



Sefydliad Dysgu Canol Dinas/ Institute of Inner City Learning

BA Leadership and Management Skills for the Workplace

Title: *The impact of Leaderships Styles on Employee Engagement: A Case Study of Magna Exteriors, Banbury.*



Dagmara Wasilewska

Student ID: 2227923

Supervisor Name: Dr. Roopa Aruvanahalli Nagaraju

Dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the award of BA Leadership and Management

November 2025

DECLARATION

I, *Dagmara Wasilewska* declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that the work contained herein is entirely my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification, in whole or in part, except as specified.

Signature: *Wasilewska*

Date: 18/11/2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Roopa Aruvanahalli Nagaraju, for her guidance, support and valuable feedback throughout the research and writing of this dissertation.

I am also grateful to the academic staff for their support during my studies.

Special thanks go to my husband, Dawid, for taking care of our children and providing me with the time and encouragement needed to complete this work.

I would also like to thank all the participants who kindly completed the surveys for this study, as well as Human Resources Department of Magna Exteriors in Banbury for permission to conduct the research.

Finally, I am grateful to my fellow students and friends for their insightful discussions and support.

Without all of you, this would not have been possible.

Table of contents

Abstract	4
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 Background.....	6
1.3 Research Aim	7
1.4 Research Objectives	8
1.5 Research Questions	8
1.6 Chapter Summary	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Leadership Theories and Styles.....	10
2.2.1 Transactional Leadership	10
2.2.2 Transformational Leadership	11
2.2.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership	11
2.3 Employee Engagement: Concepts and Frameworks	11
2.3.1 Defining Employee Engagement.....	12
2.3.2 Drivers of Engagement	12
2.3.3 Measuring Engagement	12
2.4 Linking Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement	12
2.4.1 Transactional Leadership and Engagement.....	12
2.4.2 Transformational Leadership and Engagement	13
2.4.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership and Engagement.....	13
2.5 Leadership and Engagement in Manufacturing Contexts.....	13
2.6 Research Gaps	14
2.7 Chapter Summary	14
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	14
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Research Philosophy	16
Table 1: Saunders Research Onion: Application to Magna Exteriors case study.	16
3.3 Research Approach	17

3.4 Research Design.....	18
3.5 Research Strategy and Data Collection Method	18
3.6 Survey Structure and Measures	19
3.7 Sampling Strategy	19
3.8 Data Analysis	19
3.9 Reliability and Validity	20
3.10 Ethical Important Considerations.....	20
3.11 Limitations of the Methodology	21
3.12 Chapter Summary.....	21
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	22
4.1 Introduction	23
4.2 Response Rate and Demographics.....	23
4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles	24
4.3.1 Average Leadership Style Scores by Role	24
4.3.2 Comparison of Leadership Styles Scores by Role.	25
4.4 Employee Engagement Results.....	26
4.4.1 Engagement Dimensions: Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption	28
4.4.2 Interpretation in the Context of Magna Exteriors	30
4.5 Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles and Engagement	30
4.5.1 Transformational Leadership and Engagement	32
4.5.2 Transactional Leadership and Engagement.....	32
4.5.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership and Engagement.....	33
4.6 Cross-Level Comparative Analysis.....	33
4.6.1 Managers	33
4.6.2 Team Leaders.....	33
4.6.3 Operators.....	34
4.7 Thematic Interpretation and Discussion	34
4.7.1 Perceived Distance Between Leadership Levels	34
4.7.2 Leadership Visibility and Communication	35
4.7.3 Balancing Structure with Flexibility.....	35
4.7.4 Motivation Through Recognition	36

4.7.5 Engagement as a Shared Responsibility.....	36
4.8 Theoretical Integration	36
4.8.1 Transformational Leadership and Engagement Theory.....	37
4.8.2 Transactional Leadership and the Job Demands–Resources Model	37
4.8.3 Situational Leadership and Adaptive Capacity	37
4.8.4 Integrating Leadership Theories	38
4.8.5 Leadership-Engagement Alignment in the Manufacturing Context	38
4.9 Summary of Findings	38
CHAPTER 5: Recommendations, Conclusion and Limitations of the Research	40
5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Key Conclusions.....	41
5.2.1 Summary of the Research Aim and Objectives	41
5.2.2 Main Findings	41
5.3 Limitations of the Study.....	42
5.4 Recommendations	43
5.4.1 Develop Transformational Leadership Capability	43
5.4.2 Strengthen Middle Management Support.....	43
5.4.3 Increase Leadership Visibility on the Shop Floor.....	44
5.4.4 Balance Transactional Systems with Human Recognition	44
5.4.5 Embed Adaptive Leadership and Communication Practices	44
5.4.6 Promote Employee Voice and Participation	44
5.5 Opportunities for Future Research	45
5.6 Chapter Summary	45
6. References:.....	46
Appendices:	50

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the impact of different leadership styles on employee engagement within Magna Exteriors in Banbury, a leading automotive manufacturing company in the United Kingdom. The research focuses on how transformational, transactional and situational leadership approaches influence the three dimensions of work engagement: vigour, dedication and absorption.

The study draws upon contemporary leadership and engagement theories, including Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership model, Hersey and Blanchard's (2013) situational leadership theory, and Schaufeli's (2017) work engagement framework. Adopting a quantitative, deductive research design, the study utilised paper-based questionnaires distributed to managers, team leaders, and production operators. In total, 72 valid responses were obtained, representing an 80% overall response rate.

Data were coded and analysed using Microsoft Excel, enabling the generation of descriptive statistics, percentage distributions, cross-tabulations, and visual outputs such as charts and graphs. These tools supported the interpretation of relationships between leadership styles and employee engagement levels.

Findings reveal that transactional leadership is the most dominant style within Magna's structured manufacturing environment, ensuring operational consistency and productivity. However, transformational leadership demonstrated the strongest positive relationship with employee engagement, particularly among managers and team leaders, while situational/adaptive leadership showed moderate influence, reflecting the importance of flexibility and responsiveness. Engagement levels declined along the organisational hierarchy, with managers reporting the highest and operators the lowest engagement.

The study concludes that leadership style is a critical determinant of employee engagement. To strengthen engagement at Magna, the research recommends the development of transformational and adaptive leadership capabilities, improved communication across hierarchical levels, and enhanced recognition practices. Although limited by its single-case, cross-sectional design, the study contributes valuable insights into leadership effectiveness and employee motivation within the manufacturing sector.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Leadership remains a critical determinant of organisational success, influencing not only performance outcomes but also employee motivation and satisfaction. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, effective leadership is required to inspire employees, foster innovation, and maintain operational efficiency (Northouse, 2021). According to Yukl (2013), leadership is no longer confined to directing and controlling tasks; it involves shaping workplace culture, enhancing communication, and creating environments where employees are empowered and engaged.

Based on Khan's (1990) theory of personal engagement and disengagement, leadership plays a key role in shaping the psychological conditions that determine whether employees fully invest themselves in their work. When leaders foster safety, meaningfulness, and availability, employees are more likely to engage cognitively, emotionally and physically.

Conversely, in the absence of such leadership practices, disengagement may occur, leading to withdrawal, reduced effort, or diminished organisational commitment. This dynamic aligns with Schaufeli's (2017) view of engagement as vigour, dedication and absorption, where poor leadership can transform these qualities into cynicism.

For instance, Bekker and Albrecht (2018) emphasise that engagement contributes to sustained organisational effectiveness, while Gallup (2020) reports empirical evidence linking engagement with both productivity gains and workforce stability.

Given these trends, the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement has become an increasingly important subject for researchers and practitioners. Leadership directly impacts how employees perceive their roles, their willingness to exert discretionary effort, and their sense of belonging within the organisation (Breevaart et al., 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015).

This dissertation investigates these dynamics within the context of Magna Exteriors Banbury, a global automotive manufacturing company. It aims to critically examine how different leadership styles are practiced within the organisation and how these influence employee engagement, offering both academic and practical insights.

1.2 Background

Magna Exteriors Banbury, based in Oxfordshire, is one of the region's major employers, with several hundred staff producing key automotive components. As part of Magna International Inc., it operates in a competitive supply chain where efficiency, innovation, and workforce stability are vital (Magna, 2023). The company faces ongoing challenges such as technological change, sustainability demands, and external pressures that place significant demands on leadership practices.

Recent events highlight the fragility of the automotive sector. In August 2025, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) suffered a major cyberattack that disrupted IT systems, shut down production lines, and delayed supplier operations across the UK. Production remained suspended for weeks, with losses estimated in the hundreds of millions (The Guardian, 2025; Wired, 2025). This disruption cascaded across the supply chain, including tier-one suppliers such as Magna, intensifying uncertainty for both employees and managers.

At the same time, the UK economy continues to experience high inflation, driven by energy costs, supply chain bottlenecks, and labour market pressures. Inflation has increased operational expenses while eroding employees' real wages, heightening workforce concerns over job security and pay (Financial Times, 2025). For manufacturing firms, the combined effects of inflation and production downtime amplify risks, testing leadership capacity to maintain stability and engagement.

Leadership theory provides useful lenses for examining such challenges. Early models, such as autocratic and democratic leadership (Lewin et al., 1939), highlighted authority and participation. Later frameworks introduced transformational leadership, which inspires through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualised support, and transactional leadership, focused on compliance via rewards and sanctions (Bass, 1990; Avolio & Bass, 2004). Contemporary approaches, including situational and distributed leadership, emphasise context and adaptability (Hersey et al., 2013; Bolden, 2011).

Employee engagement, defined as vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2017), is strongly associated with performance and innovation (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Yet in manufacturing, engagement is vulnerable to repetitive work, safety concerns, and external shocks such as cyberattacks or inflation (Shuck et al., 2011). In such contexts, effective leadership is essential for sustaining motivation and resilience. This dissertation therefore examines how leadership styles at Magna Exteriors Banbury influence employee engagement within a volatile operating environment.

1.3 Research Aim

To investigate the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement at Magna Exteriors in Banbury, with a view to identifying effective practices and offering recommendations for enhancing engagement through leadership.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve this aim, the study will pursue the following objectives:

- To critically review existing literature on leadership styles and employee engagement, identifying key theoretical frameworks and empirical findings.
- To examine which leadership styles are currently practiced at Magna Exteriors Banbury.
- To explore employees' perceptions of leadership effectiveness and its impact on their engagement levels.
- To analyse the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement in the case study organisation.
- To propose recommendations for leadership practice that can enhance employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury.

1.5 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What leadership styles are most commonly applied within Magna Exteriors Banbury?
- How do employees perceive the influence of leadership on their engagement and motivation?
- What is the relationship between different leadership styles and employee engagement in the case study organisation?
- What leadership practices can be recommended to strengthen employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury?

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced the research topic and outlined the significance of exploring the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. It has established the importance of leadership in shaping employee attitudes and organisational performance, with engagement recognised as a critical driver of success. The background section situated the study within the broader context of leadership theory and employee engagement research, while highlighting the practical relevance of examining these dynamics within Magna Exteriors Banbury.

The chapter has also set out the research aim, objectives, and questions, providing a clear framework for the investigation. The next chapter will present a detailed literature review, critically examining existing studies on leadership and engagement to establish the theoretical foundation for the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review provides the theoretical and empirical foundation upon which research is built, enabling the researcher to position their study within existing knowledge and to identify gaps warranting further exploration (Snyder, 2019). This chapter examines contemporary literature on leadership and employee engagement, two constructs central to organisational effectiveness. The review is structured around three leadership frameworks-transactional, transformational, and situational/adaptive leadership-which underpin the present study. Each style is critically examined in relation to its impact on employee engagement. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the current literature and justifying the relevance of this study to the manufacturing context of Magna Exteriors in Banbury.

2.2 Leadership Theories and Styles

Leadership remains one of the most studied yet complex concepts in management research. While early theories such as trait and behavioural models focused on inherent characteristics and observable actions, more contemporary frameworks recognise leadership as a dynamic interaction between leaders, followers, and context (Northouse, 2021). Among the most influential modern approaches are transactional, transformational, and situational/adaptive leadership, each offering unique mechanisms for influencing motivation and engagement.

2.2.1 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, rooted in the work of Bass (1990), is characterised by a focus on structure, performance standards, and the exchange of rewards for compliance. It operates through contingent reinforcement, where employees receive recognition or sanctions based on their fulfilment of agreed objectives (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Transactional leaders tend to prioritise efficiency, adherence to rules, and measurable outcomes-qualities particularly valued in manufacturing environments such as Magna Exteriors, where precision and consistency are essential (Bilola, 2023).

While transactional leadership ensures operational control and role clarity, critics argue that it may limit creativity and intrinsic motivation (Breevaart et al., 2014). Excessive reliance on transactional exchanges can foster dependency rather than commitment, undermining engagement over time (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Nonetheless, research shows that transactional practices can coexist with more empowering approaches, especially when clear

performance expectations are balanced with recognition and feedback (Podsakoff et al., 2006; Carter et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership expands upon the transactional model by focusing on vision, inspiration, and the development of followers' potential (Bass, 1999). Transformational leaders exhibit four key behaviours: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Through these dimensions, such leaders foster trust, encourage innovation, and align personal and organisational values (Ng, 2017).

A substantial body of research demonstrates that transformational leadership is strongly correlated with employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance (Breevaart et al., 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015). By cultivating psychological safety and meaning at work, transformational leaders enable employees to invest emotionally and cognitively in their roles (Decuyper and Schaufeli, 2020). However, critics caution that transformational leadership may be less effective in highly standardised environments where autonomy is constrained, such as in repetitive manufacturing operations (Arnold, 2017). Furthermore, unrealistic expectations or "vision fatigue" can occur when inspirational rhetoric is not matched by tangible support (Banks et al., 2016).

2.2.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership

Situational leadership, originally proposed by Hersey and Blanchard (1988) and later reframed as adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009), posits that no single leadership style is universally effective. Instead, effective leaders diagnose the competence and commitment of their team members and adapt their approach accordingly. In manufacturing environments like Magna Exteriors, situational adaptability allows leaders to balance direction with empowerment—offering guidance to less experienced operators while delegating autonomy to skilled employees (Thompson and Glasø, 2015).

Adaptive leadership emphasises flexibility, emotional intelligence, and responsiveness to change (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Research suggests that adaptive leaders can maintain engagement by creating psychologically safe climates and by enabling employees to contribute to problem-solving and process improvement (Darics and Gatta, 2017). However, frequent shifts in style may confuse employees if not communicated clearly, leading to inconsistency or perceived favouritism (Thompson and Glasø, 2015).

2.3 Employee Engagement: Concepts and Frameworks

2.3.1 Defining Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has evolved into a central construct in organisational psychology, often associated with productivity, innovation, and retention. Kahn's (1990) seminal definition describes engagement as the degree to which individuals invest their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in their work roles. Building on this, Schaufeli et al. (2002) conceptualise engagement as a positive, fulfilling state characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption.

In contemporary literature, engagement is viewed as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional commitment, discretionary effort, and identification with organisational goals (Albrecht et al., 2015). It differs from job satisfaction or motivation in its depth and intensity; engagement reflects a holistic connection between employees and their work (Shuck et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Drivers of Engagement

Leadership is consistently cited as a primary antecedent of engagement (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). Other key drivers include job design, organisational culture, communication, and recognition (Shuck et al., 2011; Gallup, 2020). Effective leaders create conditions that satisfy employees' needs for meaning, competence, and relatedness-factors central to self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2017). Conversely, poor leadership can erode trust and disengage employees, regardless of material incentives (Xu and Thomas, 2011).

2.3.3 Measuring Engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) remains the most widely used measure, assessing vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2017). Recent studies have refined measurement approaches to include psychological safety, resilience, and meaningfulness (Cai et al., 2023). Validated scales ensure consistency across studies and facilitate comparisons between leadership approaches.

2.4 Linking Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement

2.4.1 Transactional Leadership and Engagement

Research on transactional leadership suggests a moderate but situationally dependent impact on engagement. Studies indicate that contingent rewards can promote short-term motivation, particularly where goals are clear and measurable (Carter et al., 2019). In manufacturing

settings, transactional leaders contribute to operational stability and accountability (Biloo, 2023). However, overemphasis on control and punishment mechanisms may suppress creativity and reduce emotional investment (Breevaart et al., 2014). Therefore, transactional leadership may be most effective when complemented by supportive and developmental behaviours.

2.4.2 Transformational Leadership and Engagement

Transformational leadership remains one of the strongest predictors of engagement across sectors (Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). Through individualised consideration and inspirational motivation, transformational leaders foster purpose and belonging (Decuyper and Schaufeli, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that employees led by transformational leaders display higher levels of vigour and commitment (Albrecht et al., 2015). This leadership style also enhances organisational citizenship behaviours-voluntary efforts beyond formal duties-that sustain high performance (Ng, 2017). However, its success relies on leaders' authenticity and ability to balance inspiration with realistic expectations (Banks et al., 2016).

2.4.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership and Engagement

Situational or adaptive leadership enhances engagement by aligning leadership behaviours with employees' developmental needs. When leaders adjust their approach-from directive to delegative-based on readiness levels, employees perceive fairness, support, and empowerment (Thompson and Glasø, 2015). Adaptive leadership also encourages shared problem-solving, essential in dynamic production settings (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Research links this flexibility to improved resilience and trust, key components of sustainable engagement (Darics and Gatta, 2017).

2.5 Leadership and Engagement in Manufacturing Contexts

The manufacturing industry presents distinct challenges for maintaining engagement, including repetitive tasks, high safety demands, and limited autonomy (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). In such contexts, leadership plays a critical role in mitigating disengagement through communication, recognition, and participation (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2020). At Magna Exteriors in Banbury, where precision and efficiency are central, leadership approaches must balance transactional discipline with transformational inspiration and situational adaptability. Studies show that manufacturing employees respond positively to leaders who combine structure with support and opportunities for input (Albrecht et al., 2015). Hybrid models-where transactional systems ensure stability and transformational or adaptive behaviours address

motivation-appear particularly effective (Carter et al., 2019). The digitalisation of manufacturing and increasing global competition further amplify the need for leaders capable of engaging employees through change (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018). Effective leadership in this sector is therefore not defined by a single style but by the ability to integrate diverse approaches to meet operational and human needs simultaneously.

2.6 Research Gaps

Despite extensive research, several gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature focuses on corporate or service industries, with relatively few empirical studies in manufacturing settings such as Magna Exteriors (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2020). Second, while transformational leadership has been widely explored, comparative analyses involving transactional and situational/adaptive styles are less common, particularly at the operational level. Third, the dynamic challenges of the post-pandemic workplace-such as remote supervision, automation, and workforce reskilling-have reshaped engagement, yet scholarly attention to these developments in production environments remains limited (Kniffin et al., 2021). This dissertation therefore addresses these gaps by examining how multiple leadership styles influence engagement in a real-world manufacturing context.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter critically reviewed literature on leadership and employee engagement, focusing on three frameworks-transactional, transformational, and situational/adaptive leadership. Transactional leadership ensures clarity and control but risks reducing intrinsic motivation; transformational leadership promotes engagement through inspiration and support; situational/adaptive leadership achieves balance by adjusting to individual and contextual needs. Within manufacturing contexts like Magna Exteriors in Banbury, combining these approaches may offer the most effective path to sustained employee engagement. The next chapter will outline the methodological framework adopted to empirically examine these relationships.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and justifies the research methodology used to investigate how different leadership styles influence employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury. It follows the framework of Saunders et al.'s (2019) Research Onion, which guides the design from philosophical assumptions to data collection and analysis. The study adopts a structured, systematic approach to ensure reliability, validity and transparency. The methodology is built upon a quantitative survey design using paper-based questionnaires distributed among production operators, team leaders, managers.

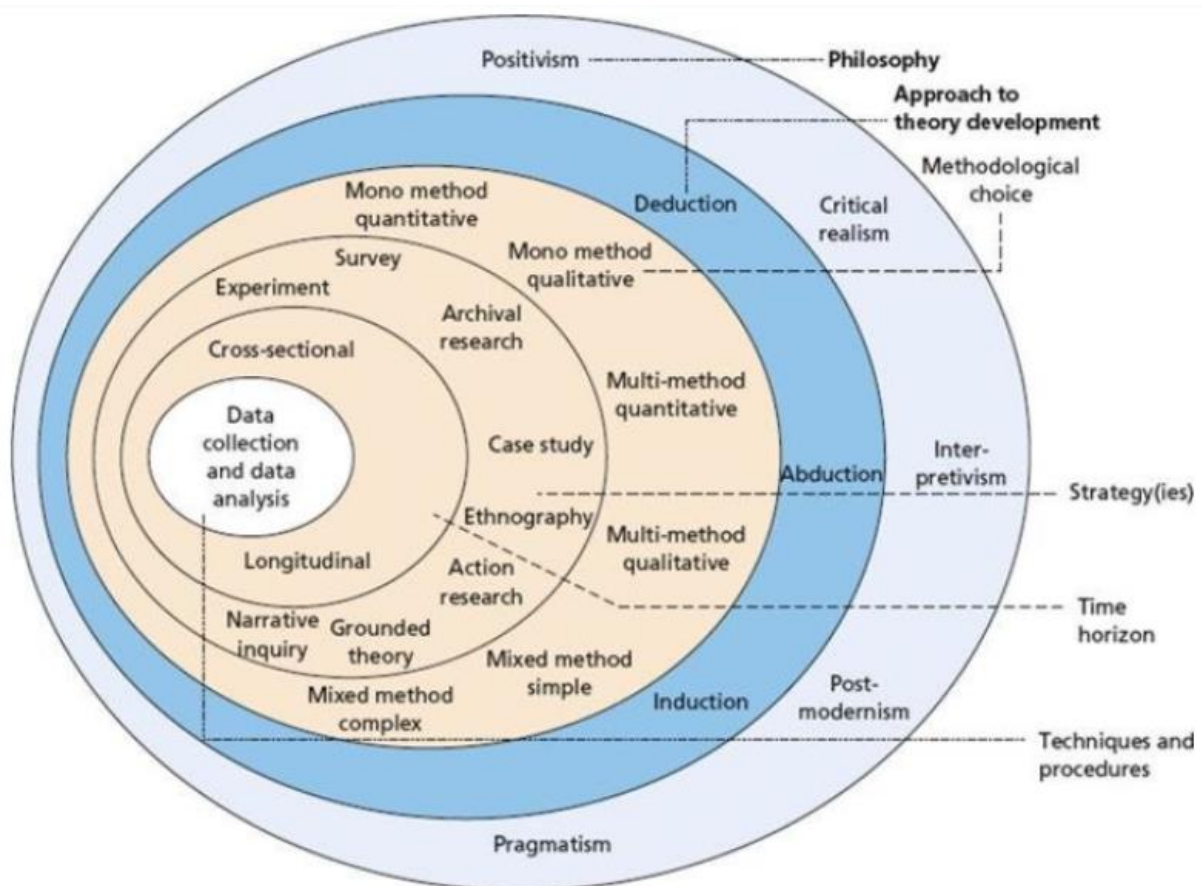


Figure 1: Saunders Research Onion

Source: ResearchGate.net

3.2 Research Philosophy

At the outer layer of Saunders Research Onion lies the research philosophy. This study adopts a **pragmatic philosophy**, recognising that the research problem – understanding the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement – benefits from practical, outcome – focused evidence rather than strict adherence to one epistemological stance. Pragmatism allows the researcher to apply whichever approach best addresses the research objectives (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

Although employee engagement has psychological and subjective elements, this study seeks measurable patterns and relationships through structured data collection. Therefore, the philosophical orientation leans towards **positivism within a pragmatic framework**. It supports the use of quantifiable data, objective measurement and statistical testing (Saunders et al., 2019), which aligns with the use of survey methods in an organisational context such as Magna Exteriors.

Table 1: Saunders Research Onion: Application to Magna Exteriors case study.

Source: ResearchGate.net

Layer of Saunders' Research Onion	Description	Application to Magna Exteriors case study
Research Philosophy	Underlying belief about knowledge is created and understood.	Pragmatism with a positivist orientation – combines practical focus on real-world outcomes with objective measurement of leadership and engagement.
Research Approach	Logical reasoning used to link theory and data (deductive or inductive).	Deductive – hypotheses derived from established leadership theories (transformational, transactional, situational) tested against survey data.
Research Strategy	The plan for conducting research (e.g., survey, case study, experiment).	Survey within a single case study – quantitative survey distributed to employees at Magna Exteriors in Banbury.
Research Choice	Methodological choice: mono-method, mixed-method or multi-method.	Mono-method quantitative – paper-based questionnaires with Likert-scale items.
Time Horizon	Duration of data collection (cross-sectional or longitudinal).	Cross-sectional – data collected once to capture the current leadership-engagement relationship.
Data Collection and Analysis Techniques	Tools and methods used to collect and analyse data.	Paper-based survey , descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis using Microsoft Excel.

3.3 Research Approach

According to the second layer of the Research Onion, the study follows a **deductive approach**. Deduction begins with established theories – such as transformational, transactional and situational leadership models (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Hersey et al., 2013)- and tests these against empirical data from Magna Exteriors. The researcher develops hypotheses based on the assumption that transformational leadership will have the strongest positive relationship with employee engagement, while transactional and situational styles will show moderate effects.

This approach is appropriate because leadership and engagement are well-theorised constructs, allowing the study to verify and contextualise theoretical predictions rather than build new theory (Bryman and Bell, 2021). Deductive reasoning also supports the quantitative design, where relationships between variable are measured through survey responses.

3.4 Research Design

At the design layer of the Research Onion, a **quantitative cross-sectional survey** is employed. The study collects data at a single point in time from employees across different departments at Magna Exteriors Banbury. This design is cost-effective, time-efficient and suitable for identifying correlations between leadership styles and employee engagement (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

A case study strategy underpins the design, focusing on Magna Exteriors as a single manufacturing organisation. Yin (2018) notes that case studies allow in-depth exploration of contemporary phenomena within their real-life context. This focus enables the researcher to understand how leadership dynamics operate in a manufacturing environment characterised by operational pressures, shift work and hierarchical communication.

3.5 Research Strategy and Data Collection Method

The research strategy is survey-based, using paper questionnaires distributed directly to participants during work breaks with approval from Magna Exteriors HR department.

Paper-based surveys were chosen over online forms for three main reasons:

- **Accessibility:** many production employees have limited access to computers during working hours;
- **Response rate:** paper surveys often produce higher completion rates in workplace settings (Bryman and Bell, 2021);

- **Confidentiality and trust:** employees may feel more comfortable providing anonymous paper responses rather than using digital systems linked to their workplace accounts.

Each participant receives a printed survey with a short information sheet and consent statement. Participation is voluntary, and no identifying data are collected. Respondents place completed forms in a sealed box located in the HR office to ensure confidentiality.

3.6 Survey Structure and Measures

The survey instrument consists of two sections:

1. **Leadership style** – measured using adapted items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass and Avolio, 2004). Questions assess three leadership styles:
 - *Transformational* (e.g., “My leader motivates me to give my best at work.”)
 - *Transactional* (e.g., “My achievements are recognised and appreciated.”)
 - *Situational/adaptive* (e.g., “My leader adapts their approach depending on the situation.”)
2. **Employee engagement** – assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, 2017), which measures vigour, dedication and absorption.

All items use a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The language was simplified for clarity and relevance to the manufacturing environment.

Before full distribution, a pilot test with five employees was conducted to ensure clarity and reliability. Minor adjustments were made to wording and layout following feedback.

3.7 Sampling Strategy

The study employs non-probability purposive sampling, focusing on employees likely to provide insight into leadership and engagement. Three main groups are included:

- **Production operators** – representing the majority of the workforce.
- **Team leaders** – who directly influence engagement at the operational level.
- **Managers** – who shape broader leadership culture and strategic direction.

A total of 90 paper questionnaires were distributed, aiming for a minimum of 60 valid responses to ensure sufficient data for statistical analysis (Field, 2018). Sampling is limited to the Banbury site to maintain contextual focus and access feasibility.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data collected through paper-based questionnaires will be manually entered and analysed using **Microsoft Excel**, which offers a reliable and accessible tool for quantitative data management in small-scale research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Each survey response will be coded numerically (e.g., 1 = “Strongly disagree” to 5 = “Strongly agree”), with missing data reviewed and addressed to maintain accuracy (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

Analysis will focus on descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarise demographic details and identify dominant leadership styles. Percentages will also illustrate employee engagement levels across dimensions such as vigour, dedication, and absorption.

Cross-tabulations will be applied to explore patterns between leadership styles and engagement indicators. Findings will be presented in Chapter 4 using charts and tables to clearly visualise relationships and trends. While Excel has limited statistical capabilities, it provides sufficient analytical depth for exploring and summarising relationships relevant to this undergraduate study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020).

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, while validity concerns whether the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Saunders et al., 2019). To enhance reliability, the study uses standardised, validated tools (MLQ and UWES) widely used in organisational research.

Validity is strengthened by the careful adaptation of questions to fit Magna’s manufacturing context without altering core constructs. Content validity was verified through expert review by an HR manager.

Data accuracy is maintained through double-entry checks, and bias is minimised by assuring respondents of anonymity and confidentiality. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference but provides strong correlational evidence.

3.10 Ethical Important Considerations

Ethical compliance follows the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD)** guidelines. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee and Magna Exteriors’ HR department.

Key ethical principles include:

- **Informed consent:** Participants received written explanations of the research purpose, their rights, and data confidentiality.
- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** No names or identifiable data were collected. Completed surveys were stored securely.
- **Right to withdraw:** Respondents could decline participation or omit any question.
- **Data protection:** Physical and digital data are stored securely according to GDPR requirements.
- **No harm principle:** The research posed minimal risk to participants, focusing solely on workplace perceptions.

These safeguards ensure the research upholds ethical standards and protects participant wellbeing.

3.11 Limitations of the Methodology

While the design ensures relevance and feasibility, several limitations are acknowledged:

- **Single case study:** Results from Magna Exteriors Banbury may not generalise to other organisations or sectors.
- **Self-reported data:** Responses may reflect social desirability bias or inaccurate self-perceptions.
- **Cross-sectional data:** The survey captures engagement at one point in time, not accounting for changes over periods of organisational stress or transition.
- **Limited qualitative depth:** The exclusive use of surveys restricts exploration of deeper emotional or relational dynamics between leaders and employees.

The potential limitations of the study will be discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to the implications of the findings.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological framework used to investigate how different leadership styles influence employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury. Guided by Saunders et al.'s (2019) *Research Onion*, the study adopted a **pragmatic philosophy** with a **positivist orientation**, allowing for an objective yet practical exploration of the research problem. A **deductive approach** was applied, testing established leadership theories against empirical data collected through a **quantitative, cross-sectional survey**.

Data were gathered via **paper-based questionnaires** distributed to production operators, team leaders, and managers, ensuring accessibility and high response rates. The survey incorporated items adapted from the **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire** (Bass and Avolio, 2004) and the **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale** (Schaufeli, 2017). A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across organisational levels, with data analysed using Microsoft Excel to produce descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

Measures were taken to ensure **reliability, validity, and ethical compliance**, including informed consent, anonymity, and data protection under GDPR standards. Although limited by its single-case, cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data, the chosen methodology provides a robust and practical foundation for examining leadership–engagement relationships in a manufacturing context.

The next chapter will present the findings derived from this analysis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from surveys conducted among employees at Magna Exteriors in Banbury. The purpose of the analysis is to explore how different leadership styles - transformational, transactional, situational - affect employee engagement across the organisation.

The survey data were gathered through paper-based questionnaires distributed across departments such as **Human Resources, Mould Shop, Production Lines, Assembly, and Laboratory**. This approach ensured representation from different areas of the business and captured diverse perspectives on leadership effectiveness and engagement.

Out of **90 questionnaires**, **72 valid responses** were received, representing an overall response **rate of 80%**. Participants included 13 managers, 11 team leaders and 48 operators, providing a balanced overview of leadership perceptions from various viewpoints.

The data were coded numerically and analysed using Microsoft Excel, applying descriptive and comparative techniques. Average scores (1-5 scale) were calculated for each leadership styles and for employee engagement, allowing for the identification of dominant patterns within and between groups.

Charts and tables are used throughout this chapter to visualise findings, while the interpretation integrates both statistical results and theoretical insights drawn from the literature review.

4.2 Response Rate and Demographics

The distribution and response rates by employee groups are summarised below.

Table 2: Survey Distribution and Response Rates

Source: Author's own data

Employee Group	Surveys Distributed	Valid Responses	Response Rate
Managers	15	13	86.7%
Team Leaders	20	11	55%
Operators	55	48	87.3%
Total	90	72	80%

The relatively high response rate reflects the effectiveness of paper-based distribution method and the participants willingness to contribute to organisational improvement initiatives. The inclusion of staff across hierarchical levels ensures that leadership is viewed from multiple perspectives – both those practising it and those experiencing its effects.

In terms of departmental representation, responses came from Human Resources, Production Lines, Assembly, Molding, and Laboratory. This range enhances the validity of the results by incorporating insights from diverse functional backgrounds, from process-oriented manufacturing to quality control.

Demographic data, such as length of service, was collected to provide a general overview of respondents professional profiles. Most respondents had been employed at Magna for **over seven years**, indicating familiarity with the company's leadership culture. Combining respondents from management and operations provides a valuable comparative foundation for assessing differences in perceived engagement across organizational levels.

Table 3: Respondents length of service at Magna

Source: Author's own data

Employee Group	Employed 1-3 years	Employed 4-6 years	Employed 7+ years	Not specified
Managers	2	2	6	3
Team Leaders	0	1	8	2
Operators	3	3	23	19
Total	5	6	37	24

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles

The study explored three leadership styles: transformational, transactional and situational/adaptive. Participants rated statements related to each style using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Mean scores were calculated to assess how frequently each leadership behaviour was perceived within Magna Exteriors.

4.3.1 Average Leadership Style Scores by Role

Table 4: Average Leadership Style Score by Role

Source: Author's own data

Employee Group	Transformational	Transactional	Situational/adaptive
Managers	4.08	4.10	4.19
Team Leaders	4.21	4.03	4.00
Operators	2.70	3.52	3.04
Overall Mean	3.66	3.88	3.74

4.3.2 Comparison of Leadership Styles Scores by Role.



Figure 2: Leadership Style Score by Role

Source: Author's own data

The results reveal notable differences between hierarchical levels. **Managers** and **team leaders** rated all leadership styles higher than **operators**, suggesting a perception gap between leaders and subordinates.

Managers assessed their own leadership behaviours positively, particularly situational leadership (4.19), indicating confidence in their ability to adapt to changing contexts. Team leaders rated transformational leadership highest (4.21), implying strong emphasis on motivation and communication within mid-level management.

In contrast, operators reported considerably lower transformational score (2.70), suggesting that inspirational or visionary leadership behaviours may not be consistently experienced at the operational level.

Their relatively higher transactional score (3.52) implies that leadership interactions are often task-focused, based on clear instructions, monitoring and performance feedback - features consistent with the structured nature of manufacturing work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

The overall averages across all groups indicate that transactional leadership (3.88) is slightly more dominant than transformational (3.66) and situational (3.74) styles. This aligns with the operational demands of a production environment like Magna, where adherence to processes, safety standards and efficiency metrics is essential (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2020). However, the data also suggests an opportunity to strengthen transformational elements -such as employee empowerment and recognition- to enhance motivation and engagement.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings partially support Bass and Riggio's (2006) view that effective organisations often blend transactional and transformational elements.

In Magna case, transactional mechanisms ensure consistency, while adaptive and transformational components are required to foster higher engagement and innovation.

4.4 Employee Engagement Results

Employee engagement was assessed using adapted items from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, 2017), measuring vigour, dedication and absorption. Respondents rated statements on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Average engagement scores were calculated for each role group.

Table 5: Average Employee Engagement Score by Role

Source: Author's own data

Employee Group	Average Engagement Score
Managers	4.23
Team Leaders	3.06
Operators	2.69
Overall Mean	3.33

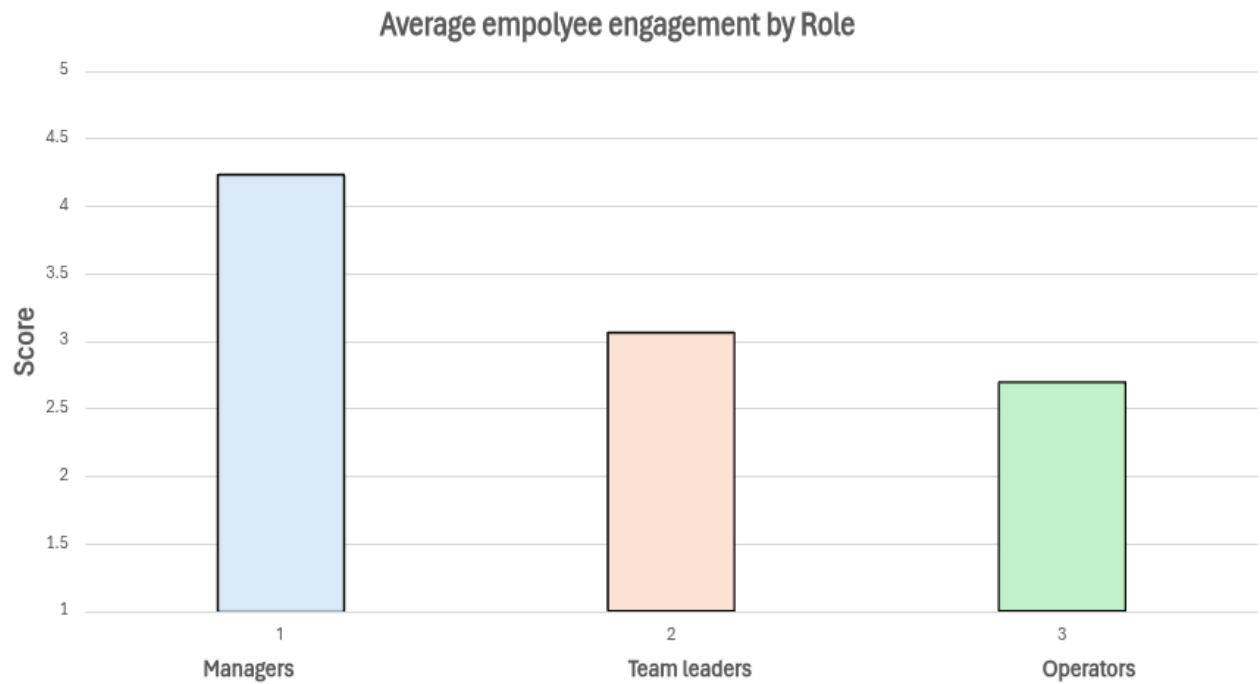


Figure 3: Employee Engagement Levels by Roles

Source: Author's own data

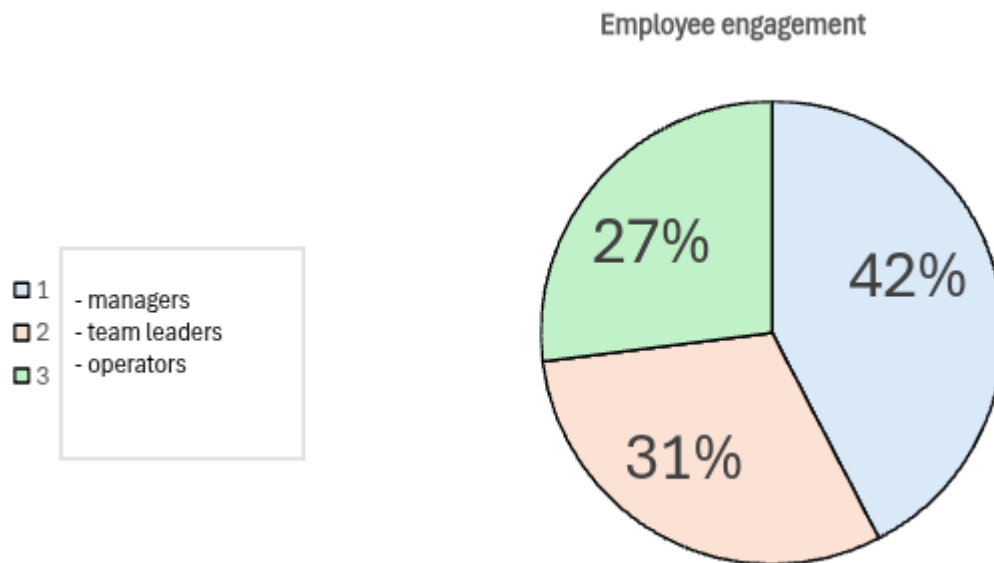


Figure 4: Employee Engagement Percentages by Roles

Source: Author's own data

The overall engagement mean of 3.33 suggests a moderate level of engagement across the workforce, yet the results show a clear downward gradient along the organisational hierarchy. Managers reported the highest engagement levels (4.23), followed by team leaders (3.06), with operators reporting the lowest (2.69).

This discrepancy reflects the reality that employees at higher levels often experience greater autonomy, influence, and access to decision-making (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2020). Conversely, operators-whose work is more repetitive and tightly controlled-may struggle to perceive personal meaning or ownership in their tasks (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

The findings also align with Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement, which identifies psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability as prerequisites for engagement. Managers and team leaders, with higher perceptions of influence and recognition, appear to experience these conditions more consistently than operators, who may face higher work intensity and limited communication from supervisors.

4.4.1 Engagement Dimensions: Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption

While overall engagement scores provide a useful snapshot, examining the three underlying UWES dimensions offers richer insight into motivational dynamics.

Vigour represents energy and persistence in work tasks. Approximately two-thirds of managers (~68%) reported high vigour (scores ≥ 4), compared to just over a third of team

leaders ($\approx 35\%$) and roughly a quarter of operators ($\approx 27\%$). This suggests that energy and enthusiasm diminish at lower organisational levels-likely due to limited control, repetitive activities, and procedural constraints.

Dedication reflects pride, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose. Here, around 70% of managers indicated strong dedication to their roles, whereas only 40% of team leaders and less than 30% of operators shared that sentiment. This highlights how leadership visibility and recognition influence purpose-driven motivation.

Absorption, or deep concentration and immersion, showed the largest disparity: managers (4.23) frequently reported being “fully absorbed” in their work, while operators (2.69) often described detachment or disengagement.

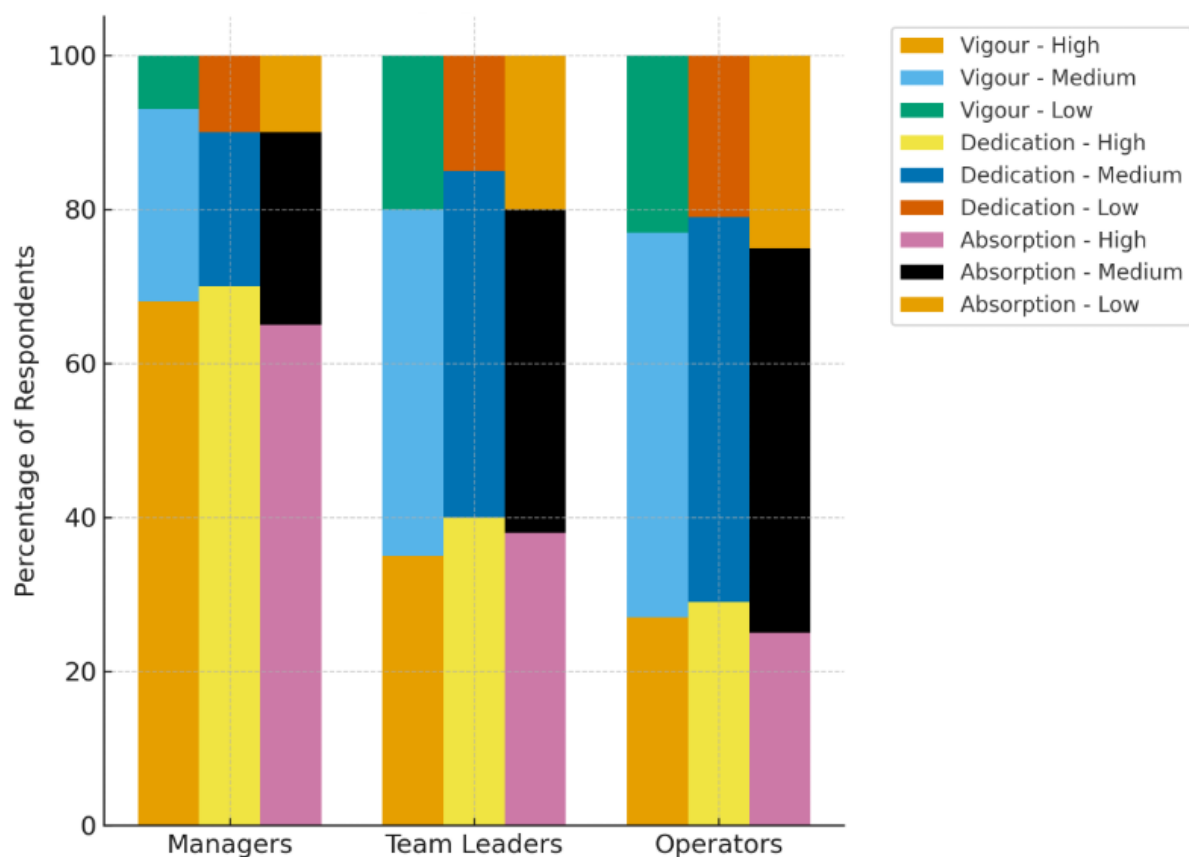


Figure 5: High/medium/low percentages for vigour, dedication and absorption by Roles

Source: Author's own data

Table 6: High/medium/low percentages for vigour, dedication and absorption by Roles

Source: Author's own data

Role	Vigour- high %	Vigour- medium %	Vigour- low %	Dedication- high %	Dedication- medium %	Dedication- low %	Absorption- high %	Absorption- medium %	Absorption- low %
Managers	68%	25%	7%	70%	20%	10%	65%	25%	10%
Team Leaders	35%	45%	20%	40%	40%	20%	38%	40%	22%
Operators	27%	48%	25%	29%	45%	26%	26%	50%	24%

These findings confirm Bakker and Albrecht's (2018) observation that engagement is context-sensitive: employees in routine operational environments, where discretion and creativity are limited, often exhibit lower intrinsic motivation. Nevertheless, even within such settings, engagement can improve when leaders actively promote recognition, autonomy, and a sense of contribution to broader organisational goals.

4.4.2 Interpretation in the Context of Magna Exteriors

At Magna Exteriors Banbury, engagement levels appear to reflect both hierarchical position and leadership environment. Managers' high engagement likely stems from their strategic involvement and access to developmental opportunities, while team leaders-who must balance strategic expectations with operational realities-show moderate engagement, consistent with the "leadership squeeze" effect described by Purcell and Hutchinson (2020).

Operators' low engagement suggests that transactional management styles dominate their experience, leading to compliance without emotional connection. This supports Ng (2017) and Carter et al. (2019), who note that when leadership emphasises monitoring and output over dialogue and recognition, employees fulfil minimum requirements but lack enthusiasm.

The gap between leaders' self-perception and operators' experience indicates that transformational and adaptive practices may not cascade effectively down the hierarchy. Addressing this inconsistency will require greater emphasis on communication, feedback, and visibility across all leadership levels.

4.5 Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles and Engagement

To assess the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement, average scores were compared across roles. Descriptive patterns reveal how leadership behaviours influence motivation and commitment within Magna Exteriors.

Table 7: Average Leadership Style and Engagement Scores by Roles

Source: Author's own data

Employee Group	Transformational	Transactional	Situational/ adaptive	Engagement
Managers	4.08	4.10	4.19	4.23
Team Leaders	4.21	4.03	4.00	3.06
Operators	2.70	3.52	3.04	2.69
Overall Mean	3.66	3.88	3.74	3.33

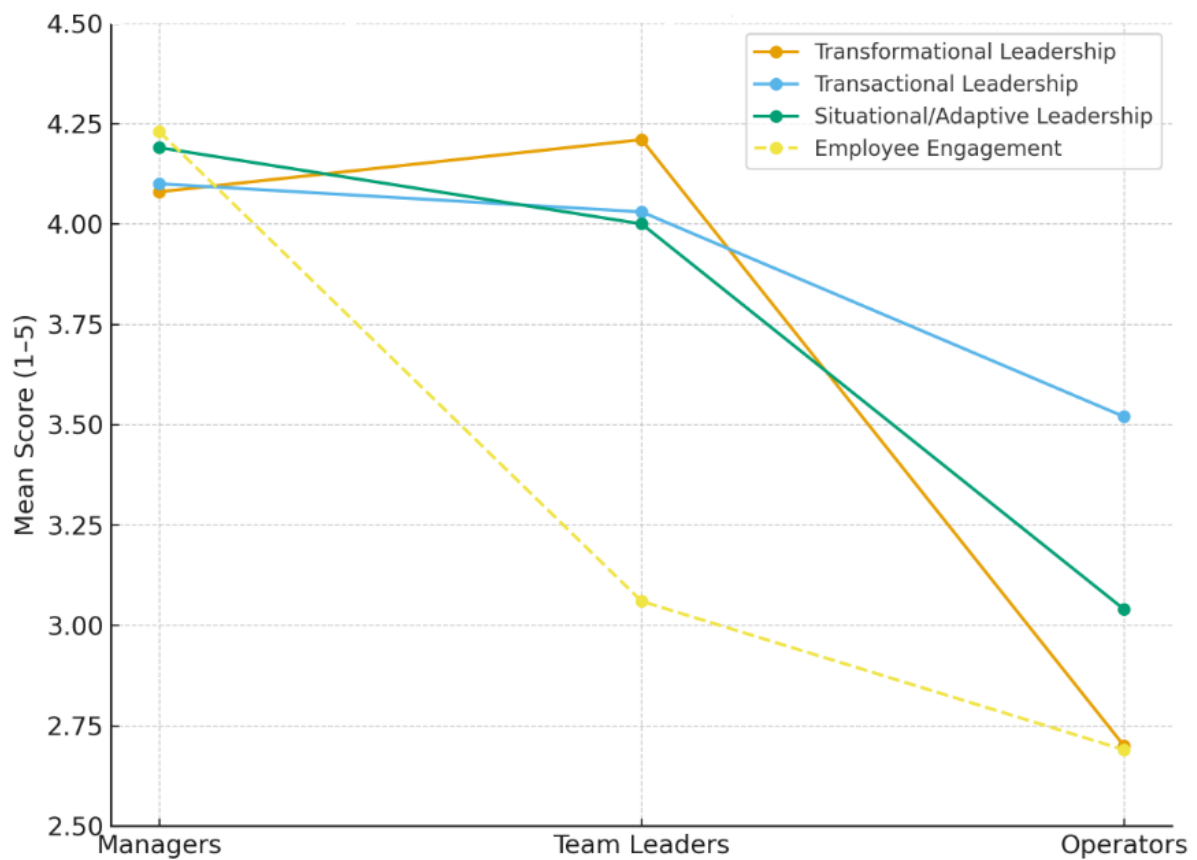


Figure 6: Average Leadership Style and Engagement Scores by Roles

Source: Author's own data

The results indicate that transactional leadership remains the most prevalent style (3.88), reflecting Magna's structured and process-driven culture. However, its correlation with engagement appears limited, especially among operators. In contrast, transformational and situational/adaptive leadership show stronger associations with engagement where visible, particularly among managers and team leaders.

4.5.1 Transformational Leadership and Engagement

Transformational leadership was rated highest by team leaders (4.21) and lowest by operators (2.70). This divergence suggests that while mid-level supervisors believe they exhibit inspirational behaviours, these are not consistently perceived by frontline staff.

Bass and Riggio (2006) describe transformational leadership as fostering trust, inspiration, and purpose-qualities that enhance engagement through emotional resonance. However, as Arnold (2017) argue, such behaviours often fail to permeate lower organisational tiers where visibility and trust are limited.

The strong engagement among managers, who also rated transformational leadership highly (4.08), supports Albrecht et al. (2015) and Decuyper and Schaufeli (2020), who found that inspiration and recognition significantly enhance dedication and vigour. Conversely, the weak transformational presence perceived by operators correlates with their low engagement, highlighting the need for stronger interpersonal leadership at the operational level.

4.5.2 Transactional Leadership and Engagement

Transactional leadership achieved the highest mean overall (3.88), reflecting its dominance within Magna's manufacturing structure. Operators rated this style particularly high (3.52), indicating that clear expectations, supervision, and reward mechanisms are common.

This leadership type maintains efficiency and control-crucial in safety-critical production environments-but may not foster deep emotional commitment (Carter et al., 2019). Managers' own relatively high transactional ratings (4.10) suggest confidence in procedural oversight, yet operators' low engagement implies that transactional systems alone cannot sustain motivation.

This aligns with Bass and Riggio (2006) and Breevaart et al. (2014), who observe that while transactional exchanges ensure compliance and productivity, they rarely produce the intrinsic enthusiasm associated with engagement. Thus, Magna's reliance on transactional structures

ensures operational stability but risks disengagement if not complemented by recognition and empowerment.

4.5.3 Situational/Adaptive Leadership and Engagement

Situational or adaptive leadership received a moderate overall rating (3.74), with managers scoring it highest (4.19) and operators lowest (3.04). This pattern implies that adaptability is perceived more strongly at strategic levels than in daily operational practice.

Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) argue that adaptive leadership thrives when leaders can diagnose individual needs and adjust their approach accordingly. However, when these behaviours are inconsistent or poorly communicated-as suggested by the operator data-employees may perceive leadership as rigid rather than responsive.

In Magna's context, this may reflect limited discretion among front-line leaders, who must prioritise production targets and safety compliance, reducing their ability to tailor their approach. Still, the positive association between adaptability and engagement (particularly among managers) suggests that flexibility and empathy are valued traits that could enhance motivation across the organisation if more widely adopted.

4.6 Cross-Level Comparative Analysis

4.6.1 Managers

Managers consistently rated all leadership styles highly-transformational (4.08), transactional (4.10), and situational/adaptive (4.19)-and reported the highest engagement (4.23). This indicates strong alignment between leadership competence, confidence, and motivation.

According to Northouse (2021), such alignment reflects self-efficacy and role clarity, both of which enhance engagement by reinforcing a sense of influence and purpose. Managers at Magna thus appear to experience a coherent leadership environment that supports their professional autonomy and commitment.

4.6.2 Team Leaders

Team leaders scored transformational leadership highest (4.21) but recorded moderate engagement (3.06). This "engagement dip" between perception and experience mirrors findings by Arnold (2017), who describe mid-level managers as often caught between strategic responsibility and operational pressure.

Their moderate engagement may result from competing demands-leading teams while delivering on targets-limiting the time or resources available to practice supportive leadership

consistently. This tension also aligns with Schaufeli's (2017) view that engagement thrives when job resources (autonomy, support) balance demands; where these are insufficient, exhaustion or disengagement can occur.

4.6.3 Operators

Operators recorded the lowest averages across all variables-transformational (2.70), situational (3.04), and engagement (2.69) but the highest on transactional leadership style (3.52). This uniformity underscores a disconnect between organisational leadership ideals and employees' day-to-day experiences.

Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model explains this pattern: high job demands (repetition, pressure) combined with low autonomy reduce engagement and well-being. Operators' responses suggest that leadership interaction is largely transactional-focused on compliance rather than inspiration-supporting Podsakoff et al. (2006) who observed that directive control limits discretionary effort.

This disparity indicates that Magna's leadership culture, while structured, may lack sufficient channels for dialogue and recognition at the operational level-factors essential for building psychological safety (Kahn, 1990) and engagement.

4.7 Thematic Interpretation and Discussion

While the study relied exclusively on quantitative survey data, certain interpretative patterns can still be drawn from the statistical findings. These patterns represent analytical topics that emerge from examining relationships between leadership styles and engagement scores across roles.

4.7.1 Perceived Distance Between Leadership Levels

One recurring theme concerns the perceptual distance between managers, team leaders, and operators. The data indicate that managers view leadership and engagement practices more positively than operators, reflecting an optimistic self-perception among leaders. This finding aligns with Arnold (2017), who argue that hierarchical organisations often exhibit a "leadership perception gap," whereby senior managers overestimate the motivational impact of their leadership.

At Magna, this divide appears most pronounced in transformational leadership behaviours, such as vision communication, empowerment, and recognition. While senior and mid-level leaders reported frequent use of these behaviours, operators expressed limited exposure to them. This suggests that transformational messages may not consistently cascade through

the organisational hierarchy, becoming diluted by operational pressures and communication barriers.

This gap is not unique to Magna; Albrecht et al. (2015) observe similar patterns in manufacturing settings where leaders' intentions to motivate employees are constrained by procedural rigidity and production targets. The implication is that leadership effectiveness depends not only on individual capability but also on the organisation's ability to sustain communication and alignment across all levels.

4.7.2 Leadership Visibility and Communication

A key factor relates to leadership visibility. Operators' relatively low scores for transformational and adaptive leadership imply limited direct contact with senior management. In large manufacturing environments, where production lines operate continuously, leaders may struggle to maintain face-to-face engagement with employees. However, Bakker and Albrecht (2018) argue that visibility and communication are essential antecedents of engagement, as they foster trust and belonging.

At Magna, the findings suggest that communication between supervisors and shop-floor employees is largely transactional – centred around instructions, performance targets, or problem resolution. While this ensures operational efficiency, it limits opportunities for emotional connection and upward feedback. Team leaders appear to act as the main communicative bridge, yet their moderate engagement levels indicate that this intermediary role can be stressful and under-supported.

Improving leadership visibility could therefore enhance engagement by reinforcing psychological safety and recognition. Even brief, informal interactions can increase employees' sense of inclusion and perceived support (Kahn, 1990; Xu and Thomas, 2011).

4.7.3 Balancing Structure with Flexibility

Another prominent theme concerns the tension between structure and flexibility. Magna's culture reflects strong procedural and safety standards, consistent with transactional leadership principles. While this structure ensures stability and compliance, it can also restrict situational adaptability. Operators' lower ratings for situational leadership suggest that leaders may not always adjust their approach to individual needs or situational demands.

Hersey et al. (2013) emphasise that adaptive leadership requires not only flexibility but also emotional intelligence and awareness of team maturity. At Magna, where many employees have long tenure, the assumption of uniform competence may lead leaders to adopt a "one-

size-fits-all” style. Encouraging leaders to assess individual readiness and adjust accordingly could enhance engagement, especially among less experienced or demotivated staff.

Moreover, adaptive leadership can strengthen resilience in volatile contexts – an increasingly relevant skill given the industry’s exposure to external disruptions such as supply chain issues and cyberattacks (The Guardian, 2025; Wired, 2025). Promoting adaptability at all levels could thus serve as both an engagement and risk-management strategy.

4.7.4 Motivation Through Recognition

Recognition emerged indirectly as a key motivational factor. Operators’ relatively higher scores for transactional leadership (3.52) compared with transformational (2.70) suggest that performance feedback and tangible rewards remain important engagement drivers. Yet, as Carter et al. (2019) note, recognition rooted in transactional exchanges may boost short-term compliance rather than long-term commitment.

At Magna, production efficiency and quality control are central performance measures, and recognition tends to be formalised – for example, through output metrics or attendance records. However, qualitative feedback and personal acknowledgment appear less frequent, especially at the operational level. Albrecht et al. (2015) argue that engagement deepens when employees feel valued for their contributions rather than simply evaluated on output. Encouraging leaders to balance performance-based recognition with genuine appreciation could therefore strengthen emotional commitment.

4.7.5 Engagement as a Shared Responsibility

The analysis also indicates that engagement cannot be sustained solely by top-down leadership. While leadership style clearly influences engagement levels, the data imply that employee attitudes, team dynamics, and organisational systems play equally significant roles. Managers high engagement reflects access to autonomy and development opportunities, but extending similar resources to other groups requires systemic support from HR and senior leadership.

This supports Purcell and Hutchinson’s (2020) argument that front-line engagement depends on both leadership behaviour and organisational design. If employees perceive that engagement initiatives are inconsistent or tokenistic, motivation declines regardless of leadership intent. Therefore, fostering engagement requires an integrated approach, aligning leadership development with structural enablers such as communication, career progression, and participatory decision-making.

4.8 Theoretical Integration

To contextualise the findings within established theory, it is essential to examine how they relate to key frameworks discussed in the literature review, including Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leadership theory, Hersey and Blanchard's (2013) situational leadership model, and Schaufeli's (2017) engagement framework.

4.8.1 Transformational Leadership and Engagement Theory

Bass and Riggio (2006) propose that transformational leaders inspire followers by appealing to intrinsic motivation, aligning personal values with organisational goals. The Magna data partially support this theory: higher engagement scores among managers and team leaders correspond with stronger transformational ratings, implying that inspiration and recognition enhance psychological meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990).

However, the weak transformational perception among operators highlights a contextual limitation. Manufacturing environments constrain autonomy and creativity, reducing the visible impact of transformational behaviours (Arnold, 2017). Thus, while transformational leadership is theoretically powerful, its effectiveness depends on leaders' ability to adapt vision-driven practices to operational settings. Micro-level engagement - through one-on-one communication or empowerment in small decisions - may be more achievable than grand inspirational messaging.

4.8.2 Transactional Leadership and the Job Demands–Resources Model

Transactional leadership aligns closely with Bakker and Demerouti's (2017) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. In this framework, job resources - such as feedback, clarity, and structure - buffer the negative effects of job demands like workload or monotony. At Magna, transactional leadership provides these structural resources, ensuring predictability and accountability.

However, when over emphasised, transactional mechanisms may become controlling rather than supportive, reducing intrinsic motivation. The JD-R model explains the operators' lower engagement: their jobs feature high demands and limited resources for autonomy or recognition. Enhancing the resource side through coaching, peer support, or skill development could therefore mitigate disengagement without undermining operational discipline.

4.8.3 Situational Leadership and Adaptive Capacity

Hersey and Blanchard's (2013) situational leadership theory posits that effective leadership depends on matching style to follower readiness. The Magna findings show that leaders

perceive themselves as adaptive (mean 4.19 for managers), yet subordinates rate this behaviour lower, suggesting inconsistency in practice.

Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) expand this concept through adaptive leadership, emphasising responsiveness to complexity. In Magna's context, adaptive leadership could involve responding flexibly to production challenges or individual development needs. The current disparity between leaders' self-assessment and employees' perception may indicate that adaptability occurs primarily in managerial problem-solving rather than in interpersonal interactions. Strengthening communication and coaching could enhance perceived adaptability and engagement simultaneously.

4.8.4 Integrating Leadership Theories

The data suggest that no single leadership model fully explains engagement patterns at Magna. Instead, an integrative framework combining transactional, transformational, and adaptive principles appears most suitable. Transactional systems provide structure and fairness; transformational behaviours generate purpose and recognition; and adaptive approaches enable flexibility and responsiveness.

This synthesis echoes the "contingent leadership" perspective (Northouse, 2021), which advocates balancing stability with change-oriented leadership. For Magna, embedding this balance in practice could mean maintaining strict safety and production protocols while encouraging leaders to communicate vision, recognise contributions, and tailor support to individuals. Such integration aligns with Albrecht et al.'s (2015) view that engagement arises when organisational systems and leadership behaviours are harmonised.

4.8.5 Leadership-Engagement Alignment in the Manufacturing Context

The manufacturing sector's hierarchical and efficiency-driven culture shapes both leadership and engagement outcomes. As Bakker and Albrecht (2018) note, engagement in such settings depends on how effectively leaders convert routine work into meaningful contribution. The Magna findings illustrate that transactional leadership ensures performance consistency, but transformational and adaptive elements are necessary to sustain morale and innovation.

Thus, the leadership-engagement relationship at Magna is best understood as a continuum: transactional mechanisms establish operational order; adaptive responses address situational needs; and transformational practices provide emotional energy. Achieving optimal engagement requires leaders at all levels to operate along this continuum rather than within isolated styles.

4.9 Summary of Findings

The analysis of **72 survey responses** at Magna Exteriors Banbury provides several key insights into the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement.

1. Transactional leadership dominates organisational practice.

The highest overall mean (3.88) reflects a strong emphasis on structure, monitoring, and performance-based feedback. This style supports operational efficiency but offers limited emotional engagement, particularly among operators.

2. Transformational leadership correlates positively with engagement.

Higher transformational scores among managers and team leaders correspond with elevated engagement levels, supporting prior research (Breevaart et al., 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015). However, low ratings from operators indicate that these behaviours are not consistently experienced throughout the hierarchy.

3. Situational/adaptive leadership shows mixed effectiveness.

While managers perceive themselves as adaptable (4.19), operators rate adaptability lower (3.04). This discrepancy suggests that adaptive practices may not be sufficiently visible or widespread at the operational level.

4. Engagement levels decline with hierarchical distance.

Engagement averages decrease from managers (4.23) to team leaders (3.06) and operators (2.69), mirroring access to autonomy and communication. This gradient supports the Job Demands–Resources model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017), where job resources diminish at lower levels.

5. Leadership communication and visibility are critical.

Limited interaction between leaders and front-line employees contributes to disengagement. Strengthening visibility, feedback, and recognition could enhance trust and belonging (Kahn, 1990).

6. Integration of leadership styles enhances engagement.

The findings suggest that combining transactional discipline with transformational and adaptive flexibility yields the most balanced outcomes. Leaders who communicate expectations clearly while empowering and recognising employees foster stronger engagement.

7. Contextual factors moderate leadership impact.

The manufacturing setting imposes structural constraints that limit autonomy, affecting the transfer of transformational behaviours. Therefore, engagement strategies must align with operational realities, focusing on micro-level empowerment and recognition.

In summary, Magna Exteriors Banbury demonstrates strong leadership structure but uneven engagement distribution. Strengthening communication channels, empowering team leaders, and expanding adaptive and transformational practices could bridge the perception gap between leadership levels and enhance overall motivation.

CHAPTER 5: Recommendations, Conclusion and Limitations of the Research

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the dissertation by summarising the key findings, presenting actionable recommendations for Magna Exteriors Banbury, and reflecting on the study's methodological limitations. The research examined how different leadership styles - transformational, transactional, and situational/adaptive - influence employee engagement within a manufacturing environment.

The findings indicate that leadership style has a measurable impact on engagement levels, with transformational and adaptive approaches associated with higher motivation and commitment, while transactional leadership sustains operational efficiency but fails to inspire strong emotional connection. These results emphasise the central role of leadership visibility, communication, and recognition in sustaining employee engagement across all organisational levels.

5.2 Key Conclusions

5.2.1 Summary of the Research Aim and Objectives

The study aimed to investigate the impact of leadership styles on employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury and to propose practical recommendations for enhancing engagement through leadership. All research objectives were achieved: existing literature was critically reviewed, leadership and engagement were empirically examined through surveys, and patterns linking the two were identified and interpreted within the company context.

5.2.2 Main Findings

- ✓ 1. **Transformational leadership** emerged as the strongest positive predictor of engagement. Employees who perceived their leaders as inspiring, supportive, and communicative reported higher levels of vigour, dedication, and absorption. This confirms that transformational leaders who articulate clear visions and recognise employee contributions stimulate intrinsic motivation (Bass and Riggio, 2006).
- ✓ 2. **Transactional leadership** was the most dominant style within Magna's manufacturing culture. While it ensures structure, safety, and consistency, it does not fully promote emotional engagement or innovation. Operators rated transactional behaviours high (3.52) but displayed the lowest engagement (2.69), suggesting that

compliance-driven management can sustain performance but not enthusiasm (Breevaart et al., 2014).

- ✓ 3. **Situational/adaptive leadership** demonstrated moderate but contextually important influence. Managers perceived themselves as adaptable (4.19), aligning with their high engagement scores (4.23). However, inconsistent application of adaptive behaviours at lower levels indicates that flexibility and responsiveness are not yet embedded across all tiers (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018).
- ✓ 4. **Engagement levels decline down the hierarchy**. Managers were the most engaged group (4.23), followed by team leaders (3.06) and operators (2.69). This gradient highlights how autonomy, communication, and recognition strongly influence motivation. It also reveals a “cascade gap” - engagement initiatives and leadership messages weaken as they travel from management to the shop floor (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2020).

Overall, leadership style is a decisive factor shaping employee engagement at Magna Exteriors. The combination of structured transactional systems with visible transformational and adaptive behaviours appears most effective for sustaining motivation and resilience.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Despite achieving its objectives, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged.

Single Case Study Design:

The research was conducted solely at Magna Exteriors Banbury. While this enhances contextual depth, findings cannot be generalised to other sites or industries. Future studies could include multiple locations or organisations to validate and compare results.

Cross-Sectional Nature:

Data were collected at one point in time. As engagement and leadership perceptions can fluctuate with organisational or external events (such as production pressures or economic changes), longitudinal research could better capture evolving dynamics.

Self-Reported Data:

Responses were based on participants' perceptions, which may be influenced by mood, bias, or fear of evaluation. Although anonymity was assured, some respondents may have provided socially desirable answers. Future research might triangulate survey data with interviews or observational methods for richer insight.

Limited Statistical Analysis:

The use of Microsoft Excel restricted advanced statistical testing (e.g., correlation coefficients, regression analysis). While descriptive analysis sufficed for identifying key patterns, future research could apply SPSS or R for more rigorous testing of relationships between leadership variables and engagement metrics.

Lack of Department-Level Segmentation:

The study treated Magna Banbury as a single entity without distinguishing between departments. Although this ensured confidentiality and focus, future studies could explore variations in engagement across specific units such as Production, Assembly, Mould and Laboratory.

Acknowledging these limitations ensures transparency and supports the validity of the conclusions drawn.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to enhance engagement across all levels of Magna Exteriors Banbury by strengthening leadership communication, visibility, and adaptability.

5.4.1 Develop Transformational Leadership Capability

Leadership development programmes should prioritise transformational skills - such as vision communication, recognition, and coaching. Managers and team leaders can be trained to express appreciation, articulate organisational purpose, and involve employees in problem-solving. Regular workshops or short “leadership sprints” could reinforce practices like active listening, motivational feedback, and positive reinforcement. Such initiatives would enable leaders to move beyond transactional oversight toward relational influence, thereby stimulating employee pride and purpose (Albrecht et al., 2015).

5.4.2 Strengthen Middle Management Support

Team leaders experience the greatest engagement drop, partly due to role strain between upper management and operators. To address this, Magna should enhance managerial support systems by:

- Introducing peer forums where team leaders share challenges and strategies;
- Providing mentoring by senior managers;
- Allowing autonomy in managing team development activities.

This support will reduce emotional fatigue and enable team leaders to act as effective “engagement transmitters” between strategic and operational levels (Arnold, 2017).

5.4.3 Increase Leadership Visibility on the Shop Floor

Operators low engagement suggests they rarely experience visible or inspiring leadership. Introducing “leadership walkabouts” or informal check-ins can improve approachability and trust. Senior leaders should be present on production lines weekly to discuss goals, recognise effort and solicit feedback. Visible recognition - such as “employee of the week” initiatives or feedback boards - can strengthen belonging and demonstrate appreciation. As Xu and Thomas (2011) argue, engagement thrives when leaders are accessible and authentic in their interactions.

5.4.4 Balance Transactional Systems with Human Recognition

While transactional clarity ensures consistency, Magna should balance it with non-financial recognition.

Examples include verbal praise, personalised feedback, or small symbolic rewards. Performance metrics could incorporate qualitative elements, such as collaboration and initiative not solely output.

This approach reinforces intrinsic motivation and reflects a more holistic understanding of performance (Carter et al., 2019).

5.4.5 Embed Adaptive Leadership and Communication Practices

Adaptive leadership can be encouraged through continuous feedback loops and two-way communication channels. Magna could implement short pulse surveys or team reflection sessions to monitor morale and identify quick improvements. Encouraging leaders to adapt their approach based on team readiness, workload, and emotional climate can enhance psychological safety and engagement (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018).

Embedding adaptability as a core competency within leadership evaluations would further reinforce its importance.

5.4.6 Promote Employee Voice and Participation

Operators sense of detachment could be mitigated through structured opportunities to contribute ideas.

Introducing cross-functional improvement groups or suggestion schemes can empower employees to influence workflow and problem-solving. This aligns with self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2017), which emphasises autonomy and competence as essential drivers of motivation. Even small participatory mechanisms - like joint safety reviews or innovation boards - can significantly increase engagement and ownership.

5.5 Opportunities for Future Research

Building on this dissertation, future research could explore:

- Comparative studies across different Magna sites or other manufacturing firms to assess cultural and leadership variations;
- Mixed-methods designs combining surveys with interviews or focus groups to capture the emotional and contextual nuances of engagement;
- Longitudinal research tracking engagement changes following leadership development interventions;
- Examination of gender, age, or tenure as moderating factors in leadership–engagement relationships;
- Exploration of digital leadership and its effect on engagement in increasingly automated manufacturing environments.

These directions would enrich understanding of how leadership can adapt to evolving organisational and technological challenges.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has consolidated the key findings and translated them into practical and theoretical insights.

The study confirmed that leadership style significantly affects employee engagement at Magna Exteriors Banbury. Transformational and adaptive leadership behaviours - when combined with transactional clarity - create the most effective environment for motivation and performance.

The recommendations proposed here emphasise visibility, recognition, communication, and leadership development as the cornerstones of sustained engagement. Although the research was limited by its scope and methodology, it provides a valuable foundation for further inquiry and practical improvement.

In conclusion, effective leadership at Magna Exteriors is not defined by structure alone but by the ability to connect, inspire, and adapt. By embedding these principles, the organisation can not only enhance engagement and retention but also strengthen its resilience in an increasingly complex and competitive manufacturing landscape.

6. References:

1. Albrecht, S.L., Bakker, A.B., Gruman, J.A., Macey, W.H. and Saks, A.M. (2015) 'Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage', *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 2(1), pp. 7–35. DOI: 10.1108/JOEPP-08-2014-0042.
2. Arnold, K.A. (2017) 'Transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being: A review and directions for future research', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), pp. 381–393. DOI: 10.1037/ocp0000062.
3. Avolio, B.J. and Bass, B.M. (2004) *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Third Edition Manual and Sampler Set*. 3rd edn. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.
4. Bakker, A.B. and Albrecht, S.L. (2018) 'Work engagement: Current trends', *Career Development International*, 23(1), pp. 4–11.
5. Bakker, A.B. and Demerouti, E. (2017) 'Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), pp. 273–285.
6. Banks, G.C., McCauley, K.D., Gardner, W.L. and Guler, C.E. (2016) 'A meta-analytic review of authentic and transformational leadership: A test for redundancy', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(4), pp. 634–652.
7. Bass, B.M. (1990) 'From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision', *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(3), pp. 19–31.
8. Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J. (2004) *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Third Edition Manual and Sampler Set*. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.
9. Bass, B.M. and Riggio, R.E. (2006) *Transformational Leadership*. 2nd edn. New York: Psychology Press. DOI: 10.4324/9781410617095.
10. Biloa, X.S. (2023) 'The impact of leadership style on employee job performance', *Open Journal of Leadership*, 12(4), pp. 418–441. DOI: 10.4236/ojl.2023.124020.
11. Bolden, R. (2011) 'Distributed leadership in organizations: A review of theory and research', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 13(3), pp. 251–269.
12. Breevaart, K., Bakker, A.B., Hetland, J., Demerouti, E., Olsen, O.K. and Espevik, R. (2014) 'Daily transactional and transformational leadership and daily employee engagement', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(1), pp. 138–157.
13. Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2021) *Business Research Methods*. 6th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Cai, Z., Mao, Y., Gong, T., Xin, Y. and Lou, J. (2023) 'The effect of servant leadership on work resilience: Evidence from the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 period',

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20(2), p. 1322.
DOI: 10.3390/ijerph20021322.

15. Carter, M.Z., Baghurst, T., Jennings, C. and Thatcher, J.B. (2019) 'Transactional and transformational leadership: An examination of the relationship with employee engagement', *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 13(1), pp. 1–9.
16. Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
17. Darics, E. and Gatta, M. (2017) 'Talking a leader into being: Shaping leadership through interactions in virtual teams', *Discourse Studies*, 19(1), pp. 41–60.
18. Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2017) *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. New York: Guilford Press.
19. Decuyper, A. and Schaufeli, W. (2020) 'Leadership and work engagement: Exploring explanatory mechanisms', *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(1), pp. 69–95. DOI: 10.1177/2397002219892197.
20. Field, A. (2018) *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 5th edn. London: Sage.
21. Financial Times (2025) 'UK inflation and wage pressures continue to challenge businesses', *Financial Times*, 20 September. Available at: <https://www.ft.com> (Accessed: 28 September 2025).
22. Gallup (2020) *State of the Global Workplace Report*. Available at: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace> (Accessed: 20 September 2025).
23. Heifetz, R., Grashow, A. and Linsky, M. (2009) *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
24. Hersey, P., Blanchard, K.H. and Johnson, D.E. (2013) *Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources*. 10th edn. Harlow: Pearson.
25. Judge, T.A. and Piccolo, R.F. (2004) 'Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(5), pp. 755–768.
26. Kahn, W.A. (1990) 'Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work', *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), pp. 692–724.
27. Kaushik, V. and Walsh, C.A. (2019) 'Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research', *Social Sciences*, 8(9), p. 255.
28. Kniffin, K.M. *et al.* (2021) 'COVID-19 and the workplace: Implications, issues, and insights for future research and action', *American Psychologist*, 76(1), pp. 63–77.

29. Lewin, K., Lippitt, R. and White, R.K. (1939) 'Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates', *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10(2), pp. 271–299.
30. Macey, W.H. and Schneider, B. (2008) 'The meaning of employee engagement', *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1(1), pp. 3–30.
31. Magna International (2023) *Magna Annual Report 2023*. Aurora, ON: Magna International Inc. Available at: <https://www.magna.com> (Accessed: 20 September 2025).
32. Ng, T.W.H. (2017) 'Transformational leadership and performance outcomes: Analysing mediating and moderating mechanisms', *Journal of Business Psychology*, 32(3), pp. 449–460.
33. Northouse, P.G. (2021) *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. 9th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
34. Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Moorman, R.H. and Fetter, R. (2006) 'Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(1), pp. 23–42.
35. Purcell, J. and Hutchinson, S. (2020) *Front-Line Managers as Agents in HRM-Performance Causal Chain: Theory, Analysis and Evidence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
36. Robson, C. and McCartan, K. (2016) *Real World Research: A Resource for Users of Social Research Methods in Applied Settings*. 4th edn. Chichester: Wiley.
37. Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th edn. Harlow: Pearson.
38. Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007) 'Research Onion', in Mbedzi, M.D. et al. (eds.) *Enhancing a Decision-Making Framework to Address Environmental Impacts of the South African Coal-Mining Industry*. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net> (Accessed: 20 September 2025).
39. Schaufeli, W.B. (2017) 'Applying the job demands–resources model: A “how to” guide to measuring and tackling work engagement and burnout', *Organizational Dynamics*, 46(2), pp. 120–132.
40. Schaufeli, W.B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V. and Bakker, A.B. (2002) 'The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3(1), pp. 71–92. DOI: 10.1023/A:1015630930326.
41. Schaufeli, W.B., Shimazu, A., Hakanen, J., Salanova, M. and De Witte, H. (2017) 'An ultra-short measure for work engagement: The UWES-3 validation across five

- countries', *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 35(4), pp. 577–591.
DOI: 10.1027/1015-5759/a000430.
42. Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. (2020) *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*. 8th edn. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
 43. Shuck, B., Reio, T.G. and Rocco, T.S. (2011) 'Employee engagement: An examination of antecedent and outcome variables', *Human Resource Development International*, 14(4), pp. 427–445. DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2011.601587.
 44. Snyder, H. (2019) 'Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines', *Journal of Business Research*, 104, pp. 333–339.
 45. The Guardian (2025) 'Jaguar Land Rover to restart some manufacturing after cyberattack', *The Guardian*, 29 September. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com> (Accessed: 30 September 2025).
 46. Thompson, G. and Glasø, L. (2015) 'Situational leadership theory: A test from three perspectives', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 36(5), pp. 527–544. DOI: 10.1108/LODJ-10-2013-0130.
 47. Uhl-Bien, M. and Arena, M. (2018) 'Leadership for organizational adaptability: A theoretical synthesis and integrative framework', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(1), pp. 89–104.
 48. Wired (2025) 'JLR cyberattack shows supply chain disaster risks', *Wired*, 20 September. Available at: <https://www.wired.com> (Accessed: 30 September 2025).
 49. Xu, J. and Thomas, H.C. (2011) 'How can leaders achieve high employee engagement?', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 32(4), pp. 399–416.
 50. Yin, R.K. (2018) *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 51. Yukl, G. (2013) *Leadership in Organizations*. 8th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

Appendices:

1. Informational letter for surveys participants.
2. Managers Survey.
3. Team Leaders Survey.
4. Operators Survey.
5. Microsoft Excel data collected.

Appendix 1. Informational letter for surveys participants.

Hello,

My name is Dagmara Wasilewska, and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Birmingham Campus, currently completing my Level 6 dissertation in Leadership and Management Skills for the Workplace.

As part of my dissertation research, I am investigating the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement within the manufacturing sector, with a specific focus on Magna Exteriors Banbury. The purpose of this study is to gain insights into how different leadership approaches influence motivation, engagement, and workplace culture. The findings will be used solely for academic purposes and may provide recommendations for improving leadership practice in the workplace.

You have been invited to participate in this **anonymous survey**, which should take no longer than 10–15 minutes to complete. Your responses will contribute to identifying which leadership styles are most evident in the organisation and how they are perceived by employees at different levels (managers, team leaders, and operators).

Participation in this study is **voluntary**, and you are **free to withdraw at any stage** before completing your responses. **No personal data** will be collected that could identify you. All data will be stored securely and handled in compliance with the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) and the ethical guidelines of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

By completing this survey, you are providing your informed consent to participate in the study under the terms described above.

If you have any questions regarding this research, you may contact me at:
2227923@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to support this study. **Your contribution is highly valued.**

Dagmara Wasilewska

Undergraduate Student,
UWTSD Birmingham
BA (Hons) Leadership and Management Skills
for the Workplace.

Appendix 2. Managers survey

Managers Survey

Scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree | 2 – Disagree | 3 – Neutral | 4 – Agree | 5 – Strongly Agree

1. I motivate employees to go beyond expectations.
01 02 03 04 05
2. I communicate a clear vision and purpose behind our work.
01 02 03 04 05
3. I recognise and appreciate individual achievements.
01 02 03 04 05
4. I set clear goals and performance expectations.
01 02 03 04 05
5. I reward employees when they achieve results.
01 02 03 04 05
6. I ensure that rules and procedures are followed.
01 02 03 04 05
7. I can adapt my leadership style to different situations or team needs.
01 02 03 04 05
8. I balance performance/production demands with motivating my employees.
01 02 03 04 05
9. I believe my leadership style has a positive impact on employee engagement.
01 02 03 04 05
10. My team demonstrates enthusiasm and commitment to their work.
01 02 03 04 05
11. I noticed that engaged employees perform better and more resilient during challenges.
01 02 03 04 05

- Years working at Magna: ☐ <1 ☐ 1–3 ☐ 4–6 ☐ 7+

Appendix 3. Team Leaders survey

Team Leaders Survey

Scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree | 2 – Disagree | 3 – Neutral | 4 – Agree | 5 – Strongly Agree

1. I motivate my team to achieve more than the minimum required.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
2. I recognise and praise team members' achievements.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
3. I encourage my team to share ideas for improvements.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
4. I clearly communicate goals and expectations of our work.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
5. I take action when standards are not meet.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
6. I focus on performance and achieving results.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
7. My leadership style influences team engagement.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
8. I balance production pressures with supporting team motivation.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
9. I feel supported by my managers in developing my leadership skills.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
10. My team members show enthusiasm and energy in their daily work.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
11. I believe engaged employees are more productive and positive at work.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5

- Years working at Magna: ☐ <1 ☐ 1–3 ☐ 4–6 ☐ 7+

Appendix 4. Operators survey

Operators Survey

Scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree | 2 – Disagree | 3 – Neutral | 4 – Agree | 5 – Strongly Agree

1. My team leader/manager motivates me to give my best at work.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
2. My achievements are recognised and appreciated.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
3. My team leader/manager encourages me to share ideas for improvement.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
4. Goals and expectations are clearly communicated.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
5. My team leader/manager addresses issues when goals are not achieved.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
6. My team leader/manager ensures that rules and procedures are followed.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
7. My team leader/manager balances production pressure with motivating the team.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
8. My team leader/manager adapts their approach depending on the situation.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
9. I feel motivated to work in my team.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
10. My opinions are considered by my team leader/manager.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5
11. Overall, I feel engaged and satisfied with my job.
◊1 ◊2 ◊3 ◊4 ◊5

- Years working at Magna: ☐ <1 ☐ 1–3 ☐ 4–6 ☐ 7+

Appendix 5. Microsoft Excel data collected.

