International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

A Qualitative Study on Leadership and Workplace Culture: Its Impact on Talent Acquisition, Employee Engagement, and Retention

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ABSTRACT

Employees perceive leadership quality as significantly influenced by the leader's communication style, level of support, and overall approach, with open and transparent communication, along with empowering practices, being essential for fostering positive perceptions. Collaborative leadership styles that promote teamwork and trust enhance team cohesion and motivation, while effective conflict resolution and recognition of employee contributions further improve organizational effectiveness and satisfaction. Moreover, the speed and transparency of the recruitment process will help in molding the experience of the candidates, where criteria for the selection of candidates should be fair, reflecting the company culture and necessary for positive perceptions. The study ascertains and identifies the dynamics of different leadership styles and cultural frameworks that shape the talent management strategies. In addition, it also sought to explore critical questions about their interrelationships and the degree to which these elements contribute to organizational success. It utilized qualitative research through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to gather data among respondents. Furthermore, it captures employees' experiences and perceptions, which provides a comprehensive analysis of their perceptions. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data, wherein patterns were identified in the responses that relate to the aspects of leadership styles and organizational culture in influencing employee motivation and satisfaction. The findings of the study revealed essential aspects into the impact of leadership and workplace culture on employee experiences.

JEL CODE: M12, M54, J24, J28, J53

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, the influence of leadership and workplace culture on organizational success is increasingly being recognized. Effective leadership is crucial for managerial success, as it involves motivating and guiding people towards common goals (Nandasinghe, 2020; Begolli, 2019). Leaders establish clear visions, communicate effectively, and inspire their followers. Leadership differs from management, with leaders focusing on setting direction, aligning people, and inspiring, while managers plan, organize, and control (Tiwari, 2020). Leaders are not only influential in decision-making but are also essential in cultivating a workplace culture that aligns with organizational values and ethics. Mumley (2019) emphasizes that during crises, leaders must access ethical frameworks beyond immediate contexts to avoid ethical myopia, suggesting that transcendent values can guide decision-making. Grigoropoulos (2019) argues that leaders are essential in promoting ethical standards and aligning organizational culture with shared values, particularly in the face of globalization and technological advancements. Furthermore, Jerab and Mabrouk (2023) explore how leaders act as cultural architects, fostering innovation and inclusivity while navigating resistance to change. This relationship is essential in shaping strategies for talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention, all of which are fundamental for sustaining productivity and organizational growth.

Leadership itself forms the backbone of workplace culture, influencing the way decisions are made and the environment of teamwork and job satisfaction. Research consistently demonstrates the significant impact of leadership styles on employee productivity and organizational performance. Multiple studies have found positive correlations between effective leadership and improved work outcomes. Muhammad Marse Alfiana et al. (2024) reported that leadership style explained 28% of the variation in employee productivity at BAZNAS Sukabumi, emphasizing the importance of leaders who are intelligent, empathetic, and possess strong management skills. Shweta Tewari et al. (2019) highlighted the complexity of leadership styles and their situational appropriateness, noting that the right approach can lead to successful long-term goal achievement. Peter Mayowa (2020) found that workers' productivity is a function of leadership style and that employee participation in decision-making is related to productivity. These findings emphasize the crucial role of leadership in motivating employees, managing conflicts, and enhancing overall organizational efficiency.

Furthermore, a positive workplace culture is increasingly vital in attracting top talent. Studies show that job seekers prioritize alignment with company values and culture over financial compensation (Paloma Dias dos Santos, 2021; Joseph Pacelli et al., 2022). Companies are increasingly communicating

their cultural values through job postings, especially when labor markets are tight and alternative sources of cultural information are limited (Pacelli et al., 2022). This strategy has proven effective in attracting job seekers, particularly following social movements that emphasize the importance of workplace culture. Furthermore, a data-driven approach reveals that inclusion, respect, and bias are closely linked to employee satisfaction and retention (Williams et al., 2022). In particular, to win the war for talent, especially in periods of high turnover, companies need to build and communicate a strong, inclusive organizational culture congruent with employees' values, where employees feel that they belong.

Employee engagement, which refers to the emotional connection and commitment of employees to their organization, is heavily influenced by leadership and organizational culture (Biriowu & Chikwe, 2020; Samanta, 2021). Engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity, innovation, and commitment (Samanta, 2021). Leadership styles, particularly servant leadership, play a vital role in fostering engagement and satisfaction amongst the employees (Setiawan, 2020). Organizational culture, shaped by top management, impacts employee engagement and performance (Samanta, 2021). A recent study has shown that organizational leadership culture and remote employee engagement are significantly related, where the mentoring-based leadership culture has the highest level of engagement exhibited. (Saurage-Altenloh et al., 2023). Factors including empowerment, participation in decision-making, effective communication, and recognition drive engagement (Biriowu & Chikwe, 2020). Organizations are advised to incorporate employee engagement into their strategic planning to achieve organizational goals and reduce turnover.

Moreover, workplace culture significantly affects employee retention. A positive workplace culture, including safety measures and shared values, enhances employee loyalty and retention (Khoirur Rozaq, 2022; H. Salem & Hamad Almerri, 2023). Factors such as communication, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability contribute to a strong organizational culture that fosters employee engagement and retention (H. Salem & Hamad Almerri, 2023). The organizational culture at Google presents a case in which a good work environment acts to attain and retain the best human resources from the competitive technological industry (Gilang Zulfan et al., 2020). Furthermore, good workplace safety culture can guarantee employee loyalty and retention, especially in manufacturing sectors (Khoirur Rozaq, 2022). Moreover, such creation of a significant sense of purpose and guiding principles in employees will lead to good retention and longer-term commitments towards the organization (H. Salem & Hamad Almerri, 2023). These findings bring forth the essence of building a positive culture within an organization to retain accredited employees.

The synergy between leadership and workplace culture extends beyond human resources, impacting overall financial performance and brand reputation. Effective leadership shapes a culture aligned with organizational values, enhancing team performance and productivity (Aditya Halim Perdana et al., 2023). The symbiotic relationship between organizational culture and leadership development is crucial for sustained success, with a robust culture nurturing effective leadership and vice versa (Idowu Sulaimon Adeniyi et al., 2024). Leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, can build advanced innovation and a satisfactory work environment, leading to organizational excellence and long-term financial performance (Béjaoui, 2021). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives positively influence corporate reputation and financial performance, although excessive CSR practices moderated by responsible leadership may negatively impact performance (Javed et al., 2019). An integrated management approach combining financial and human resource management aspects is essential for optimizing organizational performance (Aditya Halim Perdana et al., 2023), strategic alignment, supported by continuous learning initiatives, is essential (Idowu Sulaimon Adeniyi et al., 2024).

This study aims to investigate these dynamics further, focusing on how different leadership styles and cultural frameworks influence talent management strategies. It seeks to explore critical questions about their interrelationships and the degree to which these elements contribute to organizational success.

Beyond leadership and culture, other factors, including technological advancements, economic shifts, and demographic changes, also influence workforce dynamics. A comprehensive understanding of these influences enables organizations to develop strategic initiatives that foster sustainable and thriving work environments.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is anchored on four related theories and models explaining the dynamics of leadership and workplace culture, and their influence in acquiring talent, engaging employees, and retaining them. These include the Transformational Leadership Theory, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, the Social Exchange Theory, and the Job Characteristics Model.
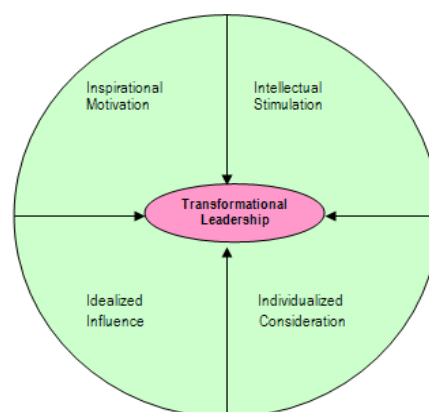
Figure 1. Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory, developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), has played a vital role in leadership within organizational culture and inspiration to employees. As proposed by the theory, transformational leaders encourage and motivate their employees to perform beyond expectation by building an environment of trust, admiration, and respect. Transformational leadership dares not relate to a simple transaction; rather, it concerns changing or increasing the level of motivation and morality of both leaders and followers. The essence of transformational leadership in this present study seeks to highlight how leaders can build a good workplace environment that benefits the employees by increasing their level of engagement and minimizing the influence of retrenchment.

Figure 2. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (1980) presents an appropriate framework for the analysis of workplace culture through the consideration of effects that a society's culture may have on its members' values. He pointed out various dimensions of culture, such as individualism vs. collectivism and power distance, which influence organizational behaviors and attitudes. This theory is helpful in assessing the variation in impacts brought forth by different cultural orientations in an organization on teamwork, decision-making, and general job satisfaction. The research will be able to find out how cultural differences in the workplace affect employee engagement and retention strategies with the inclusion of this theory.
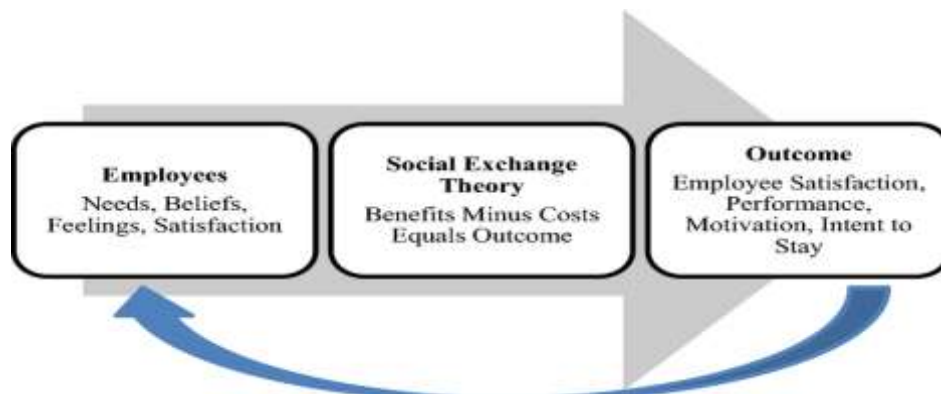

Figure 3. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, articulated by Blau (1964), stipulates that relational behaviors between employees and organizations occur based on the precept that social behaviors are "the result of an exchange process that occurs to attain a preferred outcome (maximum reward) at minimum cost". This theory will be important in understanding the underlying mechanisms of employee engagement because positive work relationships and perceived organizational support breed commitment and satisfaction. It can, therefore, by utilizing Social Exchange Theory, tease out the reciprocal nature of engagement and how leadership and workplace culture contribute to this exchange, which in turn influences retention.
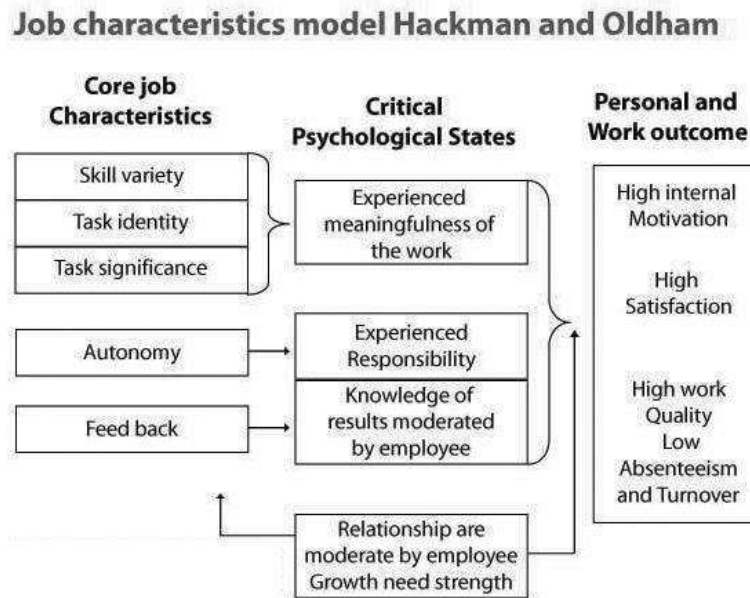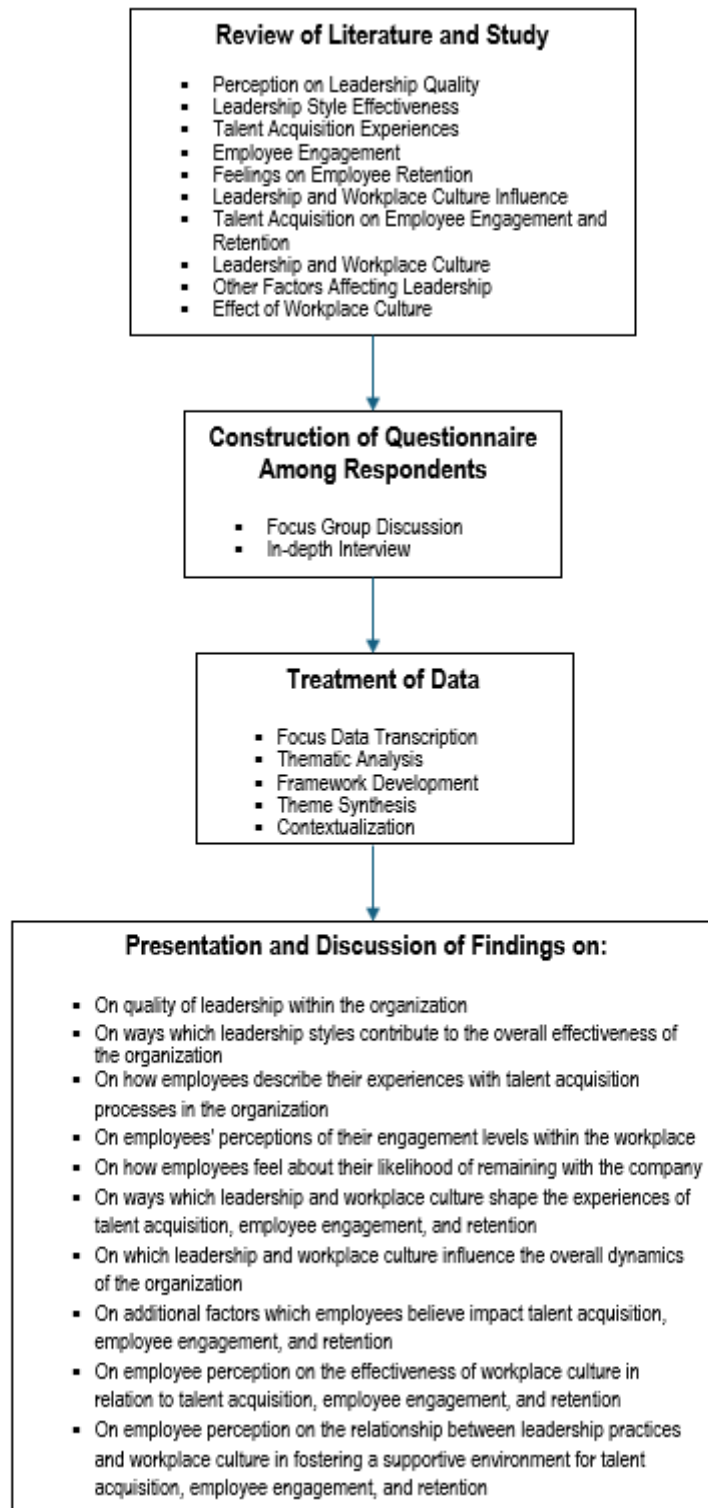
Figure 4. Job Characteristics Model

Lastly, the **Job Characteristics Model**, developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), explains how specific job attributes may cause variations in employee motivation and satisfaction. This model focuses on five vital job characteristics-skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback-which influence the critical psychological states that assure high work motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Understanding how these job characteristics are shaped by leadership and workplace culture enables a framework from which to assess talent acquisition and retention, as workers are more likely to be attracted to and stay in their jobs when the jobs provide meaningful work and engaging tasks.

Collectively, these theories offer a comprehensive lens through which to examine the influence of leadership and workplace culture on key HR outcomes, namely, talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention. They provide the theoretical underpinnings necessary to explore the complex interrelationships at play in modern organizational settings.

Conceptual Framework

Review of Literature and Study

- Perception on Leadership Quality
- Leadership Style Effectiveness
- Talent Acquisition Experiences
- Employee Engagement
- Feelings on Employee Retention
- Leadership and Workplace Culture Influence
- Talent Acquisition on Employee Engagement and Retention
- Leadership and Workplace Culture
- Other Factors Affecting Leadership
- Effect of Workplace Culture

Construction of Questionnaire Among Respondents

- Focus Group Discussion
- In-depth Interview

Treatment of Data

- Focus Data Transcription
- Thematic Analysis
- Framework Development
- Theme Synthesis
- Contextualization

Presentation and Discussion of Findings on:

- On quality of leadership within the organization
- On ways which leadership styles contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization
- On how employees describe their experiences with talent acquisition processes in the organization
- On employees' perceptions of their engagement levels within the workplace
- On how employees feel about their likelihood of remaining with the company
- On ways which leadership and workplace culture shape the experiences of talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention
- On which leadership and workplace culture influence the overall dynamics of the organization
- On additional factors which employees believe impact talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention
- On employee perception on the effectiveness of workplace culture in relation to talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention
- On employee perception on the relationship between leadership practices and workplace culture in fostering a supportive environment for talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention

The conceptual framework diagram outlines the steps involved in this study. Primarily, the objective is to examine the effects of leadership and workplace culture on employee engagement, retention, and talent acquisition. It commenced with a review of related literature, where various literature and studies are examined and grouped in themes such as leadership quality, leadership style effectiveness, employee engagement, workplace culture, and their influence on employee retention and talent acquisition.

Following the literature review, the construction of questionnaire and interview guide questions among respondents is conducted. This step involves gathering of qualitative data by means focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to explore the perceptions and experiences of employees on the concept leadership and workplace culture.

Moreover, the treatment of data phase involves organizing and presenting gathered data. Focus group and interview transcriptions will be processed using thematic analysis, framework development, theme synthesis, and contextualization to extract meaningful patterns, themes, and relationships between leadership, workplace culture, and employee outcomes.

Finally, the presentation and discussion of findings entails discussion of key insights on leadership quality, leadership style contributions, employee experiences with talent acquisition, engagement levels, perceptions on retention likelihood, and the impact of workplace culture. These findings contribute to a better understanding of how leadership and culture influence the organization's talent acquisition, engagement, and retention tactics. The research finishes by finding additional factors and interactions that influence overall organizational dynamics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organizational Leadership

Organizational leadership is a dynamic and multifaceted field that encompasses the development of effective, ethical, and sustainable leadership practices. As outlined by Brauer and Cesarone (2022), this field is essential for cultivating leaders who can engage with and inspire an organization's people by emphasizing the integration of heart, mind, and spirit into leadership approaches. The evolution of leadership theories, including humanistic and task-relationship approaches, provides valuable insights into the dynamics of leadership within different organizational contexts (Madanchian et al., 2021). The educational programs like the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership (MAOL) at institutions like St. Catherine University are essential in preparing individuals to understand and navigate these complex dynamics (Brauer & Cesarone, 2022). This education is supported by resources and guides, such as those highlighted by Dowgiert (2020), which equip students with access to relevant research materials to enhance their understanding of organizational leadership.

One salient characteristic of organizational leadership, as seen in various cultural and geographical contexts, is its adaptability to local values and norms. In the Philippines, for instance, organizational leadership is heavily influenced by cultural frameworks that merge Confucian and Catholic values, resulting in a distinct paternalistic leadership style prevalent in many Filipino organizations (Selvarajah et al., 2020). This leadership style is a reflection of broader societal norms and deeply ingrained cultural practices that shape organizational behavior and influence how leaders interact with their teams. In the service sector within the Philippines, organizational leadership does not operate in isolation but is shaped by an interplay of work-related factors, organizational culture, and social norms. Research conducted by Kurata et al. (2022) suggests that these elements significantly impact how management and leadership are perceived and enacted among Filipino professionals. By understanding and adapting to the cultural nuances and expectations, leaders in the service industry can create work environments that foster employee satisfaction and productivity.

Moreover, organizational leadership is crucial in implementing successful enterprise risk management strategies within Philippine businesses. Research by Simbulan and Laraya (2022) illustrates the significant relationship between leadership and control activities in enterprises. Effective leadership can ensure that risk management processes are well-integrated into the organizational framework, which is essential for maintaining operational stability and financial performance. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of considering cultural contexts, trust, and empowerment in crafting leadership practices that are not only effective but also culturally sensitive and responsive to the unique needs of organizations across different sectors.

Leadership Styles

1. *Transactional Leadership.* This referred to as managerial leadership, is fundamentally concerned with the organizational structure, performance, and supervision, prioritizing short-term objectives and operational efficiency (Jaqua, 2021). It works through a reward and punishment system for motivating subordinates, essentially aligning their efforts with specific organizational goals (Jaqua, 2021). The transactional leadership style uses social control to manage relationships between leaders and subordinates, thereby steering them towards achieving set objectives through clear management and incentives (Efianda & Iswahyuni, 2021). Despite its global recognition and influence, transactional leadership faces certain challenges, particularly in complex political environments like presidential systems with multiple political parties (Efianda & Iswahyuni, 2021).

The scholarly exploration of transactional leadership has shown marked growth, with 266 documents published within the past decade and a notable peak of 45 publications in 2020 (Santosa et al., 2023). A large number of studies are concentrated in the UK region, which really denotes interest and elaborates on a thorough study of its effects on employee dynamics and organizational outcomes in that region (Santosa et al., 2023). Most of these studies have searched for an understanding of the way transactional leadership influences various organizational functions and its role in employee engagement and motivation. Examples include a recent research study done in the Philippines that compared the impact of transactional versus transformational leadership style on sectors like BPO and education. Within the BPO sector, a hybrid approach combining both leadership styles has been reported to enhance job satisfaction (Cabaluna & Mbaw, 2021). This interplay of transactional and transformational leadership styles plays in educational settings too, as shown by a study involving nursing student leaders who scored highly in both styles (Amparado, 2020). Such findings indicate a synergy between the structured, goal-oriented approach of transactional leadership and the motivational, change-oriented nature of transformational leadership. Moreover, studies have shown that these various types of leadership styles have a significant impact on employees' innovative work behavior (Macaspac & Abun, 2022). Interestingly, entrepreneurial studies in the Philippines reveal a divergence in leadership tendencies with age, where younger leaders demonstrate a

propensity toward transformational leadership (Pascual et al., 2021). This trend emphasizes the evolving nature of leadership styles within different demographic groups, suggesting that younger leaders may prefer approaches that emphasize change, vision, and autonomy over the traditional rule-oriented methodology of transactional leadership. Together, these studies note the pervasive influence of both transactional and transformational leadership styles across various sectors in the Philippines, suggesting significant implications for employee satisfaction, innovation, and overall organizational performance.

2. *Transformational Leadership*. It is characterized by its power to fully alter organizational behavior and culture as well as individuals, including the leader (den Hartog, 2019; King Crefton, 2019; Quiros, 2020). The practitioners of this kind of leadership articulate visionary goals, are highly passionate and confident, and place a strong emphasis on ethics and values (den Hartog, 2019; King Crefton, 2019; Quiros, 2020). The charismatic nature of transformational leaders enables them to profoundly influence their followers, inspiring them not only to embrace the leader's vision but also to exceed their normal responsibilities (den Hartog, 2019; King Crefton, 2019; Quiros, 2020). Transformational leaders are adept at aligning individual aspirations with organizational goals and demonstrate robust organizational abilities (den Hartog, 2019; King Crefton, 2019; Quiros, 2020). This leadership style is particularly favored by those who value innovation and creativity as essential tools for driving organizational evolution (Chiș-Manolache, 2022). The process through which transformational leaders induce change is often through personal example and direct engagement with subordinates, making followers less fearful of change and more open to new ideas (Chiș-Manolache, 2022). By inspiring, motivating, and empowering their teams, transformational leaders build confidence and encourage autonomous decision-making within the organization (Chiș-Manolache, 2022). This leadership style is favored by those who feel that innovation and creativity are necessary tools in organizational evolution. Positive outcomes arising from transformational leadership in educational settings are not limited to performance metrics. Transformative approaches emphasize innovation, empathy, and adaptability, resulting in enhanced staff confidence, autonomy, and professional growth (Sarong, 2023). This environment not only benefits teachers and administrators but also leads to improved educational outcomes for students. As such, transformational leadership is essential for educational institutions in the Philippines to effectively handle complexities and prepare for future challenges. The findings of the study altogether present clear evidence that transformational leadership has a major role to play in placing the Philippine educational institutions on a correct path toward increased adaptability, better performance, and quality learning outcomes. Transformational leaders ensure that these institutions are adequately prepared to meet the current complexities in education and continue to thrive in their endeavors.

3. *Servant Leadership*. Servant leadership is the leadership style founded on morality in which this kind of leadership gives first priority to the needs of followers; hence, it has been in wide appreciation since the impact on both individual and organizational variable outcomes has clearly come into view (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021). It gives very high priority to serving others, taking initiative, and supporting followers (Kychkyruk & Salata, 2021). It has also emerged from research that benefits derivable from servant leadership are increased profitability, a more favorable work climate, hence increasing employee well-being and productivity (Meuser & Smallfield, 2022). Servant leaders help in nurturing their workers and empowering them while paying conscious attention to the particular personal concerns of employees; thus, these leaders will inspire organizational goals through the pursuance of elevated confidence and productivity levels (Meuser & Smallfield, 2022). However, despite its various components, the community aspect of servant leadership is often underdeveloped by leaders (Meuser & Smallfield, 2022). To be effective, servant leaders must fully commit to serving their organizations, balancing their roles as both humans and leaders (Hai & Van, 2021). This leadership style is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing global context, where adaptability and empathy are increasingly valued (Kychkyruk & Salata, 2021; Hai & Van, 2021). Servant leadership's focus on serving others and community-building aligns well with the demands of modern organizations that seek to create inclusive and supportive work environments. As organizations face new challenges and opportunities, servant leadership offers a framework for navigating these complexities with a focus on ethical and sustainable practices. Servant leadership is often seen as being aligned with organizational vision and can play a significant role in nation-building and social development (Reyes, 2019). In the Philippines, the prevalent paternalistic leadership style emphasizes moral obligations and a pastoral focus, mediating between personal qualities and organizational demands (Selvarajah et al., 2020). This alignment suggests that servant leadership can contribute to broader societal goals, making it a valuable approach in various sectors, from education to corporate management. The emphasis on moral and ethical leadership aligns well with the cultural and social values of the Philippines, further enhancing its relevance and impact. These studies collectively highlight the importance of servant leadership in various sectors of Philippine society, demonstrating its potential to foster trust, empowerment, and ethical practices. By prioritizing the needs of followers and aligning leadership practices with cultural values, servant leadership can effectively contribute to organizational success and social development. As organizations and leaders continue to navigate an ever-changing global landscape, the principles of servant leadership offer a valuable guide for creating resilient and inclusive communities.

Workplace Culture

Workplace culture is a defining element of any organization, encompassing the values, beliefs, and practices that shape its environment and impact employee behavior (Howard et al., 2024; Beno, 2021). This culture plays a crucial role in determining employee well-being, productivity, and retention. Organizations with positive cultures often experience greater success and sustainability as they support a more engaged and satisfied workforce (Howard et al., 2024). The development and transformation of workplace culture require a strategic blend of directive leadership from the top and active participation from employees at all levels (Howard et al., 2024). Recent findings suggest that hybrid work models, which combine on-site and remote work, can foster greater positivity and effectiveness compared to traditional office-based work environments (Beno, 2021). Moreover, effective

communication within the workplace is essential for constructing organizational identity and nurturing interpersonal relationships, thereby strengthening the overall culture (Valo & Mikkola, 2019).

In healthcare settings, such as nursing, the maintenance of a healthy workplace culture is vitally important for ensuring the mental well-being of staff (Arthi & Balachander, 2020). A culture that prioritizes empathy, support, and open communication can mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction. This recognition has spurred organizations to intentionally shape their cultures in ways that maximize employee satisfaction and performance (Howard et al., 2024). As organizations acknowledge the strategic importance of culture, they begin to implement structured initiatives aimed at cultivating environments that resonate with their core values and business objectives. Within the Philippines, recent research has explored the nuances of workplace culture across various sectors. For instance, in the Philippine Air Force, organizational safety culture is shaped by elements such as respect, performance, and training. These factors critically influence the safety behaviors of aircraft mechanics, underscoring the importance of a culture that prioritizes safety and continuous learning (Corpuz, 2023). Furthermore, substance use behaviors within Philippine organizations are linked to cultural attitudes towards drinking, smoking, and drug use. These attitudes are, in turn, influenced by the prevailing company culture, highlighting the complex interplay between organizational norms and employee behavior (Tiu et al., 2019).

Comparative studies involving the Philippines and other ASEAN countries have also shed light on the role of ethics in workplace culture, especially from a gender-based perspective (Handayani et al., 2022). These studies emphasize how ethical considerations and gender dynamics can shape and define workplace environments, promoting fairness and inclusivity. In the Philippine Business Process Outsourcing, digital workplace transformation influences the culture of work in a positive light: improved retention and motivation, which in turn translates to productivity. However, this has also brought in more stress and the prospect of overload at work, proving that technological change may be a two-edged sword in workplace dynamics (Bula et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies highlight the diverse factors influencing workplace culture in the Philippines across different sectors. From safety and ethics to digital transformation and employee behavior, each aspect contributes to the unique cultural tapestry of organizations. Understanding and managing such complex cultural dynamics is crucial to the leaders and managers who try to create an environment that will be conducive not only to the organization but also to the employees' well-being. For that reason, workplace culture remains one of the most important focuses on any organization in today's competitive, fast-moving world.

Influence of Leadership

Leadership influences the way talent management is conducted, this ranges from influencing employee engagement and retention to other vital aspects in the workplace. Great leaders build a workplace that encompasses an atmosphere of belonging, respect, and empowerment-all very critical elements in retaining skilled employees (Mey et al., 2021). By creating such an environment, leaders can significantly enhance employee engagement, which includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. This engagement is crucial for talent retention, as it boosts employee competence and satisfaction while reducing turnover rates (Dyke-Ebirika Ngozi & Amah Edwinah, 2022). To optimize these outcomes, it is essential for organizations to cultivate a talent mindset that permeates the entire organizational structure, beginning with top leadership (Hammadi & Noor, 2020).

The role of leadership in talent acquisition and employee engagement is especially critical for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which rely heavily on their ability to retain top talent (Nelson et al., 2024). Leaders who prioritize personal growth, offer flexibility, and establish meaningful connections with employees are more successful in retaining talent, particularly in technology-driven environments and during challenging periods of COVID-19 pandemic (Mey et al., 2021). These behaviors of leaders are significantly instrumental in creating an enabling and dynamic workplace culture that attracts and retains highly performing employees.

More recent studies have been repeatedly stressing how talent management practices, across varied contexts, influence organizational outcomes and employee retention. Effective talent acquisition, development, and retention strategies are found to have positive influences on both organizational and human resources outcomes. (Cordero-Au Yeung & Tiongson, 2022). Employee engagement, with its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, is a critical component of talent retention, as it enhances employee competence and satisfaction while reducing turnover (Dyke-Ebirika & Amah, 2022). The implementation of robust talent management systems will be fundamentally important in increasing employee engagement and retention to support overall organizational success (Srimulyani, 2020). In the Philippines, the Department of Foreign Affairs has demonstrated the importance of talent development as a primary strength, followed by talent attraction and retention (Cordero-Au Yeung & Tiongson, 2022). This example gives meaning to the call that all efforts should be directed at the development of appropriate comprehensive talent management strategies that improve organizational performance and retain competent personnel. It is also going to suggest that the agenda for employee engagement should be taken on by UMKM, otherwise SMEs in local parlance, if retention of the best workforce is desired (Alden Nelson et al., 2024). From all of these, it stands clear that leadership makes a very significant contribution towards driving organizational success through talent management practices.

In other words, leadership heavily influences talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention. Certainly, leaders can employ such techniques in improving workplace culture by affecting both the performance management practices and the talent management strategies that make sure top talent remains to contribute towards organizational performance. The role of leadership in managing talent hence remains one of the important determinants for the long-term sustainability and success of an organization in the ever-evolving business environment.

Influence of Workplace Culture

The influence of workplace culture on talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention is a critical area of interest within organizational behavior research. Organization culture has been proved through consistent studies to influence the acquisition and retention of talents. A good workplace culture fosters systems that promote the engagement and retention of employees by sustaining a culture concerned with the wellbeing of the employees, positive emotions, health, and competence (Srimulyani, 2020; Dyke-Ebirika & Amah, 2022). Organizational culture ensures managerial effectiveness, consequently increasing employee engagement and retention, reflecting the strong connectedness of a positive work culture with its outcomes in talent management (Tyagi, 2021).

The connection between talent management and retention was further described by findings showing that work engagement partially mediates the impact of talent management systems on employee retention (Srimulyani, 2020). In this context, workplace culture becomes a essential element in shaping how employees perceive their roles, their sense of belonging, and their overall job satisfaction. This becomes especially vital for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs or UMKM), where employee engagement is emphasized as a means to retain top talent and maintain competitive advantage (Alden Nelson et al., 2024).

The workplace factors also have their important role to play in talent management across sectors and organizational settings. In private company environments, for instance, the work environment and engagement are some of the factors that directly influence the retention rate of the employees (Andari et al., 2021). Organizations allowing for the creation of an interesting work culture, which is essentially supportive, are better able to increase employee retention, reduce turnover costs, and retain valuable talent resources. This in turn behooves how well cultural values are aligned with talent management practices to create an enabling environment for people to be satisfied with and loyal to over a long period of time.

Those talents that manage effectively attract, develop, and retain skills within the public sector often bear positive fruits in terms of both organizational and human resources outcomes (Cordero-Au Yeung & Tiongson, 2022). Most of these practices are driven by implicit cultural frameworks that frame such organizations. Therefore, culture is a very core building block in developing effective talent management systems. By putting positive workplace culture at the forefront, public sector organizations will be helping to ensure that talent management strategies align with a greater set of organization-wide goals and employee needs.

Basically, the interaction of workplace culture and talent management is one of the main determinants in organizational performance. Development of positive workplace culture encompasses concepts like engagement and well-being, which form a basis of competence that will build up talent acquisition, retention, and help organizations become effective. It also brings out the fact that where workplace culture is identified as a strategic concern in organizations across contexts, there is better implementation of comprehensive talent management strategies to reflect the core values and business objectives of the organization. Such insights indeed affirm the nurturing of a work environment supportive of approaches to employee engagement and retention for attaining sustainable growth and performance success.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Qualitative research design will be used in this study to understand the effect of leadership and workplace culture in talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention. The qualitative approach is especially useful for obtaining a deep understanding of complex research questions; it involves descriptions in rich detail that provide complex insights into experiences that quantitative methods cannot. This study, therefore, seeks an in-depth look at nuanced dynamics in organizational culture and leadership.

To gather in-depth data, the study relies on focus group discussions and interviews with employees across various industries, including telecommunications, construction, BPO, banking, and remittances. The qualitative method provides the researcher with in-depth study of the experiences and views of participants by capturing the subtlety and complexity inherent in leadership and workplace culture. As a matter of fact, open-ended questions encourage participants to give insight into their personal stories, which give valuable context to this study.

Qualitative data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a method that helps decode, identify, interpret, and report patterns or themes within the data. This analysis will, therefore, enable the researcher to systematically organize and correlate qualitative insights with particular research questions or objectives for an in-depth understanding of the drivers of engagement and retention. By focusing on the experiential aspects of leadership and workplace culture, this study aims to identify those themes and patterns that underpin employee motivation and satisfaction. The qualitative approach taken here enables an inclusive understanding of how styles of leadership and cultural dynamics interact to influence organizational success.

The qualitative research design in this study provides a nuanced exploration of the research questions, offering valuable insights that can guide organizations in developing effective strategies for enhancing talent management. The focus on qualitative data ensures that the findings are contextually rich and practically relevant, enabling organizations to tailor their leadership and workplace culture practices to better support talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention.

Participants and Sampling Technique

This qualitative research design was used to explore how leadership and work culture bear implications for talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention. The study focuses on collecting rich, detailed qualitative data through in-depth interviews with participants from key industries, including telecommunications (Telco), construction, business process outsourcing (BPO), banking, and remittances. A total of 30 respondents was selected to participate, ensuring a diverse representation of these sectors. A purposeful sampling technique was used to select participants who possess substantial experience and insights into their organization's leadership and cultural practices. While participants drawn from a variety of industries, particular emphasis will be placed on the telecommunications and construction sectors, which are crucial to the study's focus. This will help in the capture of a diverse range of perspectives, thereby allowing an exhaustive investigation of research questions. The participants will hold different roles and positions within their respective organizations, ranging from managerial positions to other non-managerial positions. This, therefore, guarantees information that is balanced in terms of leadership and culture concerning the different levels of the organizations.

The sampling and participant selection process is meticulously designed to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives, providing a well-rounded analysis of the research questions. This approach offers a valuable insights into effective leadership and workplace culture strategies that can be applied across different industries to improve organizational outcomes, with significant insights derived from the focus on telecommunications and construction.

Research Instrument

This study, therefore, adopts a qualitative research approach that is dependent upon a primary research instrument to elicit comprehensive data on the effect of leadership and work-place culture on talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention. These are open-ended questions designed to conduct an in-depth interview among participants from the key industries: telecommunications, construction, BPO, banking, and remittances. More emphasis has been given to the sectors of telecommunications and construction, as these two are quite relevant to the present study. The open-ended questions are framed in a way to extract information about participants' experiences and perceptions regarding leadership practice and workplace culture within their respective fields. The questions are targeted at specific details leading to how leadership style and cultural dynamics influence employee engagement and retention. The interviews have been designed to ensure that the participants give detailed narratives and personal reflection, thus allowing the capturing of rich contextual data to gain an in-depth understanding of the underlying factors affecting talent management. Open-ended interviews grant access to rich, contextual data; nuanced exploration of the research questions is possible through interviews by capturing the complexities and subtleties of the organizational dynamics.

Data Gathering Procedure

A formal request is submitted to the management of participating organizations to garner their approval for data collection through in-depth interviews. Upon receiving the necessary approvals, the researcher collaborates with the human resources departments of these organizations to identify suitable participants for the qualitative component. Participants are selected from key industries, including telecommunications, construction, BPO, banking, and remittances, with particular emphasis on the telecommunications and construction sectors. Once participants are identified, the researcher schedules and conducts in-depth interviews with them. These interviews are designed to gather rich, detailed insights into participants' experiences and perspectives regarding leadership practices and workplace culture dynamics within their respective sectors. The qualitative data gathered through these interviews is meticulously transcribed and organized into themes to offer detailed insights into the workplace dynamics being studied. The final stage involves analyzing the collected qualitative data to ensure that the findings are robust and reliable. This qualitative data collection approach enables the researcher to capture nuanced insights into the impact of leadership and workplace culture on organizational outcomes. The thorough analysis informs well-rounded conclusions and actionable recommendations, enhancing the study's overall validity and applicability.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study is done when the data collection process has been completed. In analyzing qualitative data collected, the researcher follows an organized approach to ensure that proper scrutiny of the qualitative data is carried out.

1. **Data Transcription:** The researcher starts by transcribing all the qualitative data gathered from the in-depth interviews. During this stage, audio recordings are converted into a written text format to facilitate detailed analysis.

2. **Decoding:** The researcher will listen listens carefully to the interview recordings to ensure that diction, tone and emphasis are captured accurately in the transcription to analyze verbal utterances effectively.

3. **Thematic Analysis:** This approach involves identification, interpretation, and reporting of themes or patterns within the data. In this regard, a proper reading and re-reading of the data is done to outline the recurring theme and insight into leadership and workplace culture.

4. **Framework Development:** An outline framework or matrix is used in systematizing data so that a researcher can categorize and relate themes with specific research questions or objectives systematically. As such, this aids in ensuring analyses are comprehensive and appropriate to the study aims.

5. **Theme Synthesis:** The researcher synthesizes the data in coherent themes representing the richness and complexity of participants' experiences and perceptions. This synthesis has provided a rich insight into how leadership styles and workplace culture dynamics influence talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention.

6. **Contextualization:** Themes are put into perspective with the bigger picture of the study through their association with the literature review and the theoretical framework. It is here that the depth of analysis is taken further, and caution is taken to ensure that the findings are pegged onto established research.

7. **Interpretation and Reporting:** The researcher interprets the themes and patterns identified, drawing conclusions about the influence of leadership and workplace culture on organizational outcomes. These interpretations are reported in a manner that highlights their relevance and applicability to real-world organizational settings.

Ethical Considerations

Participants in this study were provided with consent forms in advance, which clearly outlined the voluntary nature of their involvement and granted permission for the researchers to record and analyze data collected through in-depth interviews. These consent forms were distributed by informing each target participant about the study's objectives and procedures. Participants were also informed that the data collected would be used solely for the purposes of this research and that all data would be deleted upon the study's conclusion to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Furthermore, the anonymity of participants is strictly maintained to protect their personal information, with no names disclosed as part of the data security measures. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and no participant was coerced, ensuring that their involvement was based on personal interest and willingness. Regarding data storage, the researcher holds the sole responsibility for securely storing the collected data. The researcher is tasked with ensuring that the data is handled with confidentiality and integrity, and no one else is permitted to access or manage the data except the researcher. This measure is in place to safeguard the data and uphold the ethical standards of the study.

Regarding the conflict of interest, the researcher has identified and taken measures to mitigate the same in ensuring that there is no interference with the collection of data. In this connection, respondents who posed potential conflicts of interest were not compelled to go through the research process, thus objectivity and fairness were maintained in the research investigation. This ensures that the collected data is free from bias and actually represents the participants' genuine experiences and perspectives. Again, in this respect, the researcher would confirm that this was to be impressed upon the respondents-that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, at no personal cost. This provision was to safeguard the ethical principle of autonomy, giving participants the assurance to make free choices on whether to continue or withdraw from the research study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *On quality of leadership within the organization*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Communication and Transparency	Open Communication	Leadership is characterized by clear, frequent, and open channels of communication, enabling employees to feel informed and involved in decision-making.	"Our managers regularly hold meetings where they update us on company changes and listen to our concerns. It makes us feel like we're part of the decision-making process."
	Feedback Mechanisms	Leaders actively seek and provide feedback, creating a transparent environment where employees feel valued and heard.	"Whenever we finish a project, our supervisors ask for our feedback on what went well and what could be improved. This helps us perform better in future tasks."
Support and Empowerment	Professional Development	Leaders focus on developing employees' skills and careers through training and mentorship, fostering growth and job satisfaction.	"The leadership in our company is very supportive; they encourage us to take courses and improve our skills. I've had opportunities to attend workshops that have helped me in my current role."

	Empowerment and Autonomy	Employees are given the autonomy to make decisions and take ownership of their work, which boosts their confidence and productivity.	"In my team, the manager trusts us to make decisions on our own. This has really helped me grow because I feel empowered to take initiative and solve problems independently."
Leadership Style and Impact	Directive vs. Collaborative Styles	The approach to leadership varies between a top-down, directive style and a more collaborative, team-oriented approach, affecting employee morale and output.	"In our department, the leadership is very directive, which sometimes stifles creativity. But in other teams, where leaders collaborate with employees, there's a noticeable difference in morale and the quality of work produced."
	Impact on Workplace Culture	The leadership style directly influences the workplace culture, either creating a positive, motivating environment or a more stressful, high-pressure one.	"The leadership at my workplace sets the tone for everything. When they are supportive and positive, it affects us and everyone feels more motivated. However, when they are overly critical, it creates a stressful environment."

The perception of leadership quality within an organization is significantly influenced by communication, support, and leadership style. Respondents emphasize the importance of open communication and transparency which inidicates that effective leaders maintain clear and frequent channels of dialogue. It means it not only keeps the employees updated with changes going on around the company but makes them a part of the decision-making process as well. Secondly, feedback mechanisms that are in place are also important: leaders seek to ask their team members for their opinions to help improve the feelings of value and recognition within the teams. Such practices have resulted in a culture of trust where employees are more connected to their work and better performers.

Support and empowers are also crucial for shaping perception with respect to the leadership qualities: Leaders who give prominence to professional development and skill enhancement opportunities create a considerable rise in employee satisfaction and career growth. Also, by empowering employees with autonomy in decision-making, it bolsters confidence and therefore promises productivity. The leadership style is crucial within the workplace culture, whether directive or collaborative. Therefore, the collaborative leader is more likely to provide an enabling environment that is highly motivating, whereas the effect of a directive approach may have been to inhibit creativity and morale. In sum, results indicated that effective leadership is defined by transparency, support, and a collaborative approach that together enhance employee engagement and organizational performance.

2. *On ways which leadership styles contribute to the overall effectiveness of the organization*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Impact on Team Cohesion	Fostering Collaboration	Leadership styles that prioritize collaboration and teamwork lead to stronger team cohesion, enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.	"When our leaders encourage collaboration, it brings the team closer together. We share ideas more freely, which leads to better outcomes for our projects and the company as a whole."
	Conflict Resolution	Effective leadership includes managing and resolving conflicts promptly, which minimizes disruptions and maintains a productive work environment.	"Our manager is quick to address any issues within the team, preventing small conflicts from escalating. This keeps us focused and productive, which definitely helps the company meet its goals."
Influence on Employee Motivation	Recognition and Reward	Leadership styles that recognize and reward employee contributions boost morale and motivation, directly influencing organizational success.	"When our leaders acknowledge our hard work and reward it, it makes us want to do even better. This kind of motivation is crucial for the overall success of the organization."

	Autonomy and Trust	Leaders who trust employees to manage their tasks independently foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, improving overall effectiveness.	"Having the freedom to make decisions in my role, with the trust of my leader, has made me more invested in my work. This sense of autonomy increases not just my productivity but also the efficiency of the entire team."

The analysis of leadership styles reveals that they significantly influence both team cohesion and employee motivation within organizations. Leadership approaches that emphasize collaboration and teamwork foster a strong sense of unity among team members, leading to enhanced communication and idea-sharing. This collaborative environment not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also contributes to more effective project outcomes. Additionally, effective conflict resolution by leaders minimizes disruptions, allowing teams to maintain focus and productivity. Furthermore, leadership styles that prioritize recognition and reward systems boost employee morale, while those that promote autonomy instill a sense of ownership among team members, ultimately enhancing their commitment to organizational goals.

The findings reveal that different styles of leadership play a significant role in determining the overall effectiveness of organizations. Innovation and efficiency can be encouraged in organizations by supportive leadership approaches, which are able to create a cohesive team atmosphere. These findings have major implications; all organizations should engage in leadership development programs that emphasize conflict resolution and the promotion of strategies for recognizing and building trust. They can then inspire and motivate people better, leading to improved performance and success. Understanding the true meaning of different styles of leadership and implementing them effectively can therefore be an added competitive advantage for organizations desiring to bloom in competitive environments.

3. *On how employees describe their experiences with talent acquisition processes in the organization*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Efficiency of Recruitment Process	Timeliness of Hiring	The speed and efficiency of the recruitment process play a critical role in candidate satisfaction and overall organizational effectiveness.	"The hiring process was swift and well-organized, which made me feel valued as a candidate. It was one of the main reasons I chose to join the organization."
	Communication During Recruitment	Clear and consistent communication throughout the recruitment process enhances the candidate experience and reflects the organization's professionalism.	"I appreciated how well the company kept me informed at every stage of the hiring process. It made me feel confident that this was a place where transparency and respect are prioritized."
Quality of Candidate Evaluation	Fairness in Selection Criteria	The use of fair and transparent selection criteria ensures that the most qualified candidates are chosen, contributing to a positive perception of the organization.	"The interview process was thorough, and I felt that they were genuinely interested in my skills and experience rather than just ticking boxes. This fairness gave me confidence in the company's values."
	Alignment with Company Culture	Evaluating candidates for cultural fit, in addition to skills and qualifications, ensures that new hires contribute positively to the organizational environment.	"What stood out to me was how the interviewers focused on whether I would be a good fit for the company's culture. It wasn't just about my qualifications but about how well I could integrate into the team, which I found very thoughtful."

The employees shared their experiences with talent acquisition processes in the organization, which were largely positive, focusing on key areas such as the speed of the recruitment process and quality of candidate screening. Candidates appreciate timely hiring, noting that a speedy and organized process made them feel valued and influenced by joining the organization. Further, transparency and clear communications at all stages of recruitment lead to

good candidate experience that reflects the organization's professionalism and transparency. This positive feedback hence suggests that an effective recruitment process is necessary to attract top talent and create a positive impression of the organization.

This suggests that the effectiveness of talent acquisition processes significantly impacts candidates' perceptions of the organization. Fairness in selection criteria and a focus on cultural fit during the evaluation process contribute to a positive candidate experience and reinforce the organization's values. Employees feel confident in the organization when they perceive that their skills and experiences are genuinely considered rather than merely fulfilling a checklist. This implies the importance of refining recruitment strategies to prioritize efficiency, open communication, and a holistic approach to candidate evaluation. By doing so, organizations can enhance their reputation, attract high-quality candidates, and ultimately build a cohesive and culturally aligned workforce.

4. *On employees' perceptions of their engagement levels within the workplace*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Work Engagement Levels	High Engagement	Describes respondents who perceive themselves as highly engaged in their work.	"I would rate my engagement at work as very high because I feel motivated and passionate about what I do."
	Low Engagement	Describes respondents who perceive themselves as having low engagement at work.	"My engagement is quite low lately because I don't feel connected to my tasks anymore."
Contributing Factors	Supportive Work Environment	Factors related to the presence of a positive, encouraging, and collaborative work environment that contributes to engagement.	"The support from my colleagues and management really keeps me engaged."
	Recognition and Rewards	Factors related to the acknowledgment and rewarding of employees' efforts, leading to increased engagement.	"Being recognized for my hard work makes me more invested in what I do."
Personal Motivation	Passion for the Job	Refers to respondents' intrinsic motivation and personal passion for their work as a driving force for engagement.	"I am passionate about my job, which is why I stay highly engaged."
	Career Growth Opportunities	Describes how opportunities for advancement and professional development within the organization contribute to employee engagement.	"The potential for growth and learning in my role keeps me engaged and striving to do better."

Employees' perceptions of their engagement levels within the workplace vary significantly, with some reporting high engagement while others experience low engagement. Those who perceive themselves as highly engaged express feelings of motivation and passion for their work, indicating a strong connection to their roles. For instance, one employee stated, "I would rate my engagement at work as very high because I feel motivated and passionate about what I do." Conversely, employees with low engagement report feeling disconnected from their tasks, as illustrated by a statement like, "My engagement is quite low lately because I don't feel connected to my tasks anymore." This disparity shows the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to varying levels of engagement among employees.

Key results regarding the drivers of employee engagement vary from a helpful working atmosphere and recognition with rewards to personal motivation and an opportunity for career growth. Respondents outline that support from colleagues and management increases their engagement, as recognition of one's effort creates a return in the higher investment in their work. Besides, intrinsic motivation, enabled by the passion for the job itself and the possibility of professional growth, is very important. Consequences Thus, building a positive work environment, recognition programs, and opportunities for growth will become crucial. These factors within the organization will enhance the engagement of the employees and consequently bring better productivity, reduced turnover rate, and commitment to staying in the workplace.

5. *On how employees feel about their likelihood of remaining with the company*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Factors Influencing Retention	Job Satisfaction	Describes how overall satisfaction with the job, including tasks, responsibilities, and work environment,	"I am satisfied with my current role and responsibilities, which makes me want to stay with the company."

		influences the decision to stay with the company.	
	Work-Life Balance	Refers to the importance of maintaining a balance between work responsibilities and personal life, affecting the likelihood of remaining with the company.	"The ability to balance work and personal life is crucial for my decision to stay."
	Compensation and Benefits	Describes how salary, bonuses, and other benefits influence the decision to continue working with the company.	"The competitive salary and benefits package are significant factors in my decision to remain with the company."
Potential Changes Impacting Decision	Career Advancement Opportunities	Refers to how the availability of promotions, professional development, and growth opportunities could influence the decision to stay.	"If there were more opportunities for career growth, it would definitely make me more committed to staying."
	Management and Leadership	Describes how changes in management style or leadership practices could impact the decision to stay or leave the company.	"A change in management approach could affect my decision to stay, especially if it becomes less supportive."

Employees express a range of feelings regarding their likelihood of remaining with the company, with several key factors influencing their decisions. Job satisfaction is an important issue here, as when people enjoy their jobs, roles, and work environment, they are more likely to stay. Responses included statements like this: "I am satisfied with my current role and responsibilities, so that makes me want to stay with the company." Another important concern is work-life balance-the need to have a healthy balance between work and personal life. An employee commented, "Balancing between work and personal life is important for my decision to stay." Compensation and benefits, again, play a very important part in retention, with competitive salaries and comprehensive benefit packages being the key variable to deciding to stay with the company.

This presents that several potential changes could impact employees' decisions to stay with the organization, particularly regarding career advancement opportunities and management practices. Employees express that the availability of promotions and professional development opportunities could significantly enhance their commitment to the company, with one remarking, "If there were more opportunities for career growth, it would definitely make me more committed to staying." Furthermore, changes in management style or leadership practices are critical; a shift towards a less supportive management approach could negatively affect employees' likelihood of remaining. This finding merely reiterates that investment in job satisfaction, work-life balance, and competitive remuneration packages by organizations will pay off. In addition, supportive management culture and clearly defined career development opportunities can provide substantial push for employee retention rates and result in a more stable and active workforce.

6. *On ways which leadership and workplace culture shape the experiences of talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Effectiveness of Talent Sourcing	Diverse Recruitment Channels	Use of various channels to attract a wide range of candidates.	"Our company sources candidates through multiple platforms, which helps in finding a diverse pool of talent."
	Candidate Matching	Effectiveness of aligning candidates' skills with job requirements.	"The screening process ensures that the skills of the candidates align well with the job expectations."
Interview and Selection Process	Structured Interviews	Implementation of standardized interview procedures across the organization.	"The interviews were very structured, with every candidate undergoing the same set of questions and assessments."

	Candidate Experience	Impact of the interview process on the candidates' perceptions of the company.	"The interview process was professional, making me feel valued as a potential employee."
Onboarding and Integration	Smooth Onboarding	The process of effectively integrating new hires into the organization.	"The onboarding process was seamless, and I quickly felt like part of the team."
	Initial Training and Support	Adequacy of training and support provided during the initial phase of employment.	"The training provided during onboarding was thorough, which helped me get up to speed quickly."

The effectiveness of talent sourcing is significantly enhanced by utilizing diverse recruitment channels, which allows organizations to attract a wide range of candidates. Research indicates that companies employing multiple platforms, such as social media, job portals, and traditional media, can tap into a more diverse talent pool. This approach not only increases the quantity of applicants but also improves the quality of candidates by aligning their skills with job requirements through a structured screening process. The effectiveness of these channels is emphasized by findings that suggest the amount and specificity of information provided in recruitment messages can significantly influence candidate attraction and fit with organizational needs.

The interviewing and selection process can make or break a candidate's perception of the organization through structured interviews, which will standardize what each candidate is asked. A very effective interview process builds in a good candidate experience where individuals will feel wanted and valued. That is critical for employer branding, as candidates who perceive the process to be positive are more likely to accept their offers of employment and become highly engaged employees. Moreover, onboarding and initial training complete the cycle of induction of new recruits into the family-organization, allowing them to feel part of it and equipping them better with the knowledge required for the job. In this respect, a smooth transition can lead to increased job satisfaction and retention rate, which, after all, would benefit organizational performance and avert the turnover costs.

7. *On which leadership and workplace culture influence the overall dynamics of the organization*

Theme	**Subthemes**	**Description**	**Significant Statement**
Impact of Leadership on Team Morale	Supportive Leadership Practices	Leadership behaviors that boost team morale and motivation.	"Our leaders are always supportive, which boosts our morale and makes us more committed to our tasks."
	Decision-Making Inclusivity	Involvement of employees in the decision-making process.	"Being involved in decisions makes us feel valued and more invested in our work."
Influence of Workplace Culture	Collaborative Work Environment	The culture of teamwork and collaboration within the organization.	"The collaborative culture here encourages us to share ideas and work together effectively."
Organizational Dynamics and Adaptability	Adaptability to Change	How leadership and culture contribute to the organization's ability to adapt.	"The leadership and open culture here make us adaptable to changes in the industry."
	Alignment with Organizational Goals	How leadership and culture align with and support organizational objectives.	"Our workplace culture and leadership are closely aligned with the company's goals, driving us all in the same direction."

The table shows that supportive leadership practices and a collaborative workplace culture have strong effects on employee morale, motivation, and commitment. Consequently, across participants, there is agreement that if the leaders are genuinely supportive and include members of the team in the processes of decision-making, this builds a sense of ownership and belonging. It is not only individual motivation that is enhanced by this inclusive approach, but it also cements collective commitment to organizational goals. This is particularly important because leadership strategies aligned with the objectives of the company drive the employees to work together, collaborating towards shared outputs and, finally, improved performance. An additional focus on collaboration creates an environment where the sharing of ideas leads to finding innovative solutions and a positive atmosphere conducive to teamwork. Participants observe that the open culture fostered by the leadership is one of the reasons why the organization is able to keep pace with many changes taking place within the industry. On the other hand, leading practices aligned with the organizational goals strengthen the power of commonality among all group members moving in the same direction. All this interplay between leadership and culture, along with adaptability, pays dividends in

team morale and positions the organization for success in a competitive landscape. An important interaction among constituent elements helps in shaping an environment that is productive yet resilient.

Thus, it highlights the profound impact of supportive leadership and a collaborative workplace culture on employee morale and commitment. When employees feel valued, heard, and bought into what is important to the organization, they will obviously be more willing to go the extra mile. This reflects that a work environment that bolsters open communication, joint decision-making, and shared purpose brings about positive results in terms of employee satisfaction, engagement, and performance.

8. *On additional factors which employees believe impact talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Factors Influencing Talent Acquisition	Competitive Compensation and Benefits	The role of attractive salary packages and benefits in attracting talent.	"Offering competitive salaries and benefits is crucial for attracting top talent in this industry."
	Employer Branding	The impact of a strong and positive employer brand on talent acquisition.	"A good reputation as an employer makes people want to join our company."
	Recruitment Process Efficiency	The importance of a smooth and timely recruitment process.	"An efficient hiring process shows that the company values potential employees from the start."
Factors Impacting Employee Engagement and Retention	Work-Life Balance	The significance of providing a balanced work-life environment for retention.	"Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is key to keeping employees engaged and loyal to the company."
	Professional Growth Opportunities	The availability of career development opportunities as a retention factor.	"Employees are more likely to stay when they see opportunities for growth and development within the company."

Several key factors influencing talent acquisition, particularly the significance of competitive compensation and benefits, employer branding, and recruitment process efficiency. Good remunerations and adequate benefits are crucial for attracting superior talent in the highly competitive labor market. Participants emphasize that a strong and positive employer brand significantly impacts talent acquisition, as a good reputation makes prospective candidates eager to join the organization. Additionally, an effective and timely recruitment process would signal that, from the very beginning, potential employees are appreciated by the company, a good impression likely to shape candidates' attitudes either in applying for a vacancy or accepting an offer of employment.

According to the factors that influence employee engagement and retention, it is with regard to the essence of work-life balance that brings into focus another critical element of employee loyalty and employee engagement. To them, a work life balanced environment would help employees in their satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Besides, opportunities for professional growth also serve as a decisive factor in retention, where employees would feel inclined towards continuing with an organization if there is something overlying in terms of career development. That alignment between employee needs and organizational offerings improves not only engagement but also leads to long-term retention that helps the organization by reducing turnover and creating a more committed workforce.

9. *On employee perception on the effectiveness of workplace culture in relation to talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Alignment with Organizational Values	Consistency in Practices	The extent to which workplace culture aligns with and consistently reflects the organization's values.	"Our workplace culture is strong because it mirrors the core values of the company in every aspect of our work."
	Employee Buy-In	The degree to which employees believe in and adopt the culture,	"When everyone believes in the company's mission, it creates a

		leading to better engagement and retention.	more cohesive environment where people want to stay."
Supportive Environment	Professional Development	How workplace culture fosters continuous learning and growth opportunities, which enhance talent retention.	"The culture here is centered on growth, which makes me feel valued and encourages me to stay and develop further."
	Recognition and Reward	The role of recognizing and rewarding employee contributions in boosting engagement and retention.	"The acknowledgment of hard work through rewards really motivates us to perform better and stay with the company."
Flexibility and Work-Life Balance	Adaptability to Employee Needs	How the culture's flexibility in work arrangements supports employee well-being and retention.	"The flexibility in work hours and understanding of personal needs make this a place where I feel I can balance my life and career."
	Encouragement of Work-Life Balance	The promotion of work-life balance within the culture and its impact on employee satisfaction.	"Our culture emphasizes work-life balance, which is crucial for maintaining long-term employee satisfaction."

The importance of alignment with organizational values, emphasizing consistency in practices and employee buy-in as critical components of a strong workplace culture. In this respect, participants have quickly pointed out that an ideal workplace culture is realized if it depicts core values in every operational aspect of the organization. This foster belonging and a sense of purpose among the employees since they feel their contributions are meaningful and in line with the company's mission. It attracts harmony in the working environment by increasing engagement and retention when there is an utmost belief in employees in organizational values, to which they have a greater liability to remain attached.

In addition to alignment with values, the presence of a supportive environment is essential for fostering professional development and recognizing employee contributions. Participants express that a culture centered on growth and continuous learning makes them feel valued, encouraging them to stay and develop further within the organization. Recognition and reward systems play a essential role in boosting employee engagement, as acknowledgment of hard work motivates individuals to perform better and remain loyal to the company. Furthermore, flexibility and work-life balance are highlighted as vital aspects of the workplace culture that support employee well-being. Work arrangement flexibility and balance in work life have been very important in developing a working environment where individuals can feel they can manage to accomplish life both at home and at work. This holistic approach to workplace culture ultimately enhances talent retention and fosters a committed and satisfied workforce.

10. *On employee perception on the relationship between leadership practices and workplace culture in fostering a supportive environment for talent acquisition, employee engagement, and retention*

Theme	Subthemes	Description	Significant Statement
Leadership as a Cultural Driver	Influence on Organizational Values	How leadership practices shape and reinforce the core values that define workplace culture.	"The leaders here set the tone for the entire company, and their commitment to our values is what keeps the culture strong."
	Role Modeling Behavior	The impact of leaders demonstrating the desired behaviors and attitudes on employee engagement and retention.	"When our leaders walk the talk, it inspires us to do the same, creating a positive and engaged work environment."
	Communication and Transparency	The importance of clear and open communication from leaders in fostering trust and a supportive workplace culture.	"Open communication from our leaders builds trust, making us feel more engaged and committed to the organization."

Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership	Employee Involvement in Decision-Making	The effect of involving employees in decision-making processes on their sense of belonging and retention.	"When leaders involve us in decisions, it makes us feel valued and more connected to the company's success."
	Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion	How leadership practices that promote diversity and inclusion contribute to a supportive and engaged workforce.	"Leaders who prioritize diversity and inclusion create a culture where everyone feels welcome, which is key to both engagement and retention."

It is indicted that the role played by leadership towards shaping and driving the workplace culture is very important. Leaders ensure that the influence of organizational values, which define the culture, comes from the top, since a commitment to core values by the leaders themselves sets the pace for the whole company. Participants emphasize that if leaders are continuously over with commitments to the values of the organization, it reinforces the strength of culture and moves it along with the company's mission. Also, leaders who model the intended behaviors and attitude tend to be quite influential in engaging employees and retaining them. When they see the leaders walking through the talk, it will drive people to imitate those positive behaviors and create an atmosphere of being productive and engaged in the workplace.

Clear and open communication from leaders is also critical in fostering trust and a supportive workplace culture. Participants highlight that transparent communication from leadership builds trust, and thus makes employees more involved and attached to the organization. This again would be helped if the leader showed them that their contributions to decision-making processes are valued, since this contributes to the feeling of belonging and attachment to the success of the company. The feelings of voice and opinion being valued increase loyalty among employees. Additionally, this type of leadership that values diversity will help create a more inclusive culture where people feel that they belong, which is a very important component of both engagement and retention. By promoting an inclusive environment, leaders demonstrate their commitment to creating a supportive and engaged workforce.

CONCLUSION

It is highlighted that leadership impacts quality on employee perceptions and overall organizational effectiveness. Effective leadership, characterized by open communication, support, and collaborative styles, fosters a positive workplace environment that enhances employee motivation and satisfaction. Leaders who stress these elements are not only able to benefit from team cohesion but also create a culture wherein the employees feel valued and can engage. That explains the need for investment in leadership development programs emphasizing communication skills and collaborative practices. Besides, recruitment is a very decisive thing in candidature building. Indeed, organizations using varied recruitment channels can allow transparency in the entire recruitment process and attract a high-quality candidate. Organizations that utilize diverse recruitment channels and maintain transparency throughout the hiring process are more likely to attract a high-quality candidate. The implementation of step-by-step and structured interviews and ensuring a positive candidate experience allows companies to enhance their reputation and facilitate smoother integration of new hires. That means a well-structured recruitment strategy is important to build a superior workforce which will match or align with the culture and values of the company.

Employee engagement is considered crucial for retention that emanates from work support, recognition, and opportunities given for professional growth. From the results, organizations that can facilitate work-life balance and provide more avenues of career advancement are capable of retaining the motivation and commitment of the employees. This portrays the need for leaders to actively foster an environment that supports both personal and professional development, as it directly correlates with employee satisfaction and loyalty. Finally, the alignment between workplace culture and organizational values is fundamental to enhancing employee buy-in and retention. Leadership plays an essential role in reinforcing these values and modeling desired behaviors. Through clear communication and inclusive practices, leaders can build trust and promote a diverse workplace that encourages a sense of belonging. Thus, good leadership, a transparent recruitment process, and a friendly working environment can guarantee increased employee engagement and satisfaction levels, which in turn ensure greater retention levels and more significant organizational success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following are suggested:

1. Leaders should prioritize training that enhances communication skills, collaborative practices, and inclusive decision-making. This investment will empower leaders to create a more positive work environment that boosts employee morale and engagement.

2. HR departments should develop and maintain a recruitment strategy that emphasizes transparency and utilizes diverse channels to attract high-quality candidates. Structured interviews and a focus on positive candidate experiences should be standard practices to enhance the organization's reputation.

3. Companies should actively promote initiatives that support work-life balance and career development opportunities. This could include mentorship programs, flexible working arrangements, and professional development workshops.

4. The management in a company should ensure that the company's values are clearly communicated and integrated into daily practices. Leaders should model these values consistently to reinforce a sense of belonging and trust within the workforce.

5. Evaluators or those who assess work should establish clear recognition programs that celebrate employee achievements and contributions. Implementing regular feedback mechanisms and reward systems can significantly enhance motivation and employee satisfaction.

6. Mediators should provide training and resources for leaders and employees to effectively address and resolve conflicts. This proactive approach will help maintain a harmonious and productive work environment.

7. Feedback committee should regularly conduct assessments to gauge employee satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Utilizing this feedback to make informed decisions will enhance engagement and retention efforts.

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