

**Impact of leadership styles on employee performance: A study on Male' Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC) in Maldives**

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Griffith College Dublin

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28<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## **Candidate Declaration**

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submitted for the degree of MSc in International Business Management is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved parents, Ahmed Zareer and Niuma Afeef, for their unconditional love and support to pursue master's degree successfully. Mom, I'm immensely grateful for your countless prayers. Dad, thank you for encouraging me by providing an inspirational reflection on life. I will always cherish the love and care I receive from you both.

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## **Abstract**

### **Impact of leadership styles on employee performance: A study on Male' Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC) in Maldives**

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This study investigates the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in Male' Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC) in Maldives. The research study used quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis to determine the predicted variance of leadership styles on the performance of employees. The sample size consisted 175 employees from MWSC through convenience sampling technique. The study used Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), participative leadership and employee performance scale. SPSS software was used to conduct demographic analysis, normality, descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis. The findings of this study show, transformational leadership style has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. However, transactional, participative and laissez-faire leadership style had insignificant impact on employee performance. Thus, it is suggested that the company should adopt and practice transformational leadership style which will enhance employee performance more. The findings of this study will help managers to understand the roles of leadership styles better and their impact on employee performance as well as which particular leadership style to be adopted in order to achieve higher employee performance.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez Faire Leadership, participative leadership, employee performance.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

MWSC- Male' Water and Sewerage Company

SOE- State Owned Enterprises

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Overview**

This study will be examining the impact of leadership style on employee performance in MWSC. This chapter discuss the research background of this topic, statement of problem. Followed by, justification and significance of the study is discussed. Research objectives and research questions are also stated. Lastly, a brief structure of the study is included in the end of this chapter.

## **1.2 Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in Male' Water and sewerage Company in Maldives.

The complexity in the operations of business needs effective involvement from all the areas of the business (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Employees are one of the most fundamental assets of a company which plays a major role in achieving organizational goals and ensuring its smooth running (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). The effect of employee performance on productivity has been a significant study in the field of organizational management thus, measuring and managing employee performance is vital as their performance is vital to the overall productivity of the organization (Tandoh, 2011). Thus, employees of the business can become the company's competitive advantage if they are treated effectually (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). This is supported in many literatures that managers have significant influence on their employees (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016; Masa'deh et al., 2016). Paracha et al., (2012), asserts that leaders have a significant part in achieving organizational goals as well as enhancing performance of employees. Hence, the importance of leadership and its styles in service sector is increasing as this sector effects the economy directly and the development in this sector contributes to the growth of the country's economy particularly in developing nations (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016).

SOE's play a crucial role in Maldivian economy (IMF, 2019). SOE's contribution to the GDP of Maldivian economy is a fundamental indicator of their value in the country (ADB, 2019). Although, the performance of certain SOE's are adequate, there are several SOE's whose performance has decreased over the period (IMF, 2019). One of the SOE that has been facing the issue of low performance is MWSC (Jaufar, 2016). MWSC is a State Owned Enterprise established on April 1995 (MWSC, 2020). Since the company has been facing the issue of low performance, it experience challenges to run the company with multiple projects (Jaufar, 2016). Poor performance is one of the biggest concern of the company's management (Jaufar, 2016). According to Hameed and Waheed (2011), and Awori (2017), employee performance contribute to company's productiveness. Vosloban (2012), asserts that organization's performance depends directly on the performance of each employees thus, leaders are always trying to increase performance of employees. Employee performance is defined as the successful accomplishment of the work set and measured by the organization, by employees using the available resources effectually and efficiently within the changing business environment (Thao and Hwang, 2015). Omonona et al., (2019), states that the performance of employees in every firm highly relies on the style of leadership exhibited by their manager and the satisfaction of employees is directly correlated with performance of the organization. Thus, more importance should be given to adopt the best leadership style that enhances employee performance the most (Turner and Muller, 2005). Leadership is defined as a human symbolic-communication that adjust followers behaviors to accomplish a common objectives (Hackman and Johnson, 2013). Poor performance of MWSC could be due to the different leadership styles exhibit by different managers of the company. Therefore, to address this issues, it is important to assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in MWSC to determine the best leadership style that enhances employee performances the most (Turner and Muller, 2005).

According to Bass and Avolio's full range leadership model, transformational and transactional leadership styles are the most effective leadership styles to increase employees performance, to motivate and influence their behaviors (Wen et al., 2019). Transactional leadership is defined as a leadership style where leaders offers employees a reward or threat of punishment in exchange for the accomplishment of the task (James A and Ogbonna, 2013). On the other hand, a transformational leadership style is where the leader encourages, motivates and transforms followers to accomplish outstanding

results (Robbins and Coulter, 2007). Similarly, certain famous researchers have asserted that laissez-faire leadership style had boosted employee performance (Martin et al., 2013). According to Dallyay and Jalagat (2016), laissez-faire leadership is a leadership style where the leader avoids involving in the decision-making process even though he is the one who is accountable for it and gives more freedom to employees to make decisions on their own. Other researchers like Akpoviro et al., (2018), suggests that the businesses should employ participative leadership style as it increases employee confidence and boost company's overall productivity and performance. Participative leadership also known as democratic leadership is a leadership style where leaders encourage joint decision making and stimulate participation (Somech, 2006).

There is no similar research study been conducted to investigate the effect of leadership style on employee performance in the context of Maldives. However, leadership styles have been one of the most researched topics in the global context. Limited studies have been conducted in the context of water production companies, government corporations and related context such as public sector and utility sector globally. Itunga and Awuor (2019), investigated the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in Kenya's state organizations. They found that transformational and laissez faire styles positively predicts performance of employees in this sector. However, transactional leadership was found have positive but insignificant influence. Another study done in the service sector in Klang Valley in Malaysia found that laissez-fair leadership style have negative and insignificant influence on the performance of employees, while democratic/participative leadership style has a positive and significant influence (Chua et al., 2018). Girei (2015), conducted a study in the context of package water producing industry in Nigeria and found that transformational leadership style and transactional leadership positively and significantly related to the performance of employees. However, laissez faire leadership style negatively and insignificantly relates to performance among the employees. Malcalm and Tamatey (2017), conducted study on leadership styles and employee performance on Ghana's public sector. Their findings show that both transformational transactional leadership and laissez-faire styles have no influence on employee's performance in this sector. Jama (2017), examined transformational, democratic/participative and transactional leadership style on employee performance in Somaliland's ministry of education and higher studies and found that all three leadership styles positively and significantly impacts performance of employees in this sector.

Therefore, it is important to identify which leadership style boosts employee performance in MWSC the most since an effective leadership style would facilitate to improve employee performance (Hurduzeu, 2015), as well as organization's success is associated employee performance (Drucker, 2007). Thus, the fact that no study has been done on the leadership style and employee performance in MWSC or in the context of any organizations in Maldives and the need to assess the impact of leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in order to determine the most effective leadership style that enhances employee performance which can contribute to address the poor performance issue faced by the company drove the researcher to conduct this study and it is the justification to conduct this research. Transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership styles are adopted as independent variables and employee performance as the dependent variable in this study.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Future research and academics**

Findings of this study will benefit the academia as it has addressed the research gap existed and adds value to the existing literature and knowledge regarding leadership styles and employee performance. The findings of this study also suggest and gives recommendations on the most effective leadership style that enhances employee performance the most.

#### **1.3.2 Public policy makers**

This research study is unique as there is no similar research study conducted on this topic in the context of Maldives. This study will be significant as it will provide comprehensive knowledge about leadership styles on employee performance and will be beneficial to identify the best leadership style that can improve the performance of employees the most which will be beneficial to stakeholders, policy makers in MWSC as well as SOEs. Findings of this study can be used as a key factor in panning, implementing and adopting the recruitment policy of the government and top-level management of SOEs in Maldives. Thus, this study will be beneficial to the whole country as better performance of SOE's

will improve and maintain economic growth in Maldives as SOE's play an important role and contributes to Maldivian economy (IMF, 2019).

### **1.3.3 Company management and stakeholders**

This study will be beneficial to the managers and HR department of MWSC as the findings will broaden their knowledge regarding the effective leadership style that enhances employee's performance the most, allowing them to hire managers/supervisors that has the recommended leadership style and to foster it within the organization. With effective adoption, it will increase employee's performance and their productivity thereby increasing organizational performance.

## **1.4 Research Objective**

The general objective of this research is to examine the impact of leadership styles on the performance of employees at MWSC in Maldives.

### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives**

Following are the specific research objectives that guided this study:

- To investigate the impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.
- To examine the impact of transactional leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.
- To analyse the impact laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.
- To evaluate the impact of participative leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.
- To identify the leadership style that enhances employee performance the most in MWSC in Maldives.
- To examine the impact of overall leaderships styles on employee performance.

### **1.4.2 Research Questions**

The study addressed the following questions:

- What is the impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives?
- What is the impact of transactional leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives?
- What is the impact of laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives?
- What is the impact of participative leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives?
- What leadership style enhances employee performance the most in MWSC in Maldives?
- What is the impact of overall leadership styles on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives?

## **1.5 Structure of the Study**

This research study comprises five chapters.

Chapter 1- Introduction: This chapter explains the introduction of the study, purpose of the study, research background, problem statement, justification, significance of the study followed by research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2- Literature review: This chapter provides deep information about the context of the company and variables such as transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership styles and employee performance. Next, it covers theoretical review, empirical review, research gap, hypotheses of the study and presents a conceptual framework.

Chapter 3- Methodology and research design: This chapter explains the methodology adopted in this research. It covers research strategy, research philosophy, research instrument, research approach, sources of the data, target population, sample size, sampling method, accessibility and ethical considerations, data processing and analysis.

Chapter 4- Presentation and discussion of the findings: This chapter discuss the findings and results of demographic analysis, reliability test, normality test, descriptive statistics, multiple regression and correlation analysis.

Chapter 5- Conclusion, limitation and recommendation: This chapter discuss the implication, recommendations, suggestion and limitation of the research.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

This chapter discuss the literature review related to this study. It provides a general overview of Maldivian SOEs and MWSC, discussion of employee performance and leadership styles, a critical theoretical review, an empirical review based on the past research studies conducte.. It also presents the conceptual framework developed which serve as a framework for this research. Followed by it, statement of hypotheses is presented and lastly, a brief chapter summary is included.

### **2.2 Overview of Maldivian SOE's and MWSC**

Maldives is a country of approximately 1192 islands with a population of nearly 515,696 people and around one third of the population lives in the capital of the Maldives, Male' (Theworldbank, 2020). Tourism is the major sector as well as the main economic driving force in Maldives while, fishing is the second largest sector of the country which generates a huge amount of the nation's income by exporting fresh fish and other marine products (Mymaldives, 2020). According to World Bank, the GDP of the country is worth \$5.73 billion in 2019 (Theworldbank, 2020). However, the GDP of Maldives which is one of the economic indicator of the country fell from 6.9% in 2018 to 5.9% in 2019 (ADB, 2020).

SOEs play a fundamental role in Maldivian economy (IMF, 2019). SOEs refers to organizations that are fully or partially owned by the government of Maldives which have played a vital role in the economy of the country (IMF, 2019). In 2017, 23 SOEs contributed 11.2% to the GDP of Maldives with total revenue of MVR 27.8 billion whereas, in 2018, 9.6% was contributed by 15 SOEs to the GDP with a revenue of MVR 26.6 billion (ADB, 2019). However, the performance of several SOEs have declined over the period and many of them have not generated profits (IMF, 2019).

MWSC is one of the SOE's that has been facing the issue of low performance (Jaufar, 2016). The company distributes potable water, provides water utility and sewage facilities across Maldives and supply electricity in Dhuvaafaru Island (MinistryOfFinance, 2019). Initially MWSC was providing potable water and wastewater management but as the

economy has been changing, today the company has expanded to become an engineering and manufacturing organization as well. Government appoints MWSC's board of directors entirely and has 80% shares in the company (Latheef, 2019). MWSC contributed 0.7% to the GDP of the country in 2018 (ADB, 2019). However, poor performance is one of the biggest concerns of the company's management (Jaufar, 2016). From 2016 to 2017, the company's gross profit has fell by 1% and there was a 6% decline in net profit (MinistryOfFinance, 2019). The company's revenue also declined by 1.4% and 3.6% in quarter 3 in 2018 and quarter 2 in 2019 respectively (PrivatizationAndCorporatizationBoard, 2019). According to Vosloban (2012), organization's performance depends directly on the performance of each employees thus, leaders are always trying to increase performance of employees. Tandoh, (2011), stated that the key factor that cause the success of the company is employee performance. Thus, the poor performance of MWSC maybe due to the poor performance of employees. Hurduzeu (2015), notes that effectual leadership style would facilitate to improve employee performance in a firm. Thus, the leadership style exhibit by the leaders plays an important role in improving the performance of the employees which then leads to increase the performance of the firm (Anyango, 2015). The top management and board of directors of MWSC has been changing over the period and government has been appointing new managers and board of directors. Managing director, deputy managing director, board members, top executives ads well as the middle management level managers of the company has changed a number of times during the past 3 years (AVAS, 2020; Sunonline, 2015; Oneonline, 2020; PSM, 2018; Malsa, 2020; MinistryOfFinance, 2019). Poor performance of MWSC could be due to the effect of different leadership styles exhibit by these different managers of the company. Thus, more importance should be given to adopt the best leadership style that enhances employee performances the most (Turner and Muller, 2005). Therefore, it is important to examine the leadership styles and its impact on employee performance in MWSC.

### **2.3 Employee performance and leadership styles**

Conway and Monks (2008), defined employee performance as the degree to which an employee accomplish the responsibilities that are necessary to retain the role given to the employee within the organization. One of the major goal of any firm is to improve their

employee's performance, so that the organization can be successful in today's changing environment (Anyango, 2015). This is because organization's success is associated with firm's performance and their commitment (Drucker, 2007). According Mathis and Jackson (2010), employee performance is linked with quantity and quality of output, timeliness, presence/attendance on the work, efficiency of the task accomplished, and effectiveness of the task accomplished. Hakala (2008), stated that the quantity, quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness are the indicators and measurement for employee performance. Therefore, this study adopted timelines, quality of work, quantity of work, need for supervision and interpersonal impact as the key indicators of the employee performance. According to Jama, (2017), to encourage employees to enhance their performance is relied on the leadership style exhibited by the managers of the organization. Leadership styles exhibited by the leaders can either encourage or demotivate employees which leads to increase or decrease their performance level (Anyango, 2015). Thus, employees need to be guided by effective leadership style from their managers to perform at their best (Jama, 2017). It is important to assess employee perception towards the impact of leadership style on employee performance. Employee perception is fundamental in when dealing with organizational behavior because behaviors of employees are based on their perception of what reality actually is (Panimalar *et al.*, 2013). To carry out tasks, the organization needs perception that is accepted by each and every employee thus, employee perception is important for the leaders to get better outcomes for the organization (Panimalar *et al.*, 2013).

Transformational and transactional leadership has been supported by vast amount of empirical studies and receives great empirical attention in the area of employee's performance, suggesting that they are the effective leadership styles for increasing performance of the employees (Lor and Hassan, 2017). Transformational leaders transforms their employee's skills, competencies, principles and their beliefs (Abimbola et al., 2017). Transformational leadership is visionary where the leader leads their followers by a shared vision and motivate them to achieve specific goals (Abimbola et al., 2017). Psychological empowerment employed by transformational managers improves association between them and employees and therefore eventually enhancing performance of employees (Arinanye, 2015). There are 4 dimensions of transformational leadership known as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Lor and Hassan, 2017). Leaders who possess idealized

influence trait build trust, loyalty and confidence with their followers and develop a collective mission and vision with them (Luthans and Doh, 2018). Inspirational motivation is when the leader articulates a clear vision to their employees and set high goals and motivate their employees to reach them (Arifin et al., 2014). Intellectual stimulation trait of transformational leadership is when the leader guides his employees to solve problems in a more creative way and ensures that employees understand and conceptualize the issues (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Individualized consideration is the level of personal attention and encouragement given to the employees on the basis of their individual characteristics, attributes, differences, capacities and needs (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Therefore, this study uses idealized influence (attributed and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration as the key indicators of transformational leadership style. Upon reviewing many global cases, Bass identified that transformational leaders were the most effectual supervisors/managers (Luthans and Doh, 2018).

On the other hand, transactional leaders offers employees a reward or threat of punishment in exchange for the accomplishment of the task (Savovic, 2017). If the employees accomplish the given task, they will be rewarded such as receiving praise and recognition. If the employees could not achieve the agreed-upon objectives, they will be given a punishment or a corrective action (Riaz and Haider, 2010). The exchange of reward for agreed-upon objectives tends to be a short term relationship between the leader and employees which will give short-term exchanges of fulfillment and brings indignation between the leader and employees (McCleskey, 2014). There are three elements of this leadership style which are contingent reward, management by exception (active) management by exception (passive) (Abimbola et al., 2017). Contingent reward is that the leader make clarification about the work that the subordinate is required to do in exchange for rewards and promotions when the desired result is achieved (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012). Management by exception (active) is when the leader monitor the performance of the employee and taking the corrective action before the problem arise to make sure that the objectives are accomplished (Greiman, 2009). Management by exception (passive) is refers when the leader interferes only when the employee fails to meet the objective, they does not foresee the incoming problems, but once the problem arise, takes corrective action (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Thus, this study adopted contingent reward, management by exception (active) and management by

exception (Passive) as the key indicators of transactional leadership style. Transactional leadership can impact employee performance positively or negatively. Positive impact will arise when the subordinates evaluate transactional style positively and the negative impact arise when they decide that they cannot trust transactional leader due to lack of trust, or the leaders not being transparent (Awori, 2017).

Laissez-faire leaders shun decision making, avoid giving rewards and feedback to employees (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016a). These leaders are reluctant to be actively involved in setting goals and objectives, unwilling to take actions and tend to avoid situations where they have to face the problems or where their direction is required (Jones and Rudd, 2008; Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Thus, employees often get dissatisfied, less productive, ineffective and inefficient at their workplace (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Laissez- faire leadership gives employees maximum freedom and authority to make decisions by themselves (Anyango, 2015). This leadership style is suitable for firms that have decentralized structure and the employees working are motivated, capable, skilled and experienced to make decision on their own (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016). Employees are free to carry out the tasks on their own way and to have their own policy and approaches to make decisions (Anyango, 2015). This leadership style is being criticized for its negative impact on the firm. Allen et al., (2013), argued that laissez-fair leadership can be detrimental if the employees fails to manage themselves, if they are not knowledgeable, skilled, experienced or motivated to carry out the tasks effectively. Ronald (2011), criticized that this style of leadership can cause unproductiveness, anarchy and disorder. Regardless of these negative aspects of laissez-faire leadership, the positive effects have also been expressed by many researchers. Allen et al., (2013), stated that laissez-faire leaders provide employees autonomy which then help to increase employee's job satisfaction and productivity. This suggests that this leadership style can enhance the performance of employees working under a laissez-faire leader, if they are satisfied with their work. According to Allen et al., (2013), the impact of laissez-faire leadership can be positive when employee's performance is being monitored and being given feedback from their leader regularly. This type of leadership can also be effective if the employees possess the skill, ability, knowledge, experience and the motivation to carry out the work on their own and the main benefit of this sort of leadership is that employees have enough time to make the best decision if they are serious with their work (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016).

Participative leadership is a leadership style where leaders encourage joint decision making and stimulate participation. Participative leaders engage employees in decision making process, encourage them to interact in group discussion as well as in problem solving (Somech, 2006) and reduce the hierarchy between them (Grasmick et al., 2012). This sort of leader ensures to involve all of his/her employees in meetings to obtain their feedbacks and opinions. Once participative leaders delegate responsibilities, they trust employees to accomplish the task through their own schedules (Miao et al., 2014). Hence this leadership style allows employees to take a great amount of responsibilities in their job (Sauer, 2011). Thus, this study adopted consultative behaviour, empowerment, joint decision making, power sharing and intrinsic motivation as the key indicators of participative leadership style as participative leader exhibits these behaviours. The involvement of all the employees in decision making is one of the benefits of this leadership style which then leads to improve cooperation, inspiration and job satisfaction of employees (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016). However, this results in time consuming to reach a final decision and makes it more difficult to solve a problem based on a wide range of views from employees which might lead to biased decision (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016).

## 2.4 Dimension and Measures

**Table 1: Dimensions and Measure**

Leadership Style	Variable	Sources
Transformational Leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational Motivation</li> <li>• Intellectual Stimulation</li> <li>• Individualised consideration</li> <li>• Idealised Influences</li> </ul>	(Bass, 1985); (Bass & Avolio 1990)
Transactional Leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contingent reward</li> <li>• Management by exception (active)</li> <li>• Management by exception (Passive)</li> </ul>	Bass and Avolio (2003); (Judge and Piccolo, 2004); (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012).
Laissez-faire Leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laissez- Faire</li> </ul>	(Bass, 1985); (Bass & Avolio 1990)
Participative Leadership style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultative behaviour, Empowerment, Joint decision making, Power sharing and Intrinsic Motivation</li> </ul>	(Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010); (Koopman and Wierdsma, 1998); Dallyuy and Jalagat(2016).
Employee Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timelines</li> <li>• Quality of work</li> <li>• Quantity of work</li> <li>• Need for supervision</li> <li>• Interpersonal impact</li> </ul>	Mathis & Jackson (2009); Hakala (2008)

## 2.5 Empirical literature review

There is no study conducted on leadership style and employee performance in the context of Maldives. However, the researcher found limited peer reviewed studies conducted globally in the context of government corporations or related context such as public sector, service sector and water producing companies. Malcalm and Tamatey (2017) analyzed transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership style on employee performance in Ghana's public sector. They used both qualitative (interview) and quantitative approach (survey questionnaire) to collect data. A sample size of 30 leaders and 30 subordinates from a population of 921 staffs, the findings shows that these three leadership styles does not have any impact on the performance of employees. However,

with a population of 921 staffs, the minimum sample size for this study would be 76 (from power calculation with 3 predictors, anticipated size effect of 0.15, desired statistical power level of 0.8, probability level of 0.05). The study used only a sample size of 60 respondents to gather the data. This indicates that their data is not valid and reliable as they do not meet the ideal nor the minimum acceptable sample size. Thus, their findings are not valid and reliable and cannot be generalized.

Jama (2017), study was conducted on Somaliland's Ministry of education and higher studies. This study used both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative approach (interview) to gather the data. Chi-square, regression analysis, correlation and descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data. with a sample size of 100 respondents, results show a positive and significant impact between transformational, participative/democratic, transactional leadership and performance of employees. However, the study measured employee performance based on employee's satisfaction, productivity, commitment and cooperation only. They do not take into account punctuality, presence/ attendance on the job, efficiency of the work completed, effectiveness of work completed and completing tasks on time, quantity and quality of work which are important elements to measure employee performance.

Itunga and Awuor (2019), conducted their study in Kenya's state corporation to investigate leadership styles on performance of employees. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. From a sample of 85 respondents, result shows that both laissez faire and transformational leadership styles predicts employee performance positively however, transactional leadership was found to have a positive but insignificant influence.

Another study conducted by Chua et al., (2018), on service sector in Klang Valley in Malaysia found that laissez-fair leadership style has negative and insignificant influence on the performance of employees, while democratic/participative leadership style has a positive and significant influence. Correlation and regression analysis were used to analyse the data. However, the study results were based on 250 middle management staffs who have worked in the service sector more than 5 years. Thus, the findings can only be generalized to middle management employees only and cannot generalize to the whole service sector.

Another study conducted by Girei (2015), on package water producing industry in Nigeria found that both transformational and transactional leadership style have a positively and significantly relationship with employee performance whereas, laissez faire leadership style has a negative and insignificant relationship with employee performance. The study used correlation and regression to test analyse the data. The findings of this study can be used to compare and support the findings of current research as MWSC is also specialized in water utility as well as manufacturing water bottles.

Even though, research studies on leadership style and employee performance has been conducted across various sectors, industries, and countries, the findings and results vary. The findings of studies conducted in the context of SOE's, government corporations and related context such as service sector, public sector and water production companies varies and are inconsistent and inconclusive. For example, some research studies done in these context found that transactional leadership style has an insignificant impact on employee performance (Malcalm and Tamatey 2017; Itunga and Awuor, 2019). However, other studies show that transactional leadership impacts positively and significantly on employee performance (Girei, 2015; Jama, 2017). Similarly, the evidence on the effect of laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance also varies. For instance, Itunga and Awuor, (2019) research results demonstrate that laissez faire leadership style influence employee performance positively whereas, others studies found a negative and insignificant impact (Chua et al., 2018; Girei, 2015). Likewise, certain studies reported a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance (Jama 2017; Girei, 2015; Itunga and Awuor, 2019) while, Malcalm and Tamatey (2017), found no impact. Therefore, this concludes that the evidence on the effect of leadership style on employee performance is inconclusive and inconsistent and thereby making it nearly impossible to make direct comparison.

## **2.6 Theoretical view**

As leadership became one of the organizational behaviour factors that has been studied most widely, various number of theories focused on leadership strategies, traits and its styles have arisen. Contingency approach is where the efficacy of leadership is depend on how the characteristics of the leader and factors of the situation interacts (Anyango,

2015). In other words, the correlation between a leadership style and outcome of the firm is determined by situational aspects and thus, the outcome cannot be forecasted by the style of a leadership unless the factors of the situation are identified (Yukl, 2010). However, contingency approach has been criticized for failing to take in to account how situational aspects such as the context of the firms, characteristics of employees and job factors may impact the relationship quality developed between a leader and his employee (Yukl, 2010).

On the other hand, in transformational and transactional approach, two basic level of influence is evident in the interaction between the employees and their leaders (Eran and Drory, 2006). One influence occurs when the leader builds a cost-benefit interaction with the employee and this influence is referred as transactional leadership which means that the employees will perform according to their supervisor or managers demands as they believe that they will be benefited from it (Eran and Drory, 2006). The other influence is known as emotional excitement which is referred as transformational leadership (Eran and Drory, 2006). This style increases subordinate's awareness of the need to transform themselves and encourages them to function at higher level (Arifin et al., 2014). Transformational leadership is the outcome of the leaders capability to share the vision, the strength of his confidence and admiration (Luthans and Doh, 2018). However, transformational approach is criticized for the leader's capability to encourage employees by appealing to subordinate's strong emotions irrespective of final impact on the employees (Hall et al., 2002). Leader have the ability to violate the trust and manipulate employees for their own gain (Awori, 2017).

The researcher found contingency, transformational and transactional approach as the best approaches to understanding leadership thus, this study uses these 3 approaches.

## **2.7 Impact of leadership styles on employee performance**

### **2.7.1 Impact of transformational leadership on employee performance**

Many research studies about leadership styles confirmed that transformational leadership style have a positive influence on the performance of the organization (Zeb et al., 2015; Yukl, 2009). This is supported by and further proven by many empirical evidences.

Studies done by researchers on leadership styles and employee performance have found that there is a positive significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance (Masa'deh et al., 2016; Caillier, 2014; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Krepia et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2020). A research study done by Masa'deh et al., (2016), on the relationship between transformational leadership, transactional leadership and employee performance and firm performance found that transformational leadership style significantly impacts employee job performance. A study done by Ribeiro et al., (2018), revealed that transformational leaders promote affective commitment of employees which enhances employee's individual performance. They also propose that firms should adopt transformational leaders since they create an organizational environment of trust, loyalty and employee's participation which will increase employee's performance. Similarly, Caillier (2014), asserts that mission valence enhance the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. Banerjee et al., (2017) study outcomes indicate that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with creative performance of salespersons. Krepia et al., (2018), concludes that it is evident that transformational leaders affect positively on work performance. Rao and Kareem Abdul (2015), suggests that transformational leadership significantly and positively influence on team performance. This was evident in Yang et al., (2020) research study that transformational leadership positively impacts on employees task and contextual performance through organizational embeddedness. It was found that transformational leadership impacts positively on employee performance through mediating influence of behavioural integrity (Saleem et al., 2019). Itunga and Awuor (2019), study shows that transformational leadership predicts performance of employees. Studies done by Girei (2015), Jama (2017), Hoxha and Heimerer, (2019), Basit et al (2017), (Lor and Hassan, 2017) and Abimbola et al (2017), shows that transformational leadership positively and significantly influence the performance of employees.

H1. Transformational leadership predicts significant variance in employee's performance.

### **2.7.2 Impact of transactional leadership on employee performance**

A research study done by Masa'deh et al., (2016) on the relationship between transformational leadership, transactional leadership and employee performance and firm performance found that transactional leadership style significantly impacts employee job performance. Sung-Pyo Choi (2015), asserts that exceptional management element of transactional leadership is found to have a positive influence on firm's employee's behaviour. Sundi K (2013), study indicates that transactional leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Similarly, Zohra et al., (2017), found that transactional leadership style has a strong positive correlation with the performance of the employees. Yang (2010), concluded that transactional leadership is positively related to employee's creative performance in teams with higher empowerment climate. Both Girei, (2015) and Jama (2017), studies found that transactional leadership positively and significantly impacts the performance of employees.

H2. Transactional leadership predicts significant variance in employee's performance.

### **2.7.3 Impact of laissez faire on employee performance**

Certain researchers asserted that laissez-faire leadership has enhanced employees job satisfaction and improved their performance. Zubair (2017), study analysis shows that there is a significant and positive impact of laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance. Itunga and Awuor (2019), conducted a study on Kenya's state organizations and found that laissez faire styles positively predicts performance of employees in this sector. Basit et al (2017), study outcomes show that laissez-faire leadership style has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. A research study done by Baig et al (2019), found that laissez-faire has a significant impact on employee performance.

H3: Laissez-faire leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.

#### **2.7.4 Impact of participative leadership on employee engagement**

Participative leadership is considered as one of the most vital leadership styles and is confirmed to be strongly associated with employee performance by many researchers. Dallyuy and Jalagat (2016), found that Participative leadership enhances employee's productivity in terms of their employee performance. Their study also revealed that participative leadership is the dominant leadership style and has a significant and positive impact on employee performance. Likewise Somech and Wenderow (2006), found positive impact of participative leadership on employee performance in their study. Chishti et al., (2010) asserts that participative management has a positive relationship with employee performance and their job satisfaction. According to Miao et al., (2014), affective trust mediates the correlation between participative leadership and employee job performance. Basit et al (2017), study on the context of private companies in Malaysia, found that democratic/participative leadership style has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. A research study done by Rana et al., (2019), found that participative leadership style has a significant influence on performance of employees.

H4: Participative leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.

### **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is derived from transformational and transactional theory and from transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership styles. These leadership styles are hypothesized to predict significance on employee performance. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

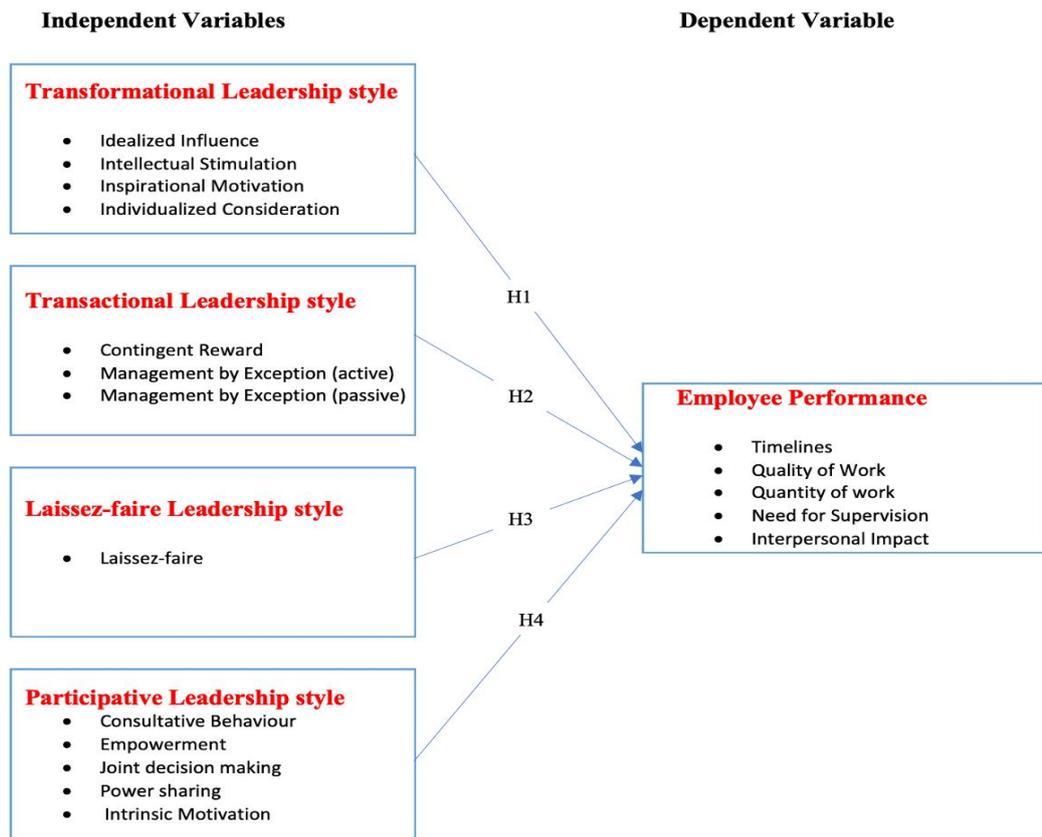


Figure 1: Conceptual framework on the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.

Table 2: Operational Framework

Hypothesis	Independent Variables	Dependent Variable (Employee Performance)	Tests	
1	Transformational Leadership style	<u>Measurement</u> Idealized Influence Intellectual Stimulation Inspirational Motivation Individualized Consideration	<u>Measures</u> Timelines Quality of Work Quantity of Work Need for Supervision Interpersonal Impact	Correlation Regression
2	Transactional Leadership style	Contingent Reward Management by Exception(active) Management by Exception(passive)	<u>Measures</u> Timelines Quality of Work Quantity of Work Need for Supervision Interpersonal Impact	Correlation Regression
3	Laissez-faire Leadership style	Laissez-faire	<u>Measures</u> Timelines Quality of Work Quantity of Work Need for Supervision Interpersonal Impact	Correlation Regression
4	Participative Leadership style	Consultative Behavior Empowerment	<u>Measures</u> Timelines	Correlation Regression

Source: Researcher own

The researcher aims to determine the association between different elements of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership style and employee performance and identify how much leaders exhibit these dimensions or factors

in MWSC. Also, to assess the extent to which these four types of leadership predicts significant variance in employee performance and if the change is positive or negative. Demographic information such as age, gender, job tenure and job position are collected to support the findings and to help understand the findings more.

### **2.8.1 Statement of hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1. Transformational leadership predicts significant variance in employee's performance.

Hypothesis 2. Transactional leadership predicts significant variance in employee's performance.

Hypothesis 3: Laissez-faire leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.

Hypothesis 4: Participative leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter started with an overall view of Maldivian economy, SOEs, and MWSC. Followed by it, a critical review about transformational, transactional, participative and laissez faire leadership is provided. Next, a critical review of empirical literature is discussed where the effect of these four types of leadership on employee performance on similar context is given with empirical evidence. Next, this chapter discussed transformational, transactional and contingency theory as these theories were related to these four types of leadership. A conceptual framework is given which shows the link between independent and dependent variables and the hypothesis formulated for this study.

### **3 Methodology and Research Design**

#### **3.1 Overview**

This chapter discuss the research methodology used in this study. It discusses and provide justifications of the research philosophy employed in this study. Followed by, research approach and research strategy used in this study is explained and justified. This chapter further presents and explain sources of data, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection method, instruments used in this study and access and ethical issues observed. In addition, the data analysis approach used in this study is discussed. Lastly, chapter summary is concluded briefly.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach**

Research philosophy is defined as set of beliefs and assumptions on knowledge development and its nature regarding the research (Saunders et al., 2015). This explanatory study is conducted from a positivist viewpoint as the data is collected and analysed through quantitative methods. Positivism research paradigm depends on observing, monitoring and measuring the data and it explains that the knowledge should be based on observing and measuring facts before it is perceived as scientific (Collins, 2010).

Important features of positivism research include generalization, parsimony, reliability and validity of the research results (Cohen et al., 2007). These features are the reason behind of using this positivist viewpoint. The researcher will be able to generalize the findings of this study to a larger extent (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The accuracy of the parsimony enables the researcher to study vast number of people (Cohen et al., 2007; Imna and Hassan, 2015). Moreover, Positivist philosophy allows to formulate hypotheses and empirical examination to find the relationship of variables by using prior theories as a clear evidence (Antwi and Kasim, 2015). Positivism paradigm allows to test hypotheses objectively and logically and thus, confirm high standard of reliability and validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007). Using this positivism philosophy, the aim was to be independent in a manner that the study was entirely objective, transparent from personal bias and with logical and reliable approach.

Independence means that free from researchers' personal belief as the researcher had minimal interaction with the respondents when the research study was carrying out (Wilson, 2014).

This study used deductive research approach. Deductive approach is formulating hypotheses based on the theories that existed and designing a research plan to test those hypotheses (Wilson, 2014). Through this approach, definitions and assumptions has been clarified first, followed by objectives and hypotheses. Four hypotheses and six research objectives were formulated based on these definitions and assumptions to be tested in this study. Logical research structure had then been developed to test those hypotheses and to achieve the objectives.

### **3.3 Research Strategy**

Quantitative survey strategy is the best strategy for this study by collecting data through questionnaire and is in keeping with the positivist philosophy and deductive approach as it is quantitative in nature. Survey is a research strategy used to collect data on individual views in a large group (Jones et al., 2013). Survey strategy is used in the study as it allows to collect vast amount of data from large samples derived from the population for testing hypotheses with validated models. (Jones et al., 2013). This strategy is also the only strategy that can collect and generalized data from any population, thus it will allow to generalize the findings of this study to the whole populations (Ponto, 2015). Survey is also well suited to collect demographical information of the sample, since demographical analysis is vital in this study to identify what age group and gender has taken part in this study and their job tenure and job position to draw a final conclusion and assumption why leadership styles has a particular effect of employee performance (Ponto, 2015).

By providing quantitative data, a logical conclusion can be drawn with evidence and argument (Trochim, 2006). Also, with quantitative data, the researcher is able to add a visual representation of the data findings in the form of charts and tables (Soiferman, 2010). By using quantitative approach, an objective data which is not contaminated by the researcher's personal beliefs is added to the study which allowed to make scientific assumption thus, making more trustworthy than qualitative data (Soiferman, 2010). In addition, it allowed the researcher to generalize the results to a larger population (Carr,

1994). Since quantitative data adopts prescribed approaches to confirm the reliability and validity, more accurate and unbiased results can be added to this study.

### **3.4 Collection Primary Data**

#### **3.4.1 Sources**

Primary data source is used for this research study. Adopting primary data collection method allowed the researcher to get more precise and accurate results of the present circumstances and context (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Several methods of data collection include questionnaire, interviews and observation. However, primary data for this study was gathered through close ended questionnaire.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X short rate form) developed by Avolio and Bass (1995), was used to measure the participants' perception about the degree to which their manager/supervisor demonstrates transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership style. Transformational leadership style comprises of four components (Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and Individualized consideration). Sample items are "My supervisor goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group". Transactional leadership style consisted 3 components (contingent Reward, Management by Exception (Active) Management by Exception (Passive). Sample items include "My supervisor provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts". Likewise, to measure Laissez-faire leadership style this study used 3 items. Sample item include "My supervisor is absent when needed". To analyse the degree to which the leader demonstrates participative leadership style, a unidimensional scale from Ismail et al., (2010) was used. This scale consisted six items. sample items are "My supervisor and team members always vote whenever a major decision has to be made". Respondents answered their choices for both participative and MLQ questions on a 5- point Likert scale which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). To measure MWSC's employees' performance which is also the dependent variable of the study, the researcher used Wiedower's employee performance scale (Wiedower, 2001). This instrument consisted 5 items; Timelines, Quality of work, Quantity of Work, Need for supervision and Interpersonal impact. Participants responded using 5-point Likert scale which ranges from dissatisfied (1) to completely satisfied (5). This leadership and employee

performance scale used in this study is a self-report measure. According to Demetriou et al., (2015), in self-report questionnaires, the participants are much closer to the issues in question in the questionnaire rather than other measures, thus, the answers they give tends to be more accurate.

The questionnaire consisted four sections and 6 pages (appendix D). First section and page 1 consisted agreement/consent form where brief introduction, purpose of the study, data confidentiality, participants right to withdraw from the survey, approximate time required to complete the survey and contact for queries/concerns was provided. It included 5 questions about the agreement. The sample questions are “I have read and understood the agreement?” and “are you at least 18 (and above) and consent to take part in this survey?”. Second section and page 2 consisted 5 demographic questions to obtain background details of the participants. Questions included respondent’s age, gender, job tenure and their current position in MWSC. Third section comprised of 31 questions to analyse leadership style (transformational, transactional, laissez-fair and participative leadership style). The last section consisted 5 questions to assess employee performance. Each and every question used in the questionnaire is related to the literature, theories, objectives and conceptual framework of this study. The questionnaire was presented in English since it is a widely spoken language in Maldives.

To check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire scale used in this study, pilot test was conducted on 10 respondents. The respondents who took part in the pilot test was not included in the final sample size of this study. In addition, reliability test was conducted to determine how reliable the questions in the questionnaire are (Saunders et al., 2009). The reliability test shows all the variables known as employee performance, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership style are valid and reliable with Cronbach alpha value of 0.781, 0.923, 0.772, 0.868 and 0.832 respectively. Detail information of the reliability test conducted is shown in chapter 4 under findings and discussion.

The population of the study include all the employees from MWSC in Maldives. MWSC has total 995 employees. Out of this population, the ideal sample size for this research is 279 respondents. Ideal sample size was calculated through Qualtrics, on 95% confidence level and 5% of margin of error. However, the researcher was not able to reach the ideal sample size due to time restraints, therefore acceptable minimum sample size was

calculated based on the power calculator, on 0.15 anticipated effect size, desired statistical power level of 0.8, 4 predictors and 0.05 probability level. The minimum acceptable sample size was 84 respondents. 175 valid questionnaires were filled completely and used in this study comfortably passing the minimum acceptable sample size.

Convenience sampling technique was used in this study where the data was obtained from those employees that were willing and conveniently ready to fill out the questionnaires. The reason behind adopting convenience sampling is that the data collection period falls to the time where the target population was in quarantine due to Covid-19 and this method allows the data to be obtained from respondents based on their convenience accessibility (Ross, 2005). It gives the respondents the choice to either take part in the research study or not if they do not want to (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, it was the most suitable sampling method for this study.

The quantitative data was collected through survey questionnaire. Survey questionnaire was designed on SurveyMonkey and was sent to the respondents via email and social media. Survey link was sent to individual employees of MWSC via Facebook Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp. Since MWSC mostly uses Viber platform to have their divisional/department groups, the link was posted on each divisional/department group of MWSC in Viber. The link of the survey was also sent to HR department by requesting to mail it to all the employees of the company. This was the most suitable and effective way to reach the target audience as most of the MWSC employees are active on social media platforms. Through Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Viber groups, the researcher was able to reach vast majority of the employees quickly, which was vital given the short time period to gather the data during the lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic. Those employees that are not active on social media, was reached through email. Survey was opened for respondents to fill for 4 weeks and reminder messages were sent to them.

The rationale behind in choosing the data collection method of questionnaire is because there won't be any interviewer bias and allows to gather a vast amount of data from potential respondents through email and social media (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). By gathering data on the respondent's propositions through survey questionnaire, the researcher got adequate information to test hypotheses and was able to draw a comprehensive and well-structured conclusions and assumptions for this study.

### **3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues**

Ethical research refers to formulating and explaining research topic, obtaining the access to collect, process, analyse and store data and writing the results in an ethical and virtuous manner (Saunders, et al., 2009). To adhere to research ethics, this research was sent to Research Ethics Committee of Griffith College, Dublin and have been approved by them. Authorization and permission to carry out the research on MWSC and to collect data from their employees was obtained from HR department of the company. Permission to carry out the research from MWSC is in Appendix C. Respondents were asked for their consent to participate and their involvement in the study was voluntarily. They were given the choice to take part in the study or not if they do not wish to. They were also given the right to withdraw or discontinue from the survey at any time they wanted to. Participants were also given the assurance that all the data and information obtained will be protected and would be kept with extreme confidentiality and the respondents would be anonymous as participants were not required to write their names, staff ID number, phone number or identity in the survey, to eliminate the confidential issues. Respondents were given adequate time to fill out the questionnaire. Research objectives were explained in the first part of the questionnaire. The data collected and gathered will be protected and will be kept confidentially only for the purpose of the study by the researcher. After completion of the dissertation and being reviewed and marked by the lecturers in the university, all the data and information provided will be destroyed within six months.

Permission to use MLQ (5X short form) scale from Avolio and Bass, (1995) was obtained from Mind Garden, Inc, and authorization to use participative leadership scale was obtained from Ismail et al., (2010). Both the permission documents granted for this study are in Appendix A and B.

## **3.5 Approach to Data Analysis**

### **3.5.1 Normality Test**

Normality test is conducted to determine if the sample data is drawn from a population which is normally distributed (Ghasemi and Zahediasl, 2012). This study used numerical

method which is presented in terms of skewness and kurtosis to test the normality of the sample data. Kurtosis indicates whether the distribution is flat or peaked compared to a normal distribution (Lei et al., 2018). A positive value means the distribution is relatively peaked and a negative value implies that the distribution is relatively flat (Hair et al., 2010). Skewness indicates the symmetry of a distribution, in most cases it is compared with a normal distribution (Lei et al., 2018). If the skewness value falls outside the range of -1 to +1, it shows that the distribution is substantially skewed (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, for both skewness and kurtosis, the general rule of the acceptable range between -1 to +1 is applied.

### **3.5.2. Reliability Test**

Reliability test is to measure how reliable the items in the questionnaire are (Saunders et al., 2009). The measurement rule in reliability test is if the Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.9 then the reliability is excellent, if it is between 0.7 to 0.9 then the reliability is good, if it is between 0.6 to 0.7 then the reliability is acceptable, if it is between 0.5 to 0.6 then the reliability is poor and if it is less than 0.5 then the reliability is unacceptable (Basit et al., 2017).

### **3.5.3 Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive statistic was conducted to determine the extent to which leadership styles are exhibited by the managers/supervisors in MWSC and which leadership style is displayed the most and least (Aworu, 2017). In addition, the test was also conducted on each factor of the transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership, to identify the extent to which these factors of the leadership styles are exhibited by the supervisors/managers in order to draw a final conclusion.

### 3.5.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted in this study to examine the relationship between transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, participative leadership styles and employee performance (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The significance value was established at 0.05 and any independent variables (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative) that has a significant level above 0.05 was considered to have an insignificant relationship with the dependent variable (employee performance) and vice versa. The strength of relationship based on the Pearson correlation coefficient value adopted from (Lei et al., 2018) is given in the table 2 below.

Table 3: Strength of relationship

Correlation coefficient Value (+) or (-)	Strength of relationship	Measurement rules (sig.)
0.91 to 1.00 / -0.91 to -1.00	Very strong	< 0.05
0.71 to 0.90 / -0.71 to -0.90	Strong	< 0.05
0.51 to 0.70 / -0.51 to -0.70	Average	< 0.05
0.31 to 0.50 / -0.31 to -0.50	Weak	< 0.05
0.01 to 0.30 / -0.01 to -0.30	Very weak	< 0.05
0.00	No correlation	< 0.05

Source: (Lei et al., 2018).

### 3.5.5 Multiple Linear Regressions

In this study, multiple regression was conducted to assess the extent to which transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership styles predicts variance in employee performance and thus, to test the hypothesis of the research (Jama, 2017). Durbin- Watson measures residuals auto correlation in regression analysis where if the value falls in the range between 1.5-2.5, it is in the acceptable range (Lor and Hassan, 2017). Adjusted R square is used to predict the variance as it is to do with variance when allowing for error (Mangiafico, 2016). The size effect of adjusted R-square is small if adjusted R square is between  $0.02 \leq R^2 \text{ adj} < 0.13$ , medium if it is between  $0.13 \leq R^2 \text{ adj} < 0.26$  and large if it is equal or higher than 0.26 (Mangiafico, 2016). Unstandardized coefficient indicates 1 unit of change in independent variable cause how much change in a dependent variable (Stephanie, 2019).

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter chooses and justifies deductive research approach and positivism as the research philosophy for this study. This chapter also presents information about the research strategy and justifies why researcher chose survey and quantitative method. This is followed by the data collection method where questionnaire method is chosen. Questionnaire instrument, target population, sample size and sampling technique used in this study was explained in data collection method. In data analysis approach, regression, correlation and normality, descriptive and reliability is discussed and explained.

## 4 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

### 4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and discuss the findings generated through SPSS from the data gathered through survey questionnaire. Findings are presented through demographic, normality, reliability, descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis.

### 4.2 Findings and discussion

#### 4.2.1 Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

The below figures from 2-5 shows data on age, gender, current position and job tenure of the participants respectively. Total number of respondents were 175.

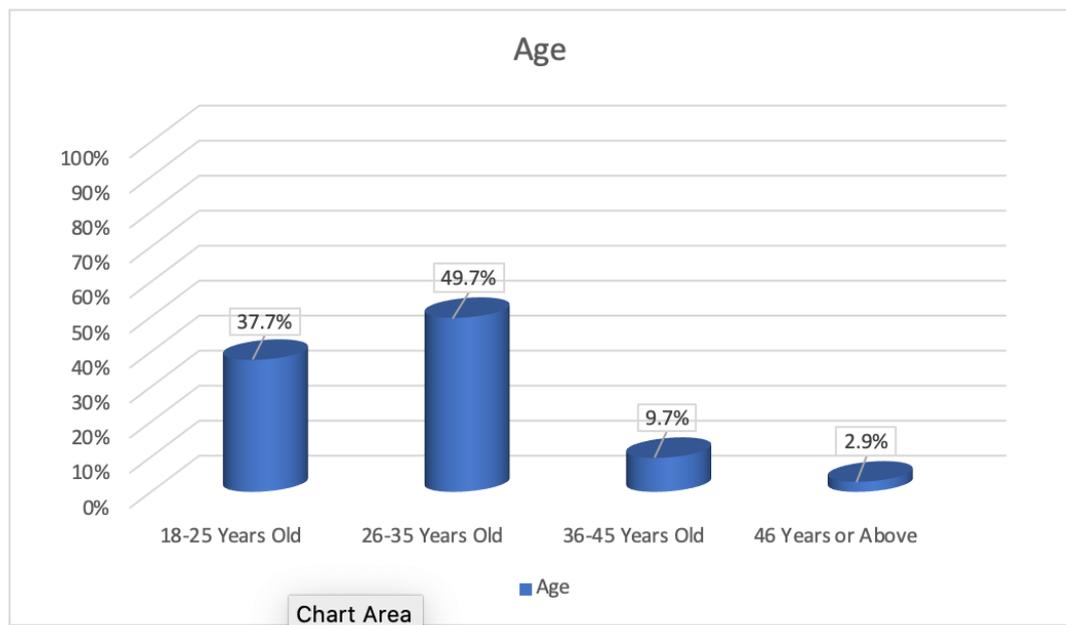


Figure 2: Age range of respondents

Figure 2 shows, 37.7% of the respondents fall in the age group of 18-25 and 49.7% participants are aged between 26-35 years. 9.7% respondents are in the age group of 36-45 year while, only 2.9% of the participants are 46 years and above. This indicates that majority of the participants were young and middle-aged employees between 26-35 years in MWSC.

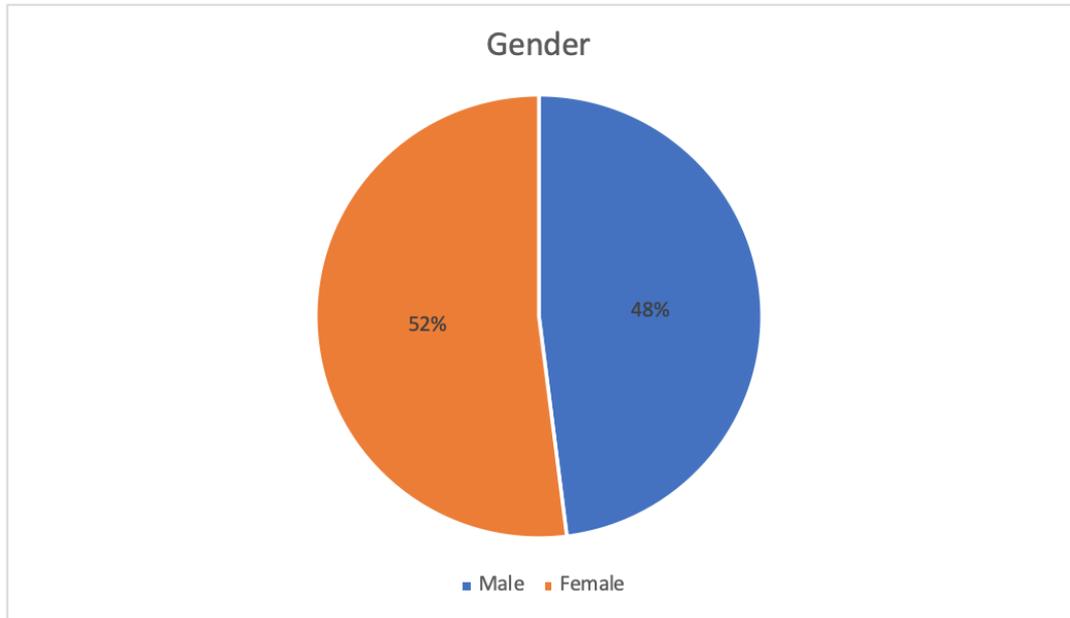


Figure 3: Gender distribution of the respondents

As per figure 3, the majority of respondents are male participants (52%) whereas, the female respondents represent 48%.

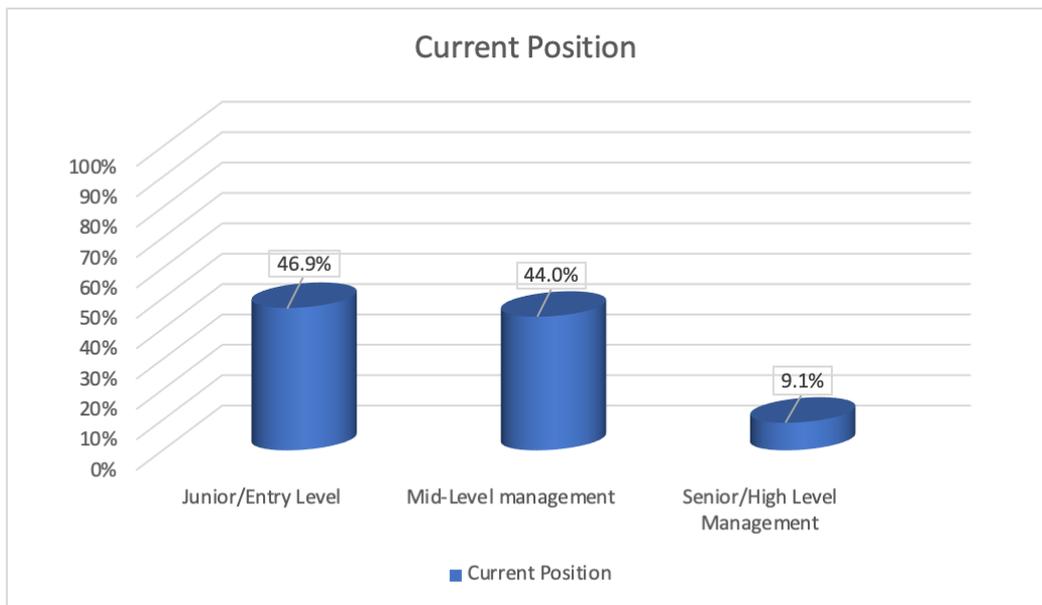


Figure 4: Current position of respondents in MWSC

Respondents were asked about their current position in MWSC and according to figure 4, the majority of them are junior/entry level staffs accounting 46.9%. 44% of the respondents are mid-level management employees while only 9.1% participants are senior/high level employees.

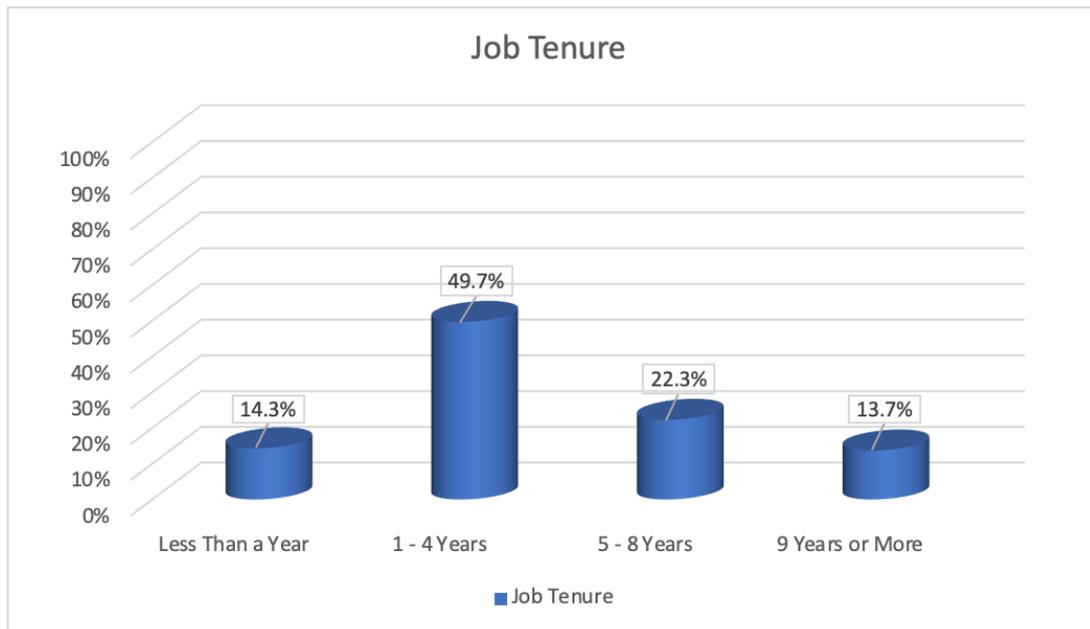


Figure 5: Job tenure categories of respondents in MWSC

With reference to the figure 5, majority of the respondents had been working in MWSC between 1-4 years which is 49.7% of the participants. Out of 175 respondents, 22.3% had been working in the company between 5-8 years while, 14.3% employees have worked less than a year. Only 13.7% respondents had been working in MWSC for 9 years and more.

#### 4.2.2 Normality test

Table 4: Normality test on the questions

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
11	175	-.311	.184	.100	.365
12	175	-.421	.184	-.564	.365
13	175	-.700	.184	-.059	.365
14	175	-.364	.184	-.181	.365
15	175	-.845	.184	.713	.365
16	175	-.712	.184	.176	.365
17	175	-.759	.184	.284	.365
18	175	-.606	.184	-.019	.365
19	175	-.577	.184	.060	.365
20	175	-.400	.184	-.571	.365
21	175	-.394	.184	.029	.365
22	175	-.528	.184	-.088	.365
23	175	-.946	.184	.891	.365
24	175	-.631	.184	.312	.365
25	175	-.824	.184	.206	.365
26	175	-.482	.184	.103	.365
27	175	-.422	.184	-.336	.365
28	175	-.107	.184	-.456	.365
29	175	.283	.184	-.728	.365
30	175	.557	.184	-.575	.365
31	175	.358	.184	-.428	.365
32	175	.649	.184	-.201	.365
33	175	.861	.184	.781	.365
34	175	.831	.184	.475	.365
35	175	.709	.184	-.162	.365
36	175	-.195	.184	-.684	.365
37	175	-.463	.184	-.560	.365
38	175	-.797	.184	.514	.365
39	175	-.562	.184	-.245	.365
40	175	-.612	.184	.082	.365
41	175	-.292	.184	-.486	.365
42	175	-.113	.184	.956	.365
43	175	-.126	.184	.354	.365
44	175	-.026	.184	.579	.365
45	175	.199	.184	.115	.365
46	175	-.048	.184	.361	.365

As per the table 4, all value in skewness and Kurtosis indicates that the questionnaire was within the acceptable range of -1 and +1. Therefore, the data is considered as normal and further to reliability test is conducted.

#### 4.2.3 Reliability Test

Table 5: Reliability Test of the variables

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Transformational Leadership style	12	0.923
Transactional Leadership style	9	0.772
Laissez-faire Leadership style	4	0.868
Participative Leadership style	6	0.832
Employee Performance	5	0.781

The results in table 5 shows, that all the variables have an acceptable and a good reliability level. Transformational leadership style has the highest Cronbach alpha of 0.923 which indicates that it is highly reliable and valid. Followed by laissez-faire leadership with 0.868, participative leadership with 0.832, employee engagement with 0.781 and transactional leadership with Cronbach alpha of 0.772, indicating good reliability. Thus, all the variables were found valid and reliable. No items were removed.

#### 4.2.4 Descriptive Statistics

Table 6 below shows the level of influence on employee performance and the extent to which leadership styles are exhibited by the managers based on the mean value. Descriptive statistic test was conducted on four independent variables of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership styles on dependent variable of employee performance. The level of influence based on the range of mean value according to Hong et al., (2013) is: low influence-1.0 to 2.32, medium influence- 2.33 - 3.65 and high influence- 3.66 – 5.00.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational Leadership style	175	3.51	0.722
Transactional Leadership style	175	3.19	0.464
Laissez-faire Leadership style	175	2.31	0.864
Participative Leadership style	175	3.33	0.739
Employee Performance	175	3.23	0.599

With reference to table 6, transformational leadership have the highest mean value of 3.51 (SD= 0.722) as compared to transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership style. This indicates that transformational leadership is the most exhibited leadership style among the supervisors/managers working at MWSC. This also shows that transformational leadership is the most influential leadership style with medium influence on employee performance than other independent variables. Participative leadership style has the second highest mean of 3.33 (SD= 0.739), followed by transactional leadership style at a mean of 3.19 with a standard deviation of 0.464. This indicates that participative leadership is the second most practiced leadership style in MWSC as well as second most influential leadership style on employee performance. Laissez-faire leadership style has the lowest mean value of 2.31 (SD=0.864). This shows that the least exhibited leadership style in MWSC is laissez-faire leadership style. All the leadership styles except laissez-faire style have a medium influence on employee performance. with a mean value of 2.31, laissez-faire leadership is considered to have a low influence on employee performance. This will be investigated further with correlation analysis to determine if there is a positive or negative relationship between leadership styles and employee performance and regression analysis to determine if independent variables predict significant variance in dependent variable.

Table 7: Descriptive statistic for factors of transformational leadership style

Transformational Leadership Dimensions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Individual Consideration	175	3.37	0.829
Intellectual Stimulation	175	3.55	0.844
Inspirational Motivation	175	3.64	0.813
Idealized Influence	175	3.47	0.832

With reference to table 7, all the dimensions of transformational leadership style have a medium influence on employee performance. Inspirational motivation is the most exhibited dimension of transformational leadership with the highest mean value of 3.64 (SD=0.813). This also indicates that inspirational motivation is the most influential factor of transformational leadership on employee performance. With a mean value of 3.37 and standard deviation of 0.829, individual consideration is the least practiced dimension of transformational leadership and is the least influential factor of transformational leadership on employee performance.

Table 8: Descriptive statistic for factors of transactional leadership style

Transactional Leadership Dimensions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Contingent Reward	175	3.53	0.818
Management by Exception (active)	175	3.36	0.827
Management by Exception (passive)	175	2.69	0.923

With reference to table 8, all the dimensions of transactional leadership style have a medium influence on employee performance. Contingent reward has the highest mean value of 3.53 (SD=0.818), indicating that it is the most exhibited factor of transactional leadership. Management by exception (passive) is the least practiced factor of transactional leadership with a mean value of 2.69 (SD=0.923).

Table 9: Descriptive statistic for laissez-faire leadership style measures

Laissez-faire Leadership Measures	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor avoids getting involved when important issues arise.	175	2.41	1.035
My supervisor is absent when needed.	175	2.23	0.961
My supervisor avoids making decisions.	175	2.23	0.975
My supervisor delays responding to urgent questions.	175	2.35	1.108

With Reference to table 9, both ‘my supervisor avoids making decisions’ and ‘ My supervisor is absent when needed’ factor of laissez faire has lowest influence on employee performance with the lowest mean value of 2.23 and standard deviation of 0.975 and 0.961 respectively. My supervisor avoids getting involved when important issues arise is the most exhibited factor of laissez-faire leadership style and has the highest influence on employee performance compared to other factors. This implies that the main assumption of laissez-faire leadership style where laissez-faire leaders avoid decision making and not actively involved in problem solving.

Table 10: Descriptive statistic for participative leadership style measures

Participative Leadership Measures	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor and team members always vote whenever a major decision has to be made.	175	3.10	1.097
My supervisor wants to create an environment where team members are allowed to participate in the decision-making process.	175	3.42	1.126
My supervisor allows team members to determine what needs to be done and how to do it.	175	3.55	0.926
My supervisor asks team members for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then uses their vision where appropriate.	175	3.24	1.023
When there are differences in role expectation, my supervisor works with employees to resolve the differences.	175	3.40	0.824
Team members have the right to determine their own organizational objectives.	175	3.25	0.984

With reference to table 10, all the factors of participative leadership style have a medium influence on employee performance. ‘My supervisor and team members always vote whenever a major decision has to be made’ is the least exhibited factor of participative leadership and has the lowest influence on employee performance with the lowest mean value of 3.10 (SD= 1.097). ‘My supervisor allows team members to determine what needs to be done and how to do it’ factor has the highest mean value of 3.55 (SD= 0.926), indicating it is the most exhibited factor of participative leadership which has the highest influence on employee performance.

#### 4.2.5 Correlation Analysis

Table 11 below presents the relationship between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership style) and employee performance. Variable’s Pearson correlation value within -1.00 or +1.00, shows perfectly correlated variables (Chua et al., 2018). P value is significant at 0.05.

Table 11: Pearson’s correlations analysis of leadership styles on employee performance in MWSC

Relationship	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Transformational Leadership style $\leftrightarrow$ Employee Performance	175	0.447**	0.000
Transactional Leadership style $\leftrightarrow$ Employee Performance	175	0.183*	0.015
Laissez-faire Leadership style $\leftrightarrow$ Employee Performance	175	-0.286**	0.000
Participative Leadership style $\leftrightarrow$ Employee Performance	175	0.382**	0.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis table 11 above indicates that transformational leadership has a moderate positive and significant relationship with employee performance with the correlation value of 0.447 and a significant value of 0.000 less than 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ). With a correlation value of 0.183 and a significant value of 0.015 which is less than 0.05, transactional leadership has a very weak positive and significant relationship with employee performance. Similarly, participative leadership has a weak positive and significant relationship with employee performance with a correlation value of 0.382 and significant value lower than 0.05. However, laissez-faire leadership style has a correlation value of -0.286 and a significance value of 0.000 lower than 0.05, indicating that it has a negative but significant relationship with employee performance.

Among these four-leadership style, transformational leadership has the highest positive and significant relationship with employee performance while, laissez faire leadership style has the weakest relationship. This finding is similar to the most exhibited and least displayed leadership style by the supervisors/managers in MWSC found in descriptive statistic table 6 above. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate and determine the leadership styles that predicts significant variance in performance of employees.

#### 4.2.6 Multiple regression analysis

Assumptions of regression used in this study include that the leadership styles are correlated significantly to the dependent variable (employee performance), data has no autocorrelation, all variables are multivariate normality and data are homoscedastic (Statisticsolution, 2020).

Table 12: Multiple regression model summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.454 <sup>a</sup>	.206	.188	.54013	2.104
a. Predictors: (Constant), Participative Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez-faire Leadership, Transformational Leadership. b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance					

Table 13: Multiple regression Anova

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.891	4	3.223	11.047	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	49.597	170	.292		
	Total	62.488	174			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance  b. Predictors: (Constant), Participative Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez-faire Leadership, Transformational Leadership.						

With reference to table 12, Durbin Watson value of 2.104 is in the acceptable range of 1.5-2.5, suggesting that there is no autocorrelation amongst the participants of this study. Durbin- Watson measures residuals auto correlation in regression analysis where if the value falls in the range between 1.5-2.5, it is in the acceptable range (Lor and Hassan, 2017). The F value of 11.047 and significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) in table 13, indicates that this model is significant.

As per table 12, R square value is 0.206 which indicates that 20% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by participative, transactional, transformational

and laissez-faire leadership styles. In other words, 20% changes in employee performance among employees in MWSC can be explained by these four leadership styles. However, R-squared increases with increasing variables, even though if the variables have no association with the dependent variable (Mangiafico, 2016). Therefore, Adjusted R square is used to predict the variance as it is to do with variance when allowing for error (Mangiafico, 2016). Adjusted R square value is 0.188 which implies that 18% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by participative, transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership style which is a medium size effect according to Cohen's 1988 classifications for multiple regression. Further analysis will be done on coefficients where the range of alpha value is 0.05 is used to determine the significance between dependent and independent variables.

Table 14: Multiple Regression coefficients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.857	.388		4.783	.000
	Transformational Leadership	.279	.100	.336	2.778	.006
	Transactional Leadership	.057	.098	.044	.582	.562
	Laissez- Faire Leadership	-.024	.063	-.035	-.383	.702
	Participative Leadership	.081	.084	.100	.965	.336
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						

According to the table 14, transformational leadership style has unstandardized beta coefficient value of 0.279 with a significant value of 0.006 (lower than 0.05), thus transformational leadership predicts significant variance in employee performance as a positive beta coefficient value represents a positive variance and a p level lower than significance value of 0.05 indicates a significant variance. This means that one unit increase in transformational leadership predicts 0.27 increase in perceived employee performance. However, the coefficients result of transactional leadership style indicates

that it predicts a positive but insignificant variance on employee performance as it has an unstandardized beta of value of 0.057 and an insignificant value of 0.562 which is higher than 0.05. Similarly, participative leadership style has a beta value of 0.081 with an insignificant value of 0.336, indicating that it also predicts a positive but insignificant variance on employee performance. However, laissez-faire leadership style has an unstandardized beta value of -0.024 with an insignificant value of 0.702 (higher than 0.05), indicating that it predicts a negative and insignificant variance on employee performance. This implies that one unit increase in laissez-faire leadership predicts 0.024 decrease in perceived employee performance.

**H1: Transformational leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.**

H1 is accepted as multiple regression analysis shows that transformational leadership predicted significant variance in employee performance. With a positive beta value, the change is positive. This positive and significant variance predicted by transformational leadership style in employee performance can be due to the pride, respect, loyalty and admiration built with employees by their manager and being role models for them. This may also be because managers of MWSC are allowing their employees to come up with new ideas and to address issue from their own perspectives in their manufacturing operations and their service of providing engineering solutions. This is also supported by table 7, where it is evident that factors of transformational leadership are exhibited by the managers of MWSC and they have influence on employee performance. It is evident that transformational leaders increase their employees capability to think and come up with innovative ideas in solving problems thus leading to employees self-development and their performance (Den Hartog, 2019). This has also been supported in chapter 2.

This finding is consistent with most of the past studies discussed in previous chapters. For instance, Girei, (2015) study on package water producing industry in Nigeria found that transformational leadership style has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. Itunga and Awuor (2019) found that transformational leadership strongly and positively correlates with employee performance. present finding also supports the result of Jama, (2017) and Abimbola et al (2017) studies, where they found

transformational leadership style has positive and significant influence on performance of employees in ministry of education in Somaliland and Nigerian private universities. However, this finding is contradictory to the results of Malcalm and Tamatey (2017) study on public sector of Ghana, where they found transformational leadership has no significant effect on employee performance.

**H2: Transactional leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.**

H2 is rejected as multiple regression analysis indicates that transactional leadership style does not predict employee performance significantly in MWSC. However, it predicts the variance in employee performance positively with a positive beta value. The insignificant variance may be due to the fact that the main focus of transactional leadership style is giving reward or punishment for the performance of the task carried by employees and the reward offered by the manager/supervisor may not commensurate with their employees' expectation in MWSC. MWSC is engage in carrying out multiple water and sewerage projects in different islands of the country and engage in manufacturing operations where a lot of employees usually have to work hard and for longer hours and they might not be offered a reward in terms of salary, bonus or promotions that reciprocates the time and effort they put in the tasks. It is evident that the higher expectations of employees does not match with what they are being offered in Maldivian organizations (Mansoor and Hassan, 2016). There has been several cases reported regarding employees striking by complaining for unfair service charge distributions and low salary (Mansoor and Hassan, 2016).

Results of past studies discussed in previous chapters supports with this finding. Malcalm and Tamatey (2017) study on public sector of Ghana, found that transactional leadership style has no significant effect on employee performance. Itunga and Awuor, (2019), also found a positive but insignificant impact of transactional leadership on employee performance in state enterprises of Kenya. This finding is also in congruence with the result of Hoxha and Heimerer (2019) study on telecommunications firm in Malaysia and Abimbola et al (2017), study on Nigerian private universities in which they found that transactional leadership style has no significant influence on employee performance.

However, this finding is contrary with Girei, (2015) study conducted on Package Water Producing Industry in Nigeria, where it was found that transactional leadership style has a positive and a significant relationship with employee performance. This finding is also inconsistent with the study done by Jama, (2017), where the study concluded that transactional leadership style has a positive and significant impact on the performance of employees in Somaliland's ministry of higher education.

**H3: Laissez-faire leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.**

H3 is rejected as regression analysis shows that laissez-faire leadership style predicts employee performance negatively and insignificantly with a negative beta value and a significant value higher than 0.05. The negative and insignificant impact of laissez faire leadership on employee performance can be due the fact that laissez-faire managers does not involve when critical issues arise, avoid making decisions, are not present when they are needed and always postponed attending to urgent matters. This is evident in table 9 where all these factors are shown to be exhibited by the managers of MWSC. It is also evident that from figure 2 and 5 that the majority of the respondents of this study is junior/entry level staffs and the majority of them had only been working in MWSC between 1-4 years. This indicates that they won't be experienced and skilled enough since they had been working in the company for a short period. In a situation where employees are not knowledgeable and unskilled and lack adequate experience, laissez faire leaders can have negative affect on their productivity and can be detrimental (Alan, 2013; Ronald 2011).

The current result is in congruence with the findings of several studies discussed previously. For instance, Malcalm and Tamatey (2017) study on public sector of Ghana, found that laissez faire leadership style has no significant effect on employee performance. Girei, (2015) study conducted on package water producing industry in Nigeria, also found that laissez faire leadership style has a negative and insignificant effect performance among the employees. The current findings also supports the results of Chua et al. (2018) study conducted on service sector in Klang Valley of Malaysia, where they found that laissez-faire leadership style has insignificant and negative

influence on performance of the employees. However, this finding has contradicting results with past research studies discussed in previous chapters. For example, Itunga and Awuor (2019) study on Kenya's state owned enterprises, found that laissez faire leadership styles positively impacts employee performance. Basit et al (2017), found a significant and positive impact of laissez-faire leadership styles on the performance of employees in Malaysian private firms. Study done by Baig et al (2019) on Pakistan's textile sector, found that laissez-faire leadership has a negative but a significant impact on the performance of employee.

**H4: Participative leadership style predicts significant variance in employee performance.**

H4 is rejected as regression analysis indicates that participative leadership style does not significantly predicts variance in employee performance in MWSC. However, the change is positive as it has positive unstandardized beta value. This may be because since participative leaders encourage joint decision making and some employees may feel alienated when their opinions are not considered while in problem solving and decision making which leads to frustration. Since most of the respondents of this study is junior/entry level employees, there is a higher possibility that their ideas are not being accepted by their managers as the managers might think young employees would be naïve and their opinion would not be based on lack of facts and experience. This may also be because most of the respondents are junior/entry level and majority of the participants had only been working in MWSC between 1-4-year period, they would be expecting their manager to schedule the task, set formal rules and procedures, their managers to make decision for them as they are still young and not experienced much. However, participative leadership are known to eliminate the hierarchy, formal rules and procedures. They also don't take the decision for employees rather encourage them to take joint decision. It is evident in table 10 that all these factors of participative leadership are exhibited by MWSC managers thus, leading to insignificant variance in employee performance.

The result of this study is in congruence with the findings of Chua et al., (2018) study done in the service sector in Klang Valley in Malaysia, where they found

democratic/participative leadership style has a positive and significant influence. Jama (2017), study on Somaliland's ministry of education and higher studies also found that participative leadership styles positively and significantly impacts performance of employees in this sector. However, this result is inconsistent with studies that reported that participative leadership style positively and significantly influences performance of employees. For instance, Rana et al., (2019), study result shows that participative leadership style significantly influence performance of employees in coffee trading firms in Kenya. This finding is also contradictory to Dalluay and Jalagat, (2016) results, where they found participative leadership styles impacts significantly on employee job performance in small-scale firms in Philippines.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

**Objective 1: To investigate the impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.**

The objective to examine the impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance in MWSC has been achieved. The results conclude that there is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance. Engaging in behaviours like idealise behaviour, intellectual stimulations, inspirational motivations and individualised considerations are an important and significant factor which have a positive impact on employee performance. This means when managers/supervisors who exhibit characteristics of these behaviours will lead to increase their employee's performance in MWSC in Maldives. This is in accordance to the transformational leadership style and transformational approach discussed in chapter 2. Therefore, managers in MWSC should build respect with their employees, instil pride in them and motivate them to become confident in achieving goals. In addition, managers should suggest new methods to complete tasks and encourage employees to solve the problems in innovative and creative ways. Managers should also spend their time teaching and coaching each employee based on their individual needs and abilities.

**Objective 2: To examine the impact of transactional leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.**

The objective to examine the impact of transactional leadership style on employee performance in MWSC has been achieved. The result concludes that there is no significant impact of transactional leadership style on employee performance. This means that exchange of reward, highlighting problems and taking corrective actions before issue arise on employee performance. This may be because the exchange of reward for the performance of achieving the task tends to be a short-term exchange of fulfilment and sometimes the reward does not match with the expectation of the employees. Therefore, managers must know what type of rewards their subordinates are expecting to get in return for their performance. Furthermore, managers should avoid focusing on mistakes, irregularities and failure.

**Objective 3: To analyse the impact laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.**

The objective to examine the impact of laissez-faire leadership on employee performance in MWSC has been achieved. The result concludes that there is a negative and insignificant impact of laissez-faire leadership style on employee performance. This means that when supervisors not being present and not being involved during in critical matters, avoiding making decisions and delaying attending to urgent issues have adverse effect on employee performance. employees might not be good at following their own schedule, managing the projects according to their own deadlines and solving problems by themselves. In such circumstance, if the employees do not get necessary guidance and feedback from their supervisor, deadline can be missed, and tasks remain unachieved. Thus, the behaviours of laissez-faire leadership style should be avoided. Therefore, Managers in MWSC should actively get involved in decision making, problem solving and taking actions. Also, managers should always be present to deal with urgent matters before their employees.

**Objective 4: To evaluate the impact of participative leadership style on employee performance in MWSC in Maldives.**

The objective to examine the impact of participative leadership style on employee performance in MWSC has been achieved. The result concludes that there is no significant impact of participative leadership style on employee performance. This means that consultative behavior, empowerment, joint decision making, power sharing and intrinsic are not significant factors on employee performance. Therefore, managers should take decision by themselves rather than involving subordinates for their opinion regarding issues. Managers should set timelines and schedules on how to carry out the tasks for their subordinates instead of leaving it to their employees to manage on their own. In addition, managers should not delegate responsibilities and empowerment to employees but rather determine what needs to be done and how to do it for employees.

**Objective 5: To identify the leadership style that enhances the performance of employees the most in MWSC in Maldives.**

The objective to identify the leadership style that improves employee performance the most in MWSC has been achieved. The results reveal that only transformational leadership style has a positive significant impact on performance of employees. Therefore, the company should practice transformational leadership style more among the managers in MWSC and foster within the company in order to increase employee performance. This finding can be generalized to SOEs in Maldives. Thus, this finding can be used to suggest leadership framework for the SOEs on how transformational leadership style will be more effective in enhancing employee performance.

**Objective 6: To identify the impact of overall leaderships styles on employee performance.**

Regression table 12 and 13 shows that leadership style has an adjusted R square value of 0.188 and a significance value of 0.000 indicating that overall leadership styles predict significant variance in employee performance. Thus, it can be concluded that leadership styles have a significant impact on employee performance. 18% of the variation in

employee performance can be explained by participative, transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership style which is a medium size effect. This may be because transformational leadership style explains a higher proportion of the variance in employee performance as it is the most exhibited leadership style in MWSC which is also found to predict significant variance in employee performance. Thus, since it evident that employee performance is impacted by leadership styles in MWSC, the company needs to adopt the most effective leadership style which is transformational leadership and foster it within the organization.

## **5 Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

### **5.1 Implications of findings for the research questions**

Transformational leadership style positively and significantly predicted variance in employee performance in MWSC. However, this finding is contradictory to the results of Malcalm and Tamatey (2017) study on public sector of Ghana, where they found transformational leadership has no significant effect on employee performance. This may be because they used different scale to measure employee performance which includes 21 questions regarding in-role and extra role performance. The study also used both quantitative and qualitative approach to gather and analyse data. Their sample size is also quite less (30 respondents) compare to the current study (175 respondents). These are the possible reasons why the differences in the findings occurred.

Transactional leadership style predicts insignificant variance in employee performance. However, this finding is contrary with Girei, (2015) study conducted on package water producing industry in Nigeria, where it was found that transactional leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with pemployee performance. This may be because the study used a different instrument known as role-based performance scale to measure the employee performance and also the sample size (361 employees) is very large compared to the current study. This finding is also inconsistent with the study done by Jama, (2017), that concluded that transactional leadership style has a positive and significant impact on the performance of employees in Somaliland's ministry of higher education. The difference in findings occurred because they study used both quantitative and qualitative approach to gather and to analyze data. Also, the questionnaire instrument used in the study is different from the scale used in the current study.

Laissez-faire leadership style negatively and insignificantly predicts variance in employee performance. Thus, it is concluded that laissez-faire leadership style has a negative and insignificant impact on employee performance in MWSC. However, this finding has contradicting results with past research studies discussed in previous chapters. For example, Itunga and Awuor (2019) study on Kenya's state owned enterprises, found that laissez faire leadership styles positively impacts employee performance. The

difference in the findings occurred may be because the sample size used in their study was 85 which is very less compared to the present study. Also, different cultural aspects would be the reason to have inconsistent findings. Basit et al (2017), found a significant and positive impact of laissez-faire leadership styles on the performance of employees in Malaysian private firms. This may be because the study was conducted in private firms of Malaysia which is an entirely different context of the current study. Also, the study used different scales to measure leadership styles and employee performance.

Participative leadership style predicts variance in employee performance positively but insignificantly. However, Rana et al., (2019), study result shows that participative leadership style significantly influence performance of employees in coffee trading firms in Kenya. This finding is also contradictory to Dalluay and Jalagat, (2016) results, where they found participative leadership styles impacts significantly on employee job performance in small-scale firms in Philippines. The difference in the findings of these two studies may be due to those studies done on different context and different culture. Also, another reason may be because they have used different scale to measure participative leadership style and employee performance.

## **5.2 Contributions and limitations of the research**

There are potential limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample size of this study is adequate but not large. This limits the accuracy and generalization of the findings of the research. A sample size of 175 employees cannot justify the finding of this study as majority of the population (almost 795 employees) have not participated in the survey.

Secondly, the study is limited to only one organization (MWSC) which will not represent the overall SOEs in Maldives. This limitation will restrain the generalization of the findings of this study to the entire context of SOEs in Maldives. Therefore, limited claims, generalizations and conclusions can be made.

Thirdly, MLQ scale and participative leadership scale used in this study are self-report instruments and Employee performance scales used in this study are self-rating instrument. According to Demetriou et al., (2015), the major limitation of self-report questionnaires is the possibility of giving not valid answers which is known as social

desirability bias as well as respondents tends to respond in a particular way regardless of the questions.

This study is cross-sectional, and thus collecting of data is limited to one time period. Employee performance is measured just one time in this study and perceptions of employee performance might vary overtime. According Carlson and Morrison, (2009), cross sectional studies lead towards bias.

Lastly, the data collection period given was limited to 3 months which is not enough to collect data for larger sample size. This study did not meet the ideal sample size.

This study contributes to expand and widen the knowledge on how leadership style can be used to enhance performance of employees better. The study also closes a gap in the present literature, where researches on leadership styles and its effect on employee performance in the context of the Maldives as whole have not been conducted and explored before. Hence, the study provides empirical evidence from MWSC on the impacts transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and participative leadership style has on employee performance. This study also provides evidence on which leadership style increases employee performance the most.

### **5.3 Recommendations for practice**

Since transformational leadership style is the most perceived leadership style in MWSC, managers of the company should maintain and practice transformational leadership style more and exhibit its characteristics such as intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. This is supported by Awori, (2017) study, where the findings show that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration predicted a significant proportion of variance in employee performance.

As a transformational leader and to exhibit idealized influence behaviours, the managers of the company should build pride, admiration, loyalty, confidence and trust with their employees. This is supported by Ngaithe et al., (2016) study, where they found that idealized influence correlates with employee performance positively and significantly.

Their multiple linear regression shows that idealized influence predicts employee performance significantly.

To exhibit inspirational motivation behaviour, managers should encourage their employees to achieve higher goals and objectives. Managers should strive to be a role model and develop a collective vision and mission with the employees. This is supported by Ngaithe et al., (2016), study where they found that inspirational motivation correlates with employee performance positively and significantly and predicts employee performance significantly.

Furthermore, to exhibit intellectual stimulation, managers should motivate their subordinates to address the issues from various different angles through innovative ways and encourage them to be creative and innovative in completing their tasks. This is supported by a study done by Ogola, (2017), where they found that intellectual stimulation impacts positively and significantly on employee performance.

To exhibit individualized consideration, managers should teach and coach each employee on the basis of their individual needs, abilities and aspirations. This is supported by Awori, (2017) study, where individualized consideration predicted a significant variance in employee performance.

MWSC can also develop training programs that help to improve leadership development of managers and provide these training programs to the managers of the company. This leadership development training can be developed based on the findings of this study in order to have a better influence on employees to increase their performance. Managers should also get involve more and be there to guide employees when an urgent matter arise. In addition, managers should attend to urgent and critical matters immediately and make decisions.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for future research**

From the limitations of this study, the following recommendations for future research can be taken into consideration.

Firstly, It is recommended that future research to consider including other corporations in SOEs in Maldives. Other functional categories of SOE include regulatory, public colleges and universities, ministries, manufacturing corporations, commercial corporations, financial, service corporations, public schools, regional development authorities, training and research and tertiary education and training. Future researches can include these government corporations and conduct a comparative analysis. This will give more in-depth stronger and more reliable results as well as diverse data.

Secondly, further research of this study should also consider other dependent variable other than employee performance such as employee satisfaction, employee motivation, employee commitment and organizational performance as these variables are important to enhance organizational performance. In addition, future research should consider using other elements that is not covered in this study to measure employee performance such as punctuality, performance and productivity, career advancement, presence/ attendance on the job, efficiency of the work completed, effectiveness of work completed and completing tasks on time.

Thirdly, other scales can be used in future work to measure variables such as non-self-report measures. In addition, future researcher may focus on leadership development programs based on the findings of this study. Future research can work on developing training and development programs.

Lastly, even though, the study has minimum required number of respondents, it does not reach to the ideal sample size. Therefore, future research should consider including ideal number of employees from the company for better generalization of findings to the whole population of the company.

## **5.5 Final conclusion and reflection**

This study provides evidence on the leadership style to practice and foster in MWSC to achieve better employee performance. The study suggests that transformational leadership style should be adopted and fostered within the managers of MWSC as it is found to be the most effective leadership style that enhances employee performance.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A –

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**Reeshan Aishath** <reeshan.aishath@gmail.com>  
to lazman, azisma08, sbzibrahim

Thu, Jul 2, 7:23 AM

Dear Azman,

I am a master's student at Griffith College, Dublin. I am in the process of writing my dissertation on the impact of leadership styles on employee's performance. For my research study, I would like to ask your permission to utilize the Participative Questionnaire you have created for the article attached.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Regards,  
Reeshan Aishath  
Master's in international business management

Linking\_Participati...

**Azis Mail** <azisma08@gmail.com>  
to me, lazman, Zalina

Fri, Jul 3, 7:25 PM

No problem and you can use the instrument.  
Thanks  
Azman

## Appendix B –

For use by Aishath Reeshan only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on July 7, 2020

**Permission for Aishath Reeshan to reproduce 50 copies  
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**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire™  
Instrument (Leader and Rater Form)  
and Scoring Guide  
(Form 5X-Short)**

**by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass**

Published by Mind Garden, Inc.

info@mindgarden.com  
www.mindgarden.com

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## Appendix C –

 **Ibrahim Sayyad**  
to Yoosuf, Shahida, me, Hussain ▾ Tue, Jul 14, 9:37 AM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Dear Reeshan,

Please be informed that the Company has no objections to the proposed research on the impact of different leadership styles on employee performance, being carried out via the shared questionnaire.

We would like to however, note that the information obtained must be treated as confidential at all times and only be used for the approved academic purposes in relation to the research project.

Do let us know if you require any assistance on our end.

We would also like to request for the results of your questionnaire and findings be shared with the HR department once it is completed. Wishing you the best for the project

**Regards,**

**Ibrahim Sayyad**  
**Senior Human Resource Officer**



**Help preserve trees on planet earth by not printing this email unless you really need to.**  
*This e-mail and any accompanying attachment(s) may contain confidential and/or legally privileged material.*

\*\*\*

## Appendix D –

### Questionnaire

#### **Impact of leadership styles on employee performance**

##### **Agreement Forms (Plain Language and Informed Consent)**

Dear Participant,

I am a postgraduate student at Griffith College, Dublin and this research is an important part in completing my master's program.

##### **Purpose of the Research**

Purpose of this study is to examine the impact of different leadership styles on employee performance in MWSC. The study will be conducted among the employees of Male' Water and Sewerage company in Maldives. This study aims to examine the impact of four types of leadership styles ( transformational, transactional, participative and laissez-fair leadership) on performance of the employees in MWSC. This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Griffith College, Dublin.

##### **Details of your Involvement in the study**

You will be asked to answer basic demographic questions and questions about your work and your job performance. The survey will not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Participants will be benefitted from taking part in this research study as your opinion will be heard and used by the company in order to take the right action according to their preference. Involvement in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. However, once you submit the survey, your responses cannot be withdrawn since they remain anonymous.

##### **Data Confidentiality**

The data collected and gathered will be protected and will be kept confidentially only for the purpose of the study by the researcher. The confidentiality of the information will be subjected to legal limitations. After completion of the dissertation and being reviewed and marked by the lecturers in the university, all the data and information provided will be destroyed within six months.

##### **Disclaimer**

The questionnaire is unlikely to cause any discomfort, however, If you feel uncomfortable you may withdraw from the research at any time. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research, feel free to discuss it with Research Ethics Committee at Griffith College, Dublin.

Dr. Garrett Ryan,  
Griffith College Research Ethics Committee  
South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Tel: +35314163324  
[Garrett.ryan@griffith.ie](mailto:Garrett.ryan@griffith.ie)

If you have any queries regarding the research, do not hesitate to contact me  
[Reeshan.aishath@gmail.com](mailto:Reeshan.aishath@gmail.com)

Best regards  
Aishath Reeshan

1. I have read and understood the agreement  
Yes  
No
  
2. I have had an opportunity to ask and discuss this study  
Yes  
No (Reach out to [reeshan.aishath@gmail.com](mailto:reeshan.aishath@gmail.com) for questions)  
Not applicable (Please chose this if you have no questions)
  
3. Im aware that I can withdraw from this research at any time during the survey  
Yes  
No
  
4. I'm aware that I would be kept anonymous in this research study  
Yes  
No
  
5. Are you atleast 18 (and above) and consent to take part in this survey  
Yes  
No

### **Respondents demographic**

Using the options, please select your answer

6. Are you currently working at MWSC  
Yes  
No
  
7. **Gender**  
Female

Male

**8. Age**

- 18-25 years old
- 26-35 years old
- 36-45 years old
- 46 years or above

**9. Current position**

- Junior/Entry level
- Mid-level Management
- Senior/High Level Management

**10. Job tenure**

- Less than a year
- 1-4 years
- 5-8 years
- 9 years or more

**Leadership questionnaire**

The sets of statements aimed at helping you assess your feelings or perceptions of the leadership style of your immediate supervisor. You are requested to rating yourself against each statement to indicate you level of agreement with what the statement is suggesting, where the following ratings are:

**1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree**

Please place a tick (√) or a mark (x) in the box (cell) that represents your appropriate level of agreement

<b>Transformational Leadership</b>					
<b>Idealized Influence</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
11. My supervisor instill pride in me for being associated with him/her					
12. My supervisor goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group					
13. My supervisor acts in ways that builds my respect					
<b>Inspirational Motivation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

14. My supervisor talks optimistically about the future					
15. My Supervisor talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished					
16. My supervisor expresses confidence that goals will be achieved					
<b>Intellectual Stimulation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
17. My supervisor seeks differing perspectives when solving problems					
18. My supervisor gets me to look at problems from many different angles					
19. My supervisor suggests new ways of looking at how to complete tasks					
<b>Individual Consideration</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
20. My supervisor spends time teaching and coaching					
21. My supervisor considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others					
22. My supervisor helps me to develop my strengths					
<b>Transactional Leadership</b>					
<b>Contingent Reward</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
23. My supervisor provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts					
24. My supervisor makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved					
25. My supervisor expresses satisfaction when I meet expectations					
<b>Management by Exception (Active)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
26. My supervisor focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions and deviations from standards					
27. My supervisor concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints and failures					
28. My supervisor keeps track of all mistakes					
<b>Management by Exception (Passive)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
29. My supervisor fails to interfere until problems become serious					
30. My supervisor waits for things to go wrong before taking action					
31. My supervisor Shows that he/she is a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."					
<b>Laissez-faire Leadership</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
32. My supervisor avoids getting involved when important issues arise					

33. My supervisor is absent when needed					
34. My supervisor avoids making decisions					
35. My supervisor delays responding to urgent questions					
<b>Participative leadership</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
36. My supervisor and team members always vote whenever a major decision has to be made					
37. My supervisor wants to create an environment where team members are allowed to participate in the decision-making process					
38. My supervisor allows team members to determine what needs to be done and how to do it					
39. My supervisor asks team members for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then uses their vision where appropriate					
40. When there are differences in role expectation, my supervisor works with employees to resolve the differences					
41. Team members have the right to determine their own organizational objectives					

### **Employee performance**

The sets of statements aimed at helping you assess your performance at your job in the company. You are requested to rate yourself against each statement to indicate your self assessment of your own performance, where the following ratings are:

**1 = Dissatisfied 2=Less satisfied 3 = Satisfied 4 = Very satisfied 5 = Completely satisfied (Excellent)**

Please place a tick (✓) or a mark (x) in the box (cell) that represents your appropriate level of performance rating.

<b>Employee performance</b>	Dissatisfied	Less satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied (Excellent)
<b>42.TIMELINESS:</b>  Consider the degree to which an activity is completed, or a result produced, at the earliest time desirable from the standpoints of coordinating with the outputs of others, maximizing the	1	2	3	4	5

time available for other activities.					
<b>43.QUALITY OF WORK:</b> Consider neatness, accuracy and dependability of results regardless of volume.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>44.QUANTITY OF WORK:</b> Consider the volume of work produced under normal conditions. Disregard errors	1	2	3	4	5
<b>45.NEED FOR SUPERVISION:</b> Consider the degree to which you carry out a job function without either having to request supervisory assistance or requiring supervisory intervention	1	2	3	4	5
<b>46.INTERPERSONAL IMPACT:</b> Consider the degree to which you promote feelings of self-esteem, goodwill and cooperativeness among co-workers and leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

# APPENDIX E

21 : GenderQ7 2.00 Visible: 58 of 58 Variables

	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	GenderQ7	AgeQ8	CurrentPositionQ9	JobTenureQ10	TransfollQ11	IQ12	IQ13	IMQ14	IMQ15	IMQ16	ISQ17
1	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
2	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00
3	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
4	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
5	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	3.00
6	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
7	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
8	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
9	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
10	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.00
11	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
12	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	4.00	5.00	2.00	2.00
13	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
14	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
15	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
16	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
17	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
18	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
19	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
20	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
21	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
22	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.00

Data View Variable View