distribution

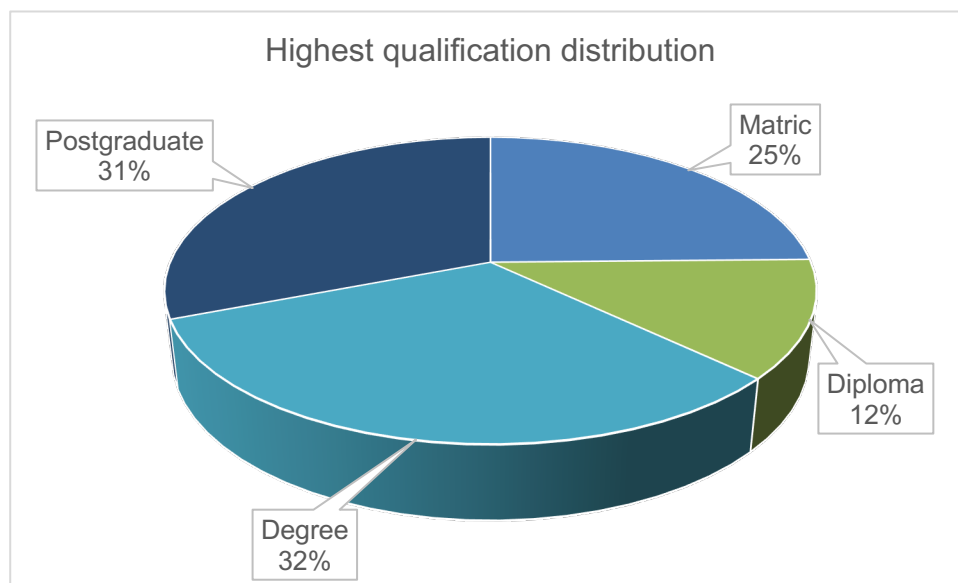


Figure 4-6: Highest qualification distribution

The employees included in this study indicated that the larger portion (75%) is in possession of a diploma, degree or postgraduate degree. This indicates that the company employs employees who are well educated. The two largest portions of the employees have either a degree (32%) or a postgraduate degree (31%).

The relationship between age group and qualification investigates whether the higher age groups are in possession of higher qualifications. This will be an indication whether employees are motivated to obtain higher qualifications in the organisation. This was not included in the study and might be a topic for future research.

Determining whether employees with a higher level of education expect a certain type of leadership style from their managers will also be a proposal for future studies, as it was not included in this study.

4.3 Employee perception and expectation descriptive statistical analysis

In this section, the overall employee perception and expectation of their leaders' management styles in the working environment were determined by means of applying frequency analysis. The frequency analysis output was used to describe the findings.

4.3.1 Employee perception

The survey questionnaire's questions 6 to 15 measured the perception of the employees in the workplace regarding the leadership style of their managers.

The results for the empirical survey on employee perception of management styles in the workplace are presented in Table 4-1 below. Table 4-1 illustrates selections made by participants for each statement in the questionnaire relating to employee perception.

Each option in the questions represents the three different leadership styles discussed in this study, i.e. autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

A total number of 810 selections were made by the respondents to indicate employee perception. This figure was determined by the fact that each respondent had to make ten selections in this section of the questionnaire. There were 83 (10%) selections made towards an autocratic leadership style, 479 (59%) selections towards a democratic leadership style, and 248 (31%) selections towards a laissez-faire leadership style. This indicates that the participants mostly selected statements relating to a democratic leadership style perceived from their managers. This does not indicate the overall individual perception; this is illustrated in Table 4-2.

From Table 4-1, the larger portion of respondents indicated that their managers include them during decision-making with a smaller group reporting to a manager who allows the employees to take decisions by themselves. The smaller portion of respondents reported that their managers make decisions without including them. Respondents also confirmed, in question 13, that their managers accept input from the team, which indicates that these respondents are included in decision-making.

The employees' perceptions of their managers' leadership style indicate that the managers received high selections towards a democratic leadership style in statements addressing when employees make mistakes. Here, the leader in most cases gives guidance to employees when mistakes are made. This is a good indication that the company cultivates a learning culture.

Interestingly, 41 of the respondents (51%) feel motivated when they perceive that they are involved and 37 of the respondents (46%) have the perception that they must motivate themselves.

Table 4-1: Frequency of answers selected – Employee perception

Survey question number	Option	Experience in the workplace – Employee perception	Frequency	Percentage
6	(a)	My manager makes decision by himself	11	14%
	(b)	My manager welcomes input to make decisions	42	52%
	(c)	My manager lets me make my own decisions	28	35%
7	(a)	My manager knows it all and requires little input from me	17	21%
	(b)	My manager always includes me to give suggestions	45	56%
	(c)	My manager relies on me to decide the direction of decisions	19	23%
8	(a)	My manager gives clear and exact orders	10	12%
	(b)	My manager gives direction and supports me with tasks and accepts feedback	51	63%
	(c)	My manager leaves me to do my thing	20	25%
9	(a)	My manager punishes me when I make a mistake	10	12%
	(b)	My manager gives guidance when I make a mistake	65	80%
	(c)	My manager does not care if I make a mistake	6	7%
10	(a)	My manager watches me closely when I perform tasks	4	5%
	(b)	My manager checks in once in a while and offers support on tasks	48	59%
	(c)	My manager leaves me to do my job	29	36%
11	(a)	My manager motivates me using rewards and punishments	3	4%
	(b)	My manager motivates me by involving me	41	51%
	(c)	My manager does not motivate me; I must motivate myself	37	46%
12	(a)	My manager gives me a sense of security	4	5%
	(b)	My manager gives me a sense of inclusion	30	37%
	(c)	My manager gives me a sense of independence	47	58%
13	(a)	My manager does not accept input from group members	8	10%
	(b)	My manager accepts inputs from group members and then makes a decision	60	74%
	(c)	My manager lets the group make the decisions	13	16%
14	(a)	My manager solves problems on his own	7	9%
	(b)	My manager includes me in problem-solving	44	54%
	(c)	My manager leaves problems to be solved by me and/or the team	30	37%
15	(a)	My manager makes the best decisions	9	11%
	(b)	My manager makes decisions based on group discussions	53	65%
	(c)	My manager leaves us to make decisions	19	23%
TOTALS	(a)	Autocratic	83	10%
	(b)	Democratic	479	59%
	(c)	Laisses-faire	248	31%

In this section (section 2 of the questionnaire), the number of times one of the three statements was selected was summed to a value. If a respondent selected mostly (a) statements, that was calculated to be the respondent's perceived leadership style from the manager.

From the 81 participants, one participant equally perceives an autocratic and a laissez-faire leadership style from the manager and six of the participants reported to perceive a democratic and laissez-faire style from their managers. These participants were omitted from the analysis as their responses are viewed as inconclusive since they do not have a strong perception to one specific leadership style. In Table 4-2, the total number of valid responses is calculated as 74, where the seven (8.6%) invalid responses were omitted.

Table 4-2: Frequency table – Employee perception

Leadership style	Frequency	Percentage
Autocratic	5	6,8%
Democratic	54	73,0%
Laissez-faire	15	20,3%
Total valid responses	74	100,0%

An autocratic leadership style, in Table 4-2, is perceived by 6.8% of the respondents, where 73.0% of the participants perceive a democratic leadership style, and 20.3% perceive a laissez-faire leadership style.

Results obtained from the survey conducted to determine employee perception of leadership styles in the workplace are graphically presented in Figure 4-7.

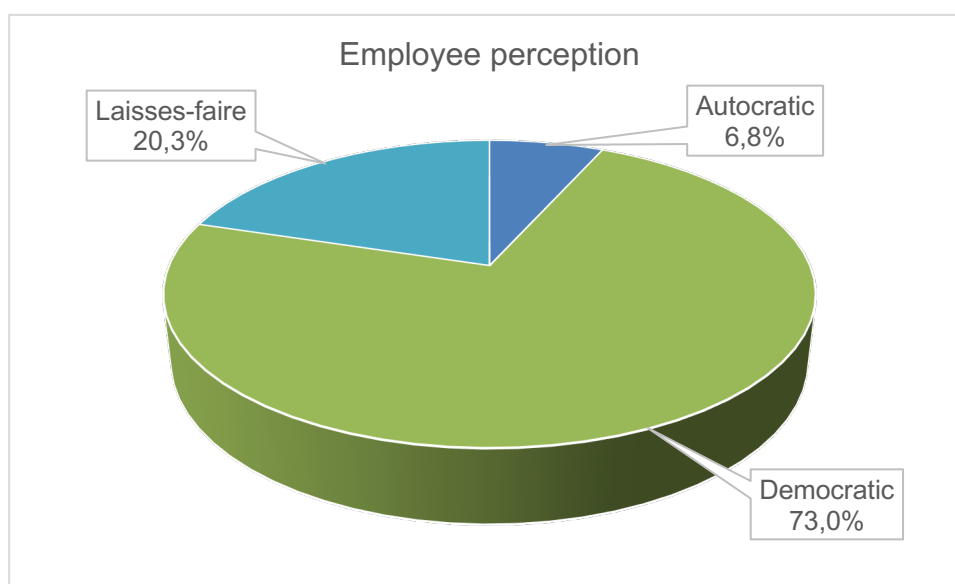


Figure 4-7: Employee perception of leadership styles

4.3.2 Employee expectation

The survey questionnaire questions 16 to 25 measured the preference of the employees in the workplace regarding the leadership style of their managers.

The results of the empirical survey on employee expectation of management styles in the workplace are presented in Table 4-3 below. Table 4-3 illustrates selections made by participants for each statement in the questionnaire relating to employee expectation.

Each option in the questions represents the three different leadership styles discussed in this study, i.e. autocratic, democratic and laisses-faire.

A total number of 810 selections were made by the respondents to indicate employee expectation. There were 37 (5%) selections made towards an autocratic leadership style, 636 (79%) selections towards a democratic leadership style, and 137 (17%) selections towards a laisses-faire leadership style. This indicated that the participants mostly selected statements relating to a democratic leadership style expected from their managers. This does not indicate the overall individual expectation; this is illustrated in Table 4-4.

From Table 4-3, question 17 strongly indicates that employees want their managers to listen to their suggestions.

None of the respondents expect their managers to punish them for making mistakes or monitor them when they are completing tasks. This is a strong indication that employees in the business

units do not prefer to be micro-managed by their managers. These employees strongly indicated that they want to be guided when in the wrong and prefer their managers to check-in occasionally to offer help and assistance. The smaller portion prefers their managers not to worry about mistakes and feel they are competent enough to handle it. Similarly, a small group of respondents feel they are capable enough to perform without their managers checking up on them.

Table 4-3: Frequency of answers selected – Employee expectation

Survey question number	Option	Expectation in the workplace – Employee expectation	Frequency	Percentage
16	(a)	I would like my manager to make the decisions	2	2%
	(b)	I would like my manager to listen to my input before making decisions	65	80%
	(c)	I would like my manager to leave the decision-making to me	14	17%
17	(a)	I would like my manager to be the most knowledgeable and not need suggestions	3	4%
	(b)	I would like my manager to listen to my suggestions	72	89%
	(c)	I would like my manager to follow my suggestions without questions	6	7%
18	(a)	I would like my manager to give clear and exact orders	7	9%
	(b)	I would like my manager to support me with tasks and give direction	54	67%
	(c)	I would like my manager to leave me to do my thing	20	25%
19	(a)	I would like my manager to punish mistakes	0	0%
	(b)	I would like my manager to guide me when I made a mistake	67	83%
	(c)	I would like my manager to not worry if I make a mistake; I can handle it	14	17%
20	(a)	I would like my manager to monitor me closely when I perform tasks	0	0%
	(b)	I would like my manager to check in occasionally and offer support in tasks	70	86%
	(c)	I would like my manager to let me do my tasks without checking up on me	11	14%
21	(a)	I would like my manager to motivate me by rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour	7	9%
	(b)	I would like my manager to motivate me by involving me	65	80%
	(c)	I would like my manager not to motivate me; I can motivate myself	9	11%
22	(a)	I would like my manager to give me a sense of security	10	12%
	(b)	I would like my manager to give me a sense of inclusion	42	52%
	(c)	I would like my manager to give me a sense of independence	29	36%

23	(a)	I would like my manager not to ask for inputs from the team or me	3	4%
	(b)	I would like my manager to welcome inputs from the group before making decisions	66	81%
	(c)	I would like my manager to let the group and myself make the decisions on our own	12	15%
24	(a)	I would like my manager to solve problems on his own	4	5%
	(b)	I would like my manager to include me in problem-solving	65	80%
	(c)	I would like my manager to leave problem-solving to the team and me and not interfere	12	15%
25	(a)	I would like my manager to make the decisions; he is the best at it	1	1%
	(b)	I would like my manager to make decisions based on group inputs	70	86%
	(c)	I would like my manager to leave decision-making up to me	10	12%
TOTALS	(a)	Autocratic	37	5%
	(b)	Democratic	636	79%
	(c)	Laisses-faire	137	17%

From the 81 participants, two participants equally expect a democratic and a laisses-faire leadership style from the manager. These participants were omitted from the analysis as their responses are viewed as inconclusive since they do not have a strong perception to one specific leadership style. In Table 4.4, the total number of valid responses is calculated as 79, where the two (2.5%) invalid responses were omitted.

Table 4-4: Frequency table – Employee expectation

Leadership style	Frequency	Valid Percent
Autocratic	0	0,0%
Democratic	70	88,6%
Laisses-faire	9	11,4%
Total valid responses	79	100,0%

Results obtained from the survey conducted on employee expectations of leadership styles indicated that 88.8% of the participants expect a democratic leadership style from their managers and 11.4% expect a laisses-faire leadership style. None of the participants would like an autocratic leadership style from their manager. Figure 4.8 graphically illustrates the employee expectation found in the survey conducted.

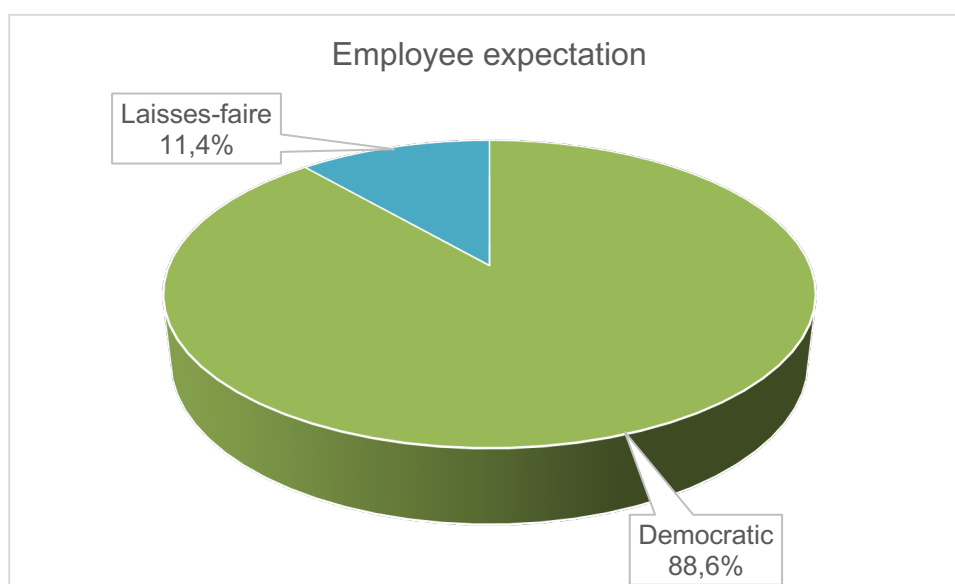


Figure 4-8: Employee expectation of leadership styles

4.3.3 Employee perception vs employee expectation

4.3.3.1 Frequency analysis

Comparing the responses received from the individual statements between employee perception and expectation can be a good indication in which areas of management employee preference does not align with employee expectation. Table 4-5 compares the preferred statements with expectation statements to determine the areas where management can focus on improving.

Table 4-5: Employee perception statements vs employee expectation statements

Survey question number	Option	Experience in the workplace - Employee perception	Perception Percentage	Expectation Percentage	Expectation in the workplace - Employee preference
6/16	(a)	My manager makes decisions by himself	14%	2%	I would like my manager to make the decisions
	(b)	My manager welcomes input to make decisions	52%	80%	I would like my manager to listen to my input before making decisions
	(c)	My manager lets me make my own decisions	35%	17%	I would like my manager to leave the decision-making to me

7/17	(a)	My manager knows it all and requires little input from me	21%	4%	I would like my manager to be the most knowledgeable and not need suggestions
	(b)	My manager always includes me to give suggestions	56%	89%	I would like my manager to listen to my suggestions
	(c)	My manager relies on me to decide the direction of decisions	23%	7%	I would like my manager to follow my suggestions without questions
8/18	(a)	My manager gives clear and exact orders	12%	9%	I would like my manager to give clear and exact orders
	(b)	My manager gives direction and supports me with tasks and accepts feedback	63%	67%	I would like my manager to support me with tasks and give direction
	(c)	My manager leaves me to do my thing	25%	25%	I would like my manager to leave me to do my thing
9/19	(a)	My manager punishes me when I make a mistake	12%	0%	I would like my manager to punish mistakes
	(b)	My manager gives guidance when I make a mistake	80%	83%	I would like my manager to guide me when I made a mistake
	(c)	My manager does not care if I make a mistake	7%	17%	I would like my manager to not worry if I make a mistake; I can handle it
10/20	(a)	My manager watches me closely when I perform tasks	5%	0%	I would like my manager to monitor me closely when I perform tasks
	(b)	My manager checks in once in a while and offers support on tasks	59%	86%	I would like my manager to check in occasionally and offer support on tasks
	(c)	My manager leaves me to do my job	36%	14%	I would like my manager to let me do my tasks without checking up on me
11/21	(a)	My manager motivates me using rewards and punishments	4%	9%	I would like my manager to motivate me by rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour
	(b)	My manager motivates me by involving me	51%	80%	I would like my manager to motivate me by involving me
	(c)	My manager does not motivate me; I must motivate myself	46%	11%	I would like my manager not to motivate me; I can motivate myself
12/22	(a)	My manager gives me a sense of security	5%	12%	I would like my manager to give me a sense of security
	(b)	My manager gives me a sense of inclusion	37%	52%	I would like my manager to give me a sense of inclusion
	(c)	My manager gives me a sense of independence	58%	36%	I would like my manager to give me a sense of independence

13/23	(a)	My manager does not accept input from group members	10%	4%	I would like my manager not to ask for inputs from the team or me
	(b)	My manager accepts inputs from group members and then makes a decision	74%	81%	I would like my manager to welcome inputs from the group before making decisions
	(c)	My manager lets the group make the decisions	16%	15%	I would like my manager to let the group and myself make the decisions on our own
14/24	(a)	My manager solves problems on his own	9%	5%	I would like my manager to solve problems on his own
	(b)	My manager includes me in problem-solving	54%	80%	I would like my manager to include me in problem-solving
	(c)	My manager leaves problems to be solved by me and/or the team	37%	15%	I would like my manager to leave problem-solving to the team and me and not interfere
15/25	(a)	My manager makes the best decisions	11%	1%	I would like my manager to make the decisions; he is the best at it
	(b)	My manager makes decisions based on group discussions	65%	86%	I would like my manager to make decisions based on group inputs
	(c)	My manager leaves us to make decisions	23%	12%	I would like my manager to leave decision-making up to me
			Perception	Expectation	
TOTALS	(a)	Autocratic	10%	5%	Autocratic
	(b)	Democratic	59%	79%	Democratic
	(c)	Laisses-faire	31%	17%	Laisses-faire

From the results, 52% of the employees indicated that they perceive their managers to welcome input when making decisions. However, a greater percentage of the respondents (80%) indicated that being included in decision-making is what they desire. A gap can be identified that managers should focus on including their employees when making decisions. Although a number of responses (35%) indicated that employees are left to make their own decisions, this is not what the employees expect from their managers and only 17% of employees indicated that they prefer to make the decisions themselves. Only 2% of the respondents indicated that they expect their managers to make the decisions, where 14% indicated that that is in fact the case.

A small portion of the respondents (4%) indicated that they would like their managers to be the most knowledgeable and not need suggestions, whereas 21% feel that their managers do not require input from them. The biggest portion (89%) of the respondents would prefer their managers to listen to their suggestions, but only 56% of the respondents actually perceive this in the workplace. A small portion of the respondents would like their managers to follow suggestions given by them, but 23% report that their managers rely on employees to make the decisions.

A good correlation exists between employee perception and expectation with regard to managers supporting with tasks, where 67% would like to see this type of behaviour and 63% of the respondents reported that they actually perceive their managers supporting them with tasks and accepting feedback. An equal number of respondents (25%), who desire their managers to leave them to do their jobs, also indicated that this is what they perceive. A small portion of respondents (9%) indicated that they prefer clear and direct orders from their managers, whereas 12% of the respondents perceive their managers to give clear and direct orders.

None of the respondents indicated a desire for their managers to punish them for their mistakes, although 12% indicated that their managers do punish them when they make mistakes. Respondents who desire their managers to guide them when they make mistakes and respondents who reported that they perceive this in the workplace are 83% and 80%, respectively. A number of respondents (17%) indicated that they would like their managers to not worry about them making mistakes, but only 7% actually perceive this in the workplace.

A small portion of respondents (5%) indicated that they perceive their managers to watch them closely when they perform tasks although none of the respondents desire this type of behaviour from their managers. Respondents (86%) mostly prefer their managers to check in occasionally and offer support on tasks, but only 59% reported that this is what they perceive. Although 36% of the respondents reported that their manager leaves them to do their jobs, only 14% indicated that to be expected.

A small portion (4%) of respondents feels motivated by managers using rewards and punishment, whereas 9% would like this type of motivation from their managers. Most of the respondents (80%) reported that they would be motivated if they feel their managers include them, but only 51% perceived being included and feeling motivated. Interestingly, respondents perceive that their managers do not motivate them and feel they must motivate themselves although a small portion (11%) would actually prefer their managers not to motivate them, feeling they can motivate themselves.

Managers giving their employees a sense of security is perceived by 5% of the respondents, where 12% would like to experience a sense of security from their managers. Managers giving employees a sense on inclusion were mostly desired and 52% of the respondents indicated that they experience this in the workplace with only 37% of the respondents reporting that their managers give them a sense of inclusion. A sense of independence is perceived by 58% of the employees and 36% of the respondents indicated this as their desired behaviour from their managers.

Although a small portion of the respondents indicated that they prefer their managers not to ask them or the team for input, 10% of the respondents experience this from their managers. A larger portion of the respondents (81%) would like their managers to welcome inputs from the team before making decisions and 74% reported that their manager accepts inputs from group members and then makes a decision. Making decisions in a group was perceived by 16% of the employees, and 15% of the respondents prefer to make decisions on their own.

Managers excluding their employees from problem-solving was reported by 9% of the respondents, but only 5% desire not to be included in problem-solving. Although 80% of the respondents would like to be included in problem-solving, by their managers, only 54% reported that this is the case. Managers leave employees and/or their team to solve problems to 37% of the respondents and 15% of respondents indicated that they would like their managers to leave problem-solving to them and the team.

Respondents who indicated that they perceive their managers to make decisions were 11% and only 1% would like their managers to make the decision. The bigger portion of the respondents (86%) indicated that they would prefer their managers to make decisions based on group inputs, but this was perceived by only 65% of the respondents. A smaller portion (12%) of the respondents would like their managers to leave them to make decision, but 23% indicated that they perceive that in the workplace.

4.3.3.2 Statistical analysis

To answer the research question, the results from employee perception are compared with the results from employee expectation.

Random sampling has an advantage that enables the researcher to study properties of a population with the time and money available. The statistically significant tests (t-tests) are used to show that the results, between two different means, are significant. "The p-value is a criterion of this, giving the probability that the obtained value or larger could be obtained under the assumption that the null hypothesis (eg. no difference between the means) is true". Small p-values ($p < 0.05$) are considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant, but do not necessarily imply that the result is important in practice (Steyn & Ellis, 2003:51).

In this study, the convenience sampling method was used and the data was obtained from a small population. Statistical inference and p-values are therefore not relevant as indicated by Steyn and Ellis (2003:51), stating that "statistical inference draws conclusions about the population from

which a random sample was drawn” and “using descriptive measures that have been calculated”. In this case, the p-value is only reported for completeness’ sake. The symmetric measure, Phi, is reported in Table 4-6. Phi is for a 2xn table, but for this study, Cramer’s V (for all other table sizes) reported identical values. A large Cramer’s V means that there is a tendency for particular categories of the first variable to be associated with particular categories of the second variable.

Table 4-6: Symmetric measures

Symmetry measures		Value	Approximate significance
Nominal by nominal	Phi	0,190	0,274
	Cramer's V	0,190	0,274
N of valid cases		72	

The Chi-square test is a test statistic for frequency data. The magnitude of Pearson’s Chi-square reflects the amount of discrepancy between observed frequencies and expected frequencies. The Pearson Chi-square value of 2.591 in Table 4-7 indicates that there is an association between employee perception and expectation. Cramer’s V indicates that the strength of the association between employee perception and employee expectation shows a medium practical significance with a value of 0.274.

Table 4-7: Chi-square tests

Chi-square tests	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	2.591 ^a	2	0,274
Likelihood ratio	2,317	2	0,314
N of valid cases	72		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .56.

The phi-value of 0.19 (p-value = 0.27) reported for the cross tabulation between the employees’ perception and their expectation indicates that the association between the two variables is leaning towards being practically visible. Only the valid responses were used in the analysis as nine of the respondents were indecisive with regard to either their perceived or expected leadership style from their leader. Therefore, the total number of valid responses that could be used was 72.

Table 4-8: Cross table – Employee perception vs expectation

			Perception			
			Autocratic style	Democratic style	Laisses-faire style	Total
Expectation	Democratic style	Count	4	49	11	64
		% within preference	6,3%	76,6%	17,2%	100,0%
	Laisses-faire style	Count	1	4	3	8
		% within preference	12,5%	50,0%	37,5%	100,0%
	Total	Count	5	53	14	72
		% within preference	6,9%	73,6%	19,4%	100,0%

According to Table 4-8, of the 64 respondents expecting a democratic leadership style from their managers, four (6.3%) perceive their managers to have an autocratic leadership style, 49 (76.6%) perceive a democratic leadership style and only 11 (17.2%) perceive a laisses-faire leadership style from their managers. This indicates that 76.6% of the respondents who prefer a democratic leadership style, actually perceive this type of leadership style in the workplace.

Similarly, of the eight respondents who prefer their managers to have a laisses-faire leadership style, only three (37.5%) indeed perceive their managers' leadership style as laisses-faire, whereas four (50.0%) experience a democratic leadership style from their managers and only one (12.5%) an autocratic leadership style.

None of the respondents indicated that they would want to experience an autocratic leadership style from their managers. The respondents who perceive an autocratic leadership style would rather want to experience either a democratic or laisses-faire leadership style from their managers.

In summary: 52 (72.1%) of the valid response received (72) during this study do experience the leadership style that they prefer in the workplace, and 20 respondents (27.8%) experience a different leadership style from their preference.

4.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the data was presented and discussed using graphical representation and tables. The findings reported that the business units are male dominant and the majority of the respondents were in the age group of between 31 and 40 years. This is good as the employees within this age group have the potential to be developed by the company.

The respondents included in this study were found to include middle managers, first-line managers and the larger portion of respondents are not in a managerial position. Employment duration results indicated the majority of respondents have been working for the company for longer periods of 11 years or more. The company is doing well in this area to retain talent. It was also found that the employees within the age group of 31 to 40 years have been working for the company for periods of six to 10 years and 11 to 15 years.

Employees in the business units also have good educational background with the larger portion in possession of either a degree or a postgraduate degree.

Employee perceptions were analysed and compared to employee expectation. On the individual statements, it was found that gaps exist in the perception and expectation of the respondents and results indicated areas where managers can focus on to close gaps and improve relationships with employees.

In the next chapter, the conclusion and recommendations to future research are presented.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of this study are summarised. The research objectives are linked to the findings and the research questions are answered and discussed. Conclusions are drawn from the results obtained and findings from literature.

Limitations of the research study, identified during the course of this study, are also discussed. Recommendations to the organisation's leadership and employees will be presented in this chapter. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research in the field of study and to the organisation included in this study.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis of this study stated that there is a gap between the leadership style employees perceive and experience from their managers in the workplace. The results obtained from this study showed that five (6.9%) of the employees perceive an autocratic leadership style from their managers, 53 (73.6%) of the employees perceive a democratic leadership style from their managers, and 14 (19.4%) of the employees perceive a laissez-faire style from their managers. From the 81 employees, only 72 valid responses were obtained as nine of the responses were not dominant towards a specific style.

From the five employees who perceive their managers to have an autocratic leadership style, four (80.0%) have an expectation to experience a democratic leadership style from their managers and only one (20.0%) wants to experience a laissez-faire leadership style from their manager. Similarly, from the 53 employee who perceive a democratic leadership style from their managers, the larger portion, i.e. 49 employees (92.5%), do expect what they perceive and only four employees (7.5%) expect a different leadership style from their managers. Of the 14 employees who perceive a laissez-faire leadership style from their managers, 11 of the employees (78.6%) and three employees (21.4%) expect a democratic and laissez-faire style, respectively.

The employees who perceive a different leadership style than what they expect were found to be 20 out of the 72 employees. This indicates that 27.8% of employees do not perceive what they expect from their managers.

Employees mostly experience what they perceive, but the number of employees who do not experience what they perceive results in the hypothesis to be confirmed. Although the gap between the expectation and perception is small, a gap does exist.

5.2.2 Primary and secondary research questions

From this study, the primary and secondary research questions were answered.

5.2.2.1 Primary research question

What is the magnitude of the gap between employee perception and expectation regarding the leadership style of their manager or supervisor?

The primary question was answered during this study and it was found that 20 of the 72 employees perceive a different leadership style from their managers than what they expect. This indicates that the magnitude of the gap between employee perception and expectation is 27.8% for the selected business units in the organisation.

5.2.2.2 Secondary research questions

- *What leadership styles are perceived by employees?*
- *What leadership style do employees expect from their manager or supervisor?*
- *How much does the perception differ from the expectation?*

It was found that employees in the organisational business units perceive a dominantly democratic leadership style from their managers, which answers the first secondary question. Furthermore, the largest portion of the employees in the organisation's business units expect a democratic leadership style from their managers, answering the second secondary question. Only 27.8% of the respondents perceive a different leadership style, from their managers, than what they expect. This answers the third secondary question.

5.3 Implications of the findings

Although a gap exists, however small, between the employee perception and expectation within the organisation's business units, this might lead to manager and leader mismatch. This can cause a lack in productivity and employees who do not perform to their capabilities. Employees might feel that they are not valued and participation in problem-solving might lack leading to the business units not performing as well as they are capable of.

This can also have an effect of the employee turnover where employees are leaving either the business units or even the organisation resulting in a loss of knowledge and experience and/or loss in human capital and time and money invested in employees.

In business units where the perceived leadership style and expected leadership style are aligned, it can be found that good manager-employee relationships exist and that the business units are productive and efficient. Employees might feel that they are valued and can freely give opinions in solving problems and presenting innovative ideas.

The findings indicate that the business units are doing well in appointing employees and managers who are compatible as the larger portion of the employees do in fact perceive their managers' leadership style as a style they expect from their managers. This is a good indication of the business unit's hiring processes relating to employee-manager match making.

The results indicated that the business units are male dominant and this might cause problems of inequality based on gender. There might be concerns about the hiring strategy when recruiting employees in these departments. This might also be because of the type of industry and that females are not as interested in the line of work as males are, but this can be investigated by the company to understand this phenomenon.

The majority of the respondents are in possession of a degree or a postgraduate degree. Managers might view these employees as capable enough to work on their own and with little input from the manager. Although this might be the case, employees strongly prefer to be included rather being left alone to do everything by themselves.

However, gaps were evident in the individual statements as some of the respondents perceive an autocratic leadership style from their managers when decisions are made. Employees feel competent to be able to give inputs during decision-making and problem-solving or to make decisions and solve problems by themselves.

There is a need for employees be heard and although this was perceived by a number of respondents, there is a gap where managers can focus on to include employees more often and consider their inputs. A number of employees experience a laissez-faire leadership style when giving inputs; there is a need for managers to be involved but not dominant.

The respondents who would like their managers to support them with tasks are relatively equal to the respondents who indicated that their managers do exercise this behaviour in the workplace. Employees who want to be left to do their work were also equal to the number of employees who perceive this in the workplace.

5.4 Limitations

This was a quantitative study and the respondents were not approached to reflect about how their managers make them feel and whether they are motivated to perform better when their perception matched their expectation. This limits the study to determine whether employees who perceive what they expect will still consider leaving the business unit or the company.

Another limitation is that only two business units in the organisation were investigated and this might not be a representation of the organisation as a whole. This limits the conclusion to only the business units investigated in the study.

Because only two business units within the organisation were used in this study, the study might not be a representation of the industry as a whole.

During the data gathering phase of the study, some of respondents indicated that, in some of the statements, there was no option to not agree with all of the statements. This is seen as a limitation as employees were then obligated to maybe choose an option they do not agree with in full.

During the data gathering phase of the study, a world-wide pandemic broke out and people were required to stay at home. This limited the study to get responses as some individuals were not receiving emails or might not have the necessary resources at home to participate in the study.

5.5 Recommendations

The research study indicated that a gap exists between the leadership style employees perceive and experience in the business units included in this study.

It is recommended that the organisation should take note of the gap that exists between employee perception and expectation. When moving managers from one business unit to another, it would be advised to have manager-employee management style analysis done to understand what manager would be a better fit in specific departments.

Should employees show poor work performance, it would be recommended to understand the leadership style preference of the employee and to determine the manager's leadership style when dealing with employee performance. A policy exists for poor performance management that takes into consideration employee-manager mismatch. It is recommended that the organisation should continue to follow the policy and not revert to consequence management unless it is found to be the last option available after following the procedure as set out in the poor performance management procedure.

Managers are urged to consult with employees during a decision-making process and during problem-solving. When employees come up with ideas by themselves or in a team, they tend to be more committed to take ownership.

However, it might not always be possible to consult employees when decisions are made, as some decision requires a on the spot action. Managers should cultivate a culture of inclusion and support, not punishing mistakes, but rather supporting and guiding employees in a direction to reach company goals.

It is recommended for the company to investigate the male dominance in the business units and understand this phenomenon. This might also include a review of the recruitment process and criteria employees have to adhere to when applying for vacancies. Understanding the dynamics of gender in the workplace would benefit the company to correct the gender imbalances should it be necessary and/or possible.

Although it was identified that a gap exists between employee perception and expectation, this study did not explore the causes of the gap, this can be included in future studies.

Recommendations to close the gap between perceptions and expectations can include frequent sessions with managers and subordinates to discuss tasks and align goals. Managers should welcome employees to ask questions and communicate any changes in the business that might affect the employees. It will. Be important for managers and employees to discuss their understanding of tasks to ensure alignment

5.6 Future research

Further research on this topic would be to include more of the organisation's business units to have a holistic view of the organisation.

It is recommended to do a study that includes cross-sectional studies with both $t=0$ and $t=1$, to determine in the beginning of a research study how employees perceive their managers and to again at a later time interval do the same analysis. This can be done before and after change of management occurs in a specific department or the company as a whole. These results will be valuable when compared to a business unit's overall performance and to relate the performance to the perceived and expected leadership style of the employees.

It is also recommended to determine an employee's individual performance related to the perceived management style of their manager and include a qualitative study to determine whether the management style of the manager impacts the employee's individual performance and willingness to participate and/or intention to leave this particular organisation or business unit.

It is recommended that this study be done in different organisations to determine the tendency of the industry as a whole. Different respondents can be randomly selected from different departments in various business units to get a holistic view of the industry as a whole.

From the findings in this study, there might be a relationship between level of education of employees and the leadership style they perceive and expect from their managers. Employees with a higher level of education might feel competent enough to make decisions and solve problems without the input of their managers. This might be part of the employees who prefer a more *laissez-faire* leadership style from their managers. Employees with a lower level of education might be satisfied with taking orders from their managers and are not affected by being included in decision-making or problem-solving, and see their manager as the competent person.

Comparing age to preferred leadership style can also be a topic for future research. This will help understand how the younger generations perceive their management and understand how they should be managed to obtain optimal results in the workplace.

5.7 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed the hypothesis and research questions. The implications of the research study were addressed and the study limitations were presented. Further recommendations were

made to the organisation based on the findings of this study and proposals for future research were set out in this chapter.

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ANNEXURE 1: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Leadership style survey – Employee expectation and perception of leadership styles

Section 1: Demographic information

1. Gender (Select one option)

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. Age group (Select one option)

☐ 21-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ >60

3. Role category (Select one option)

☐ Middle management

☐ First-line management

☐ No people reporting to me

4. Employment duration (within the company) (Select one option)

- ☐ 0-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-15 years
- ☐ >15 years

5. Highest level of education (Select one option)

- ☐ Matric
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate

Section 2: Employee perception

6. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager makes decisions by himself
- ☐ My manager welcomes input to make decisions
- ☐ My manager lets me make my own decisions

7. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager knows it all and requires little input from me
- ☐ My manager always includes me to give suggestions
- ☐ My manager relies on me to decide the direction of decisions

8. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager gives clear and exact orders
- ☐ My manager gives direction and supports me with tasks and accepts feedback
- ☐ My manager leaves me to do my thing

9. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager punishes me when I make a mistake
- ☐ My manager gives guidance when I make a mistake
- ☐ My manager does not care if I make a mistake

10. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager watches me closely when I perform tasks
- ☐ My manager checks in once in a while and offers support on tasks
- ☐ My manager leaves me to do my job

11. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager motivates me using rewards and punishments
- ☐ My manager motivates me by involving me
- ☐ My manager does not motivate me; I must motivate myself

12. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager gives me a sense of security
- ☐ My manager gives me a sense of inclusion
- ☐ My manager gives me a sense of independence

13. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager does not accept input from group members
- ☐ My manager accepts input from group members and then makes a decision
- ☐ My manager lets the group make the decisions

14. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager solves problems on his own
- ☐ My manager includes me in problem-solving
- ☐ My manager leaves problems to be solved by me and/or the team

15. What do you experience in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ My manager makes the best decisions
- ☐ My manager makes decisions based on group discussions
- ☐ My manager leaves us to make decisions

Section 3: Employee expectation

16. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to make the decisions
- ☐ I would like my manager to listen to my input before making decisions
- ☐ I would like my manager to leave the decision-making to me

17. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to be the most knowledgeable and not need suggestions
- ☐ I would like my manager to listen to my suggestions
- ☐ I would like my manager to follow my suggestions without questions

18. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to give clear and exact orders
- ☐ I would like my manager to support me with tasks and give direction
- ☐ I would like my manager to leave me to do my thing

19. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to punish mistakes
- ☐ I would like my manager to guide me when I make a mistake
- ☐ I would like my manager to not worry if I make a mistake; I can handle it

20. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to monitor me closely when I perform tasks
- ☐ I would like my manager to check in occasionally and offer support on tasks
- ☐ I would like my manager to let me do my tasks without checking up on me

21. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to motivate me by rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour
- ☐ I would like my manager to motivate me by involving me
- ☐ I would like my manager not to motivate me; I can motivate myself

22. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to give me a sense of security
- ☐ I would like my manager to give me a sense of inclusion
- ☐ I would like my manager to give me a sense of independence

23. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager not to ask for inputs from the team or me
- ☐ I would like my manager to welcome inputs from the group before making decisions
- ☐ I would like my manager to let the group and myself make the decisions on our own

24. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to solve problems on his own
- ☐ I would like my manager to include me in problem-solving
- ☐ I would like my manager to leave problem-solving to the team and me and not interfere

25. What you would like in your workplace? (Select one option)

- ☐ I would like my manager to make the decisions; he is the best at it
- ☐ I would like my manager to make decisions based on group inputs
- ☐ I would like my manager to leave decision-making up to me

ANNEXURE 2: INFORMED CONSENT



INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

**MBA STUDY: EMPLOYEE EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN
A CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

FIELD OF STUDY – MBA – HUMAN RESOURCES, NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

STUDY LEADER: DR J.J. VILJOEN

RESEARCHER: I. RUST

Tel: (+27) 76 400 7419

Email: ismari.lester@sasol.com

Dear respondent

This research must be conducted as part of the fulfilment of the requirements of an MBA (Masters in Business Administration).

The main purpose of the study is to determine the gap between employee expectation and perception of leadership styles in the organisation. Participation is requested from respondents who fit the desired target population. The target population consists of your organisation's talent pool, more specifically, all individuals reporting to senior managers, directly and indirectly, in the Technical Support business unit and Water and Ash business unit.

Aim of the study: Gathering data on what employees prefer, also what they perceive and then to determine how different employee perception is from employee expectation.

Data will be collected from the respondent via this questionnaire. All employees fitting the criteria of the target population have been requested to participate. Participation is voluntary and confidential. Anonymity and privacy of respondents are guaranteed, as responses will return to the researcher via the online survey platform.

Biographical information will only be used to obtain a profile of participants and the final dissertation will only be provided to respondents upon request. This information will only be

used to describe the composition of the sample and will not be used to compare groups or make any inferences about individuals.

By clicking on the survey link and by submitting all the answers of the questionnaire, you hereby declare that the information provided is truthful and accurate and that the data generated from this survey platform may be used by the researcher to perform the study.

Link in the email

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Ismari Lester

This email is sent on behalf of the person/organization whose name appears in the from field by SoGoSurvey. If you have any questions about the email, please contact the sender by replying to this email.

If you prefer not to receive future reminders about this survey, please [click here](#).

If you prefer not to receive future surveys from the organization behind this survey, please [click here](#).

We request you not to forward the survey link to anyone. Each survey link is unique and intended for the recipient only.

ANNEXURE 3: EMPLOYER CONSENT



PERMISSION LETTER

July 2019

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Secunda Synfuels Operations, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Mrs. Ismari Rust, a student at North West University. We are aware that Mrs. Ismari Rust intends to conduct her research by administering a written/electronic survey to our employees (Area Managers and Foremen).

As Vice President, Human Resources, Secunda Synfuels Operations, I grant Mrs. Ismari Rust permission to conduct her research at the Water and Ash business unit. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at (+27) 17 610 8029.

Sincerely,

J.F. Gouws

Vice President: Human Resources

Secunda Synfuels Operations

Sasol Limited 1979/003231/06

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Directors: MSV Gantsho (Chairman) SR Cornell (Joint President & Chief Executive Officer) (American) B Nqwababa (Joint President & Chief Executive Officer) C Beggs MJ Cuambe (Mozambican) MBN Dube M Flöel (German) GMB Kennealy NNA Matyumza ZM Mkhize MJN Njeke MEK Nkeli PJ Robertson (British and American) P Victor (Chief Financial Officer) S Westwell (British)

Company Secretary: VD Kahla

ANNEXURE 4: DATA ANALYSIS CERTIFICATE



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
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Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
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Statistical Consultation Services
Tel: +27 18 299 2651
Fax: +27 0 87 231 5294
Email: erika.fourie@nwu.ac.za

14 December 2020

Re: Thesis, Mrs I Lester, student number: 12604615
A quantitative trend investigation of absenteeism within a selected chemical
Employee expectations and perceptions of leadership styles in a chemical
manufacturing facility in South Africa

We hereby confirm that the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University analysed the data of the above-mentioned student and assisted with the interpretation of the results. However, any opinion, findings or recommendations contained in this document are those of the author, and the Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU (Potchefstroom Campus) do not accept responsibility for the statistical correctness of the data reported.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'E Fourie', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Dr E Fourie

Senior Consultant: Statistical Consultation Services

ANNEXURE 5: ETHICS CERTIFICATE



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
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Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

29 May 2020

Dr Jos Viljoen
Per e-mail
Dear Dr Viljoen,

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 29052020

Student: Rust, I (12604615)(NWU-00698-20-A4)

Applicant: Dr Jos Viljoen – MCom in South African and International Taxation

Your ethics application on, *Employee expectations and perceptions of leadership styles in a chemical manufacturing facility in South Africa*, which served on the EMS-REC meeting of 29 May 2020, refers.

Outcome:

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number NWU-00698-20-A4 is given for one year of ethics clearance.

Due to the Covid-19 lock down ethics clearance for applications that involve data collection or any form of contact with participants are subject to the restrictions imposed by the South African government.

Kind regards,

Mark
Rathbone

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North-
West University, ou=Business
management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2020.06.05 06:28:50 +02'00'

Prof Mark Rathbone

Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

ANNEXURE 6: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl
Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

10 March 2021

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of mini-dissertation: Employee expectations and perceptions of leadership styles in a chemical manufacturing facility in South Africa

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned mini-dissertation by Ms Ismari Lester (student number: 12604615).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

