



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**The impact of leadership styles on employee performance – a case of
Umgeni Water**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The impact of leadership styles on employee performance was evaluated at Umgeni Water. The study was essential to gain insight into leadership and draw conclusions and recommendations to achieve optimal performance levels. The study will likely provide Umgeni Water leaders insight into leadership styles' impact on employee performance. The study also aimed to discover the most preferred leadership styles to effectively build optimal attitudes and behaviour towards achieving organisational goals, allowing leaders to introspect and improve. In addition, the study provided the basis for aspiring leaders and managers to improve their leadership skills.

The study was designed as a quantitative research study employing statistical modelling at a descriptive and inferential level to assess the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. The questionnaire was administered electronically using QuestionPro software. The results presented in this study were computed using the Stata version 17 software for data analysis. The target sample size proposed using sample size guidelines proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was 200 cases selected from a pool of 1039 employees randomly selected to participate in the online survey. The results analysis has shown that employee performance varies among employees based on their age groups, gender, and educational status. The study found that the democratic leadership style is the most preferred leadership style among employees. However, it was observed that, generally, leadership styles do not influence the constructs of employee performance, with a very low correlation observed between constructs of employee performance and leadership styles. Using regression analysis, it was observed that other constructs are generally non-significant on employee performance except for the influence of democratic leadership on job design. In contrast, most studies found the autocratic leadership style ineffective. This study discovered that the preference for autocratic leadership depends on the age cohort and educational level. In the analysis of dominant leadership styles at Umgeni Water, it was observed that while the democratic leadership style was predominant, there was an observed preference for autocratic leadership style among employees across all gender and racial categories. The study concluded that organisations could be strengthened by establishing democratic leadership styles that foster optimal employee performance.

Key words: employee, job-satisfaction, performance, leadership styles

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1. Introduction and background	1
1.2. Motivation for the study	2
1.3. Significance of the study	2
1.4. Research problem statement.....	4
1.5. Research aim and objectives	6
1.5.3. Research questions	6
1.5.4. Delimitations of the study	7
1.6. Outline of the research study	7
1.7. Chapter Summary.....	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1. Introduction.....	9
2.2. Definition of Concepts	9
2.2.1 Leadership and leadership style	9
2.2.2 Employee performance	11
2.3. Theoretical framework.....	12
2.3.2.1. Research knowledge gap.....	15
2.3.2.2. The impact of leadership styles on employee performance.....	15

2.4. Leadership styles and employee performance at Umgeni Water.....	21
2.5. Conceptual Framework.....	22
2.6. Chapter Summary	23
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Research design	24
3.3 Sampling	25
3.3.1 Sampling Method.....	25
3.3.2 Population Of The Study.....	28
3.3.3 Sample Size And Sampling Technique.....	28
3.3.4 Construction of the instrument.....	30
3.3.5. Data collection	31
3.3.6. Data Preparation.....	31
3.4. Data Analysis	32
3.4.1. Validity and Reliability	33
3.5. Ethical consideration.....	34
3.6. Chapter Summary	35
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	36
4.1. Introduction.....	36
4.2 Variables description and preparation.	36
4.2.1. Demographic Variables.....	37
4.2.2. Composite Variables: Employee performance, Leadership and Work environment.	41
4.3. The Results.....	53
4.2.1. Objective one: To identify the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water.....	53
4.3.2. Objective two: To investigate the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation.	60
4.3.3. Objective three: To assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.	62
4.4. Discussion of Results.....	66
4.5. Chapter Summary	68
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69

5.1. Introduction.....	69
5.2. Conclusions of the study.....	69
5.3. Recommendations.....	71
5.4 Limitations of the study	72
5.5 Recommendations for future research	73
5.6 Chapter Summary	74
REFERENCES	75
APPENDICES	85
Appendix 1: INFORMED CONSENT	85
Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRE	88
Appendix 3: GATEKEEPER’S LETTER	94
Appendix 4: ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	95
Appendix 5: TURNITIN REPORT	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework	222
Figure 2: Univariate analysis of age.	377
Figure 3: Univariate analysis of employee gender.	388
Figure 4: Univariate analysis of Population group.	399
Figure 5: Univariate analysis of Education Levels among employees.	400
Figure 6: Univariate analysis of departmental positioning at work.	411
Figure 7: Employee Performance across employee age.	544
Figure 8: Gendered profile of Employee Performance.	566
Figure 9: Employee performance over educational level.	588
Figure 10: Identified Leadership Styles.	600
Figure 11: Comparing leadership style preferences among employees by age.	61
Figure 12: Leadership Style preferences by employee Gender and Racial Group.	622

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Probability and non-probability sampling designs .	255
Table 2: Sample Size for a given Population Size.	299
Table 3: Factor Analysis Procedure using Stata	433
Table 4: Rotation Factor Matrix, Employee Performance.	455
Table 5: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.	477
Table 6: Rotated Factor Items, Leadership styles.	488
Table 7: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.	500
Table 8: Factor Rotation, Ideal Work Environment.	511
Table 9: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.	52
Table 10: Employee performance Constructs.	533
Table 11: Employee Performance across age groups.	634
Table 12: Gendered Profile of employee performance.	647
Table 13: Employee performance over educational competency.	58
Table 14: Correlation/Covariance analysis between Leadership styles and Employee Performance..	653
Table 15: Regression Analysis, Leadership styles on Compensation.	64
Table 16: Regression Analysis, Leadership styles on fair treatment..	64
Table 17: Regression Analysis, Leadership style on job design.	585

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction and background

Umgeni Water provides water services; potable water supply and wastewater treatment to various municipalities. This organisation was established in the 1970s. Umgeni Water derives revenues from the seven customers (District Municipalities) in KwaZulu Natal (KZN), namely, eThekweni Metro, UGu, Harry Gwala, iLembe, uMgungundlovu, uThukela and Msunduzi Local Municipality (Umgeni Water, 2016). The leadership of Umgeni Water includes Chief Executive Officer and five Executives, namely; Operations, Infrastructure Development, Scientific Services, Finance and Corporate Services. Every division entails divisional organograms, made up of managers and subordinates. The Chief Executive Officer report to the board members, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation. The company's mission is to deliver advanced, sustainable, operational and reasonable bulk water and sanitation services (Umgeni, 2018). The company strives to ensure an adequate and constant supply of high-quality potable water that complies with South African National Standard – SANS 241:2015 and Blue Drop for portable water and DWS standards for wastewater final effluent such as Licence, General Authorisation and Green Drop.

Umgeni Water has declared annual profits worth over R1 billion for the past ten years (Umgeni Water, 2020), indicating good financial performance. The leadership believes that employee performance equals organisational performance. Hence, Umgeni Water realises that organisational performance emanates from employees' efforts and determination towards achieving company objectives and targets. Several factors such as job satisfaction, working conditions, motivation, and leadership styles influence employee performance (Chandani, Mehta, Mali and Khokhar, 2016; Jing and Avery, 2008).

The study focuses on how leadership styles affect employee performance at Umgeni Water. A comprehensive literature review will be conducted to lend support to the study. This section will present a detailed motivation, the significance of the study and the research problem statement. The study will use designed questionnaires to collect primary data that will respond to the study's objectives. Therefore, the aims and objectives of the study and the associated vital research questions will be defined. This section will also outline the study's delimitations and the dissertation's structure.

1.2. Motivation for the study

The role of leadership evolves with time and technological advancement. Leaders were previously treated as people imbued with extraordinary powers to influence and motivate followers (Rao, 2018). With rising democracy and civilisation, there is more emphasis on leaders showing relevant leadership traits and skills to put their organisations at a global competitive advantage. Rao (2018) alluded that leaders with suitable leadership styles have strong convictions. They influence others with their integrity and trust, encouraging excellent individual performance. For organisations to survive in the global arena, they need employees to perform at optimal levels. According to Umgeni (2018), as stated in Section 29 of the Water Services Act, the organisation's crucial obligation is to supply drinking water and sanitation services to its customers. This goal can be effectively accomplished through the workforce's performance. Conducting this study will provide Umgeni Water with accurate information on how employees perceive leadership and how leadership styles can be improved to reach maximum performance without deviating from company values and policies.

Umgeni Water also emphasizes the importance of training and development. Employees are encouraged to further their studies. The company offers assisted education bursary, where the organisation pays the total cost of studies. Conducting this study will strike a balance between career advancement and leadership skills relevant to individual and organisational performance. Furthermore, the dissertation will be an addition to the study materials available at the organisational library for enthusiastic readers.

Disregarding the impact of leadership styles on employee performance will create a blind spot in terms of the relevant leadership style preferred by the employees in the organisation. It could also lead to inconsistent employee performance, while the root cause still needs to be discovered. Employers could ignore the essential boosters of optimal performance. Hence the study seeks to provide the organisation with basic knowledge through comprehensive evaluation and analysis. There will be a lack basic model for competitive improvement in leadership and performance aspects when studies of this nature are not conducted.

1.3. Significance of the study

Umgeni Water strives to conduct its business with a complete obligation to all stakeholders and their requirements. Therefore, making it possible for the organisation to be the leading water utility that enhances value in providing bulk water and sanitation services. The organisation's competitiveness emanates from the organisational performance, which includes compliance with quality and environmental standards and meeting and exceeding the targets per the balanced scorecard. The organisation can only perform exceptionally if its employees

are committed to producing exceptional results. According to the organisation, good performance means completing allocated tasks within the set period as per individual performance contracts aligned to the individual job profile. Therefore, employee performance is critical to the company's success and growth (Jing and Avery, 2008). The study by Eliyana, Ma'arif and Muzakki (2019) states that the more job satisfaction, the more outstanding the employee's performance. It takes good leadership skills and qualities to achieve positive results and organize employees for a common objective.

The performance trend over the past five financial years points to an upward trajectory in sales. Umgeni Water was able to record revenue growth of 9% in the financial year 2020/2021, which is a strong indicator of good overall performance (Umgeni Water, 2021). Divisional performances differ, it usually ranges from good to outstanding performance. This study will assess the link between leadership styles employed by Umgeni Water leaders and employee performance, which ultimately leads to organisational performance. The research will help managers and leaders to explore leadership from diverse perspectives. It will play a vital role in assisting the leaders in developing leadership styles responsive to job satisfaction needs and positive outcomes. An organisation can achieve exceptional individual and organisational performance when the needs of employees are understood and fulfilled (Agarwal, 2019). By understanding the different approaches, leaders can be more effective by comprehending how their leadership qualities affect employee performance. The study will also help leaders identify where and when to adapt their styles.

Training and development of new skills are major focus areas at Umgeni Water. According to Umgeni Water (2021, p.28), "the organisation pledge to create opportunities for the workforce to become multi-skilled so that they would be able to compete on an even keel for work opportunities that may become available within the organisation". Umgeni Water launched the Young Professionals forum in November 2014 to give the youth a voice in all organisation structures. The forum aims to uplift the organisation's young professionals and create a professional environment where new ideas and solutions for identified problem areas could be generated. The scarcity of skills and the ageing workforce in the water sector has necessitated the need to change the status quo on the development of YPs in the water sector. Young professionals must be equipped for future challenges they will face when they assume leadership positions in and outside of Umgeni Water. This study will create a knowledge base for Young Professionals for their internal or external career growth.

While most people enrol in leadership courses, it is also essential to advance knowledge by linking theories, concepts and ideas to the actual situation. Considering how the world evolves

through technological advancements and socioeconomic demands, it is important to show that effective leadership is not linked to one approach. The organisation rely on a young workforce for innovation and creativity. The growing demand for creativity and innovation continues to be a driving force for managers and leaders. Innovation in leadership is of utmost importance for every company. Therefore, aspiring leaders must develop their leadership skills to ensure effectiveness and competitive advantage. This study will divulge general leadership insight for aspiring leaders in the Umgeni Water context.

Furthermore, leaders nowadays operate within complex adaptive systems, which may and may not function effectively together depending on the changing circumstances. This necessitates leadership styles that can move between each required activity with effortless ease and without losing effectiveness. Different situations demand different leadership styles; each style can be considered a tool. Covid- 19 outbreak demanded leaders who can tackle unprecedented challenges successfully (Cho, 2020). This study will help leaders to understand themselves and move effortlessly between a range of styles in response to changing situations to have more positive outcomes.

The economic growth of any country is highly dependent on good leadership. This is particularly so because the core values of a nation are directly linked to equality and equal distribution of resources. Similarly, organisational development depends on good leadership. Leadership plays a crucial role in sustainable economic growth by providing opportunities for growth and progressive development in the organisation. This study will provide practical and relevant knowledge on leadership.

1.4. Research problem statement

Leadership is critical in today's competitive environment. Organisations develop globally and encounter many challenges in achieving their objectives (Kehinde and Banjo, 2014). Umgeni Water has grown from providing services to four District Municipalities to seven Municipalities in KwaZulu Natal (Umgeni, 2020). This expansion necessitates good leadership to ensure customer satisfaction and sustainable service delivery. For the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives, leaders need to influence their subordinates towards achieving the organisational goals. Leadership is the ability to influence people towards goal attainment (Agarwal, 2019). Employee performance which is perceived as performing defined responsibilities, meeting targets, teamwork and the cohesion of both leadership and performance, should be manifested through the style and approach used by managers. This will result in efficiency, which requires specific leadership approaches to unique performance challenges in achieving divisional and organisational goals. Armstrong (2009) pointed out that

the above lead to effectiveness, specialisation, effective feedback and good organisational relations. This captured the idea that leaders are involved with other employees in achieving goals. This is an area of interest that encouraged the researcher to carry out a study on the subject.

Umgeni Water's performance over the past five financial years indicated an upward trajectory. The organisation recorded revenue growth of 9% in the financial year 2020/2021, which is a strong indicator of good overall performance (Umgeni Water, 2021). However, the divisional performances differ, it usually ranges from good to outstanding performance. At the same time, individual performances range from poor to outstanding performance. This implies that the organisation suffers from a small percentage of inconsistent individual performance, which can be associated with the style of leadership being utilised by the organisation or other factors. The overall individual performance score takes in the individual, divisional and organisational performances depending on the percentage contribution to each category. The performance score is one of the conditions determining the payment of an annual bonus for all qualifying employees. The final performance management score also determines the salary increase for managers. Smith, Eldridge and DeJoy (2016) stated that the transactional leadership style has two dimensions: contingent reward and recognition, which can be translated as the more employees work, the more they are rewarded or the more the production, the more the appreciation.

On the other hand, transformational leadership theory suggests that when this style is applied, it can improve performance since it improves employees' knowledge and potential (Yukl, 2007). Some factors, such as job satisfaction, working conditions, motivation, and leadership styles, influence employee performance (Chandani, et al., 2016). Employee overall performance within this analysis relies on the extent of productivity and work (Amussah, 2020). The outcome of leadership operating together with overall performance must be apparent from the management style and approach. This certainly will result in efficacy, speciality, and exceptional organisational relationships, as Armstrong (2009) specified.

Leadership can be considered a continuous process in which a leader tries to influence his followers to accomplish a goal (Vasilescu, 2019). With the rapidly evolving world, leaders must stay equipped with the skills and leadership approaches aligned to the changes. The Covid-19 pandemic forced many organisations to re-evaluate the methods of ensuring continuous production and efficiency. The growing number of working-from-home and remote options has inspired a more flexible, collaborative, and adaptable leadership style based on mutual agreement and working-from-home policies (Hidayat, Fahmy, Sari, Mergeresa and

Fernando, 2021). Transactional leadership is effective when managers can closely monitor employee progress, which has been more challenging since the Covid-19 pandemic (Du Plessis and Keyter, 2020). Transactional leadership has seen a drop in popularity over the last decade. A high number of new-generation employees in the workplace (about 35% of the United States workforce) has caused more and more businesses to prioritise focus on the ideal work environment and job satisfaction, which is not a high priority under transactional leadership style (Vasilescu, 2019).

Based on the information above, it is apparent that Umgeni Water employs a transactional leadership style. This captured the researcher's interest in exploring the critical influence of outstanding performance and the impact of other leadership styles on employee performance. This study aims to determine the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water, assess the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation and assess the impact of leadership styles that immediate supervisors practice on employee performance. This study is, therefore, essential for Umgeni Water to explore the prevailing leadership culture aligned with the vision and mission of the organisation. Considering the strategies on how the organisation may create value and competitive advantage through consistent optimal performance, this study will be an added benefit.

1.5. Research aim and objectives

1.5.1. Aim of the study:

The study's primary purpose is to evaluate the impact of leadership styles on employee performance at different professions levels. This study is essential to gain insight into leadership and draw up conclusions and recommendations that can be useful in achieving optimal performance levels.

1.5.2. The objectives of the study are:

- i. To identify the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water.
- ii. To investigate the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation.
- iii. To assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.

1.5.3. Research questions

The designed questionnaires that will be used to collect primary data will respond to the study's objectives. Therefore, the questions will be:

- i. What are the primary factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water?
- ii. Which leadership styles do leaders and managers apply in the organisation?

iii. What impact do leadership styles have on employee performance?

1.5.4. Delimitations of the study

The following are the delimitations of the study.

- This study will focus on Umgeni Water only. External stakeholders will be excluded.
- There will be no experiments conducted in the study. This study will use empirical data from the questionnaires to collect primary data.

1.6. Outline of the research study

This dissertation consists of five chapters, outlined as follows:

Chapter One:

This chapter has introduced the research topic, motivation and significance of the study, the problem statement and the research questions. It also presented research objectives and related questions that the study intends to answer.

Chapter Two:

This chapter presented a literature review. The definitions of leadership, leadership styles, and employee performance were discussed in this chapter. This chapter also brought in the existing literature on the impact of leadership styles on employee performance and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter Three:

The research methodology adopted by the study was discussed in this chapter. The method of data collection, analysis, preparation, and the instrument used was discussed. Furthermore, this chapter also presented the report and analysis of univariate data collected from the questionnaires.

Chapter Four:

This chapter analysed the data collected. The factors retained from the univariate data underpin the study's objectives were thoroughly discussed. The results per objective and findings were also deliberated in this chapter.

Chapter Five:

This chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations. The study limitations and recommendations for future research are also exhibited in this chapter.

1.7.Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study and the background of the research. It puts the study's subject into perspective and displays its objective and significance. Therefore, the background to the research study, motivation and significance of the study was presented. The aims and objectives of the study and the associated key research questions were defined. The study's delimitations and the dissertation's structure were also outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In any workplace, managers' duties include influencing and pursuing subordinates to achieve organisational goals and objectives. This can be achieved through effective leadership (Eliyana, et al.,2019). An effective leader addresses the followers in a manner that encourages them to put more effort towards the outcomes (Ward, 2020). Leaders should realise that leadership has a direct impact on individual and organisational performance. According to Wang, et al. (2010, cited in Wahab, Rahmat, Yusof and Mohamed, 2016) leadership can either positively or negatively affect employees or impact their performance. Shafie, Baghersalimi and Barghi (2013, p.28) describe the leadership importance in an organisation and mainly on human beings' asset of any firm; "The main drivers of organisations are usually employees, they give life to the organisations and provide goals". It is vital to provide employees with direction and emotional gratification to acquire the best from them, the direction can only come from leaders. Leadership is crucial in improving the performance of most organisations. The success or failure of an organisation is influenced by the effectiveness of leadership. Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Inam-ul- Hassan, and Waqas (2012) also agreed that leadership play a critical role in the achievement of organisational goals and encourages workers' effort by ensuring that they are satisfied with their jobs.

The literature review intends to understand the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. The first part of this literature review will relate to the importance of leadership. The second part will focus on leadership styles as a measure to produce the desired level of employee performance.

2.2. Definition of Concepts

2.2.1 Leadership and leadership style

The definition of leadership depends on the researchers' perspectives and interests. Leadership alone is subject to argument, with no mutual explanation agreed upon in many studies (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Leadership is guidance whereby a leader engages employees to achieve the organisation's objectives, mission and vision (Ward, 2020). Ward (2020) defines leadership as the capability of motivating followers to conduct themselves to achieve organisational goals. Berger (2014) views leadership as the initiation of something new for the

benefit of everyone in the organisation. Dartey-Baah (2015:110) contends “leadership is, therefore, that part of management which requires constant addressing and appraise of discrepancies in the organisation’s culture”.

The organisational objectives are achieved through leadership attributes application such as values, principles, ethics, personality, knowledge and competences. Therefore, leadership is the combined sharing of vision, resources, and value to persuade success. Leadership means the ability to translate the set vision into reality. Leadership builds confidence and eagerness among people and creates a desire to be led. Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2015) view leadership as a process of social influence where the leader persuades the participation of followers to achieve the organisation’s goals. Hence, it is someone who influences others to perform specified activities to achieve objectives. According to Memon (2014), leadership is when an individual influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviours of others by taking a charge to set the direction for the company. Wallace, de Chernatony and Buil (2013) affirm that leadership is the ability to influence individuals to eagerly follow the guidance or adhere to the guidelines and procedures set. In Sundi (2013) leadership is defined as the ability to induce and summon subordinates or followers to work collectively as a team to accomplish a certain objective.

Leaders have different attributes in leading their followers. It is called leadership style. Leadership style is the incorporation of traits, behaviour and characteristics leaders use to engage with their followers to achieve the desire objectives or goals (Al Khajeh, 2018). Molero, Cuadrado, Navas and Morales (2007) labelled leadership style as a regular set of patterns, proposing two dimensions in a leader’s behaviour which take into account the task and relation-oriented leaders. Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, and Shaikh (2012) define leadership style as a method leaders use to do their leading activities or duties to ensure that objectives are met, which involves organising and planning work. Memon (2014) also defines leadership style as a leader’s technique of giving direction, encouraging people and executing strategies. Leadership styles are regarded as approaches that leaders and managers use when leading organisations, divisions and groups (Mehmood and Arif, 2011). According to Darling and Leffel (2010), leaders who look for the most effective leadership style may realize that there is no best leadership style, however, a combination of styles may be effective. As for Anderson and Sun (2017), leadership style refers to a certain configuration of approaches leaders hold and behaviours they demonstrate. There are various types of leadership styles. The different behaviours, one being task-focused and the other being employee focused are a product of leadership styles adopted by managers in work places. Burns (1978 cited in Keskes, 2014) first introduced transformational and transactional leadership. Leadership style application is

determined by leaders. If leadership style practices are good and can give a good direction, it then creates confidence and motivation in employees, thus increasing employee morale and better employee performance. Leadership approaches and styles' effectiveness may depend on the organisational goals, mission, and vision (Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube, 2015). However, it may positively or negatively impact employees' performance (Anderson and Sun, 2017).

2.2.2 Employee performance

Agarwal (2019) defines performance as the achieved results of activities with the skills of employees who perform those activities. According to Pattanayak (2005), the performance of an employee is the resulting behaviour on a task which can be observed and weighed. Pattanayak (2005) further described employee performance as the input made by an individual in the achievement of organisational goals. Ibrahim (2004) defined job performance as an imperative activity that provides the procedures and methods to attain the organisational goals and also provides the achievement level in terms of productivity and thus company revenue. The main goal of any organisation is to achieve exceptional organisational performance for competitive advantage and customer satisfaction, which necessitates improved employee performance. Performance is a multidimensional concept and a very vital measure that defines organisational successes or failures.

Employee performance refers to an employee's ability to complete tasks as per employers' expectations or more. Individual performance can be measured against these organisational objectives and targets. Previous studies indicate that different factors can affect employee performance (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016).

The study conducted by Vuong and Nguyen (2022) suggests that stakeholders should regularly conduct performance reviews to improve employee performance and, ultimately, organisational efficiency. Conducting performance reviews helps in identifying and resolving the root cause of poor performance of the employee. Performance measurement quantifies the efficiency and effectiveness of a past action (Neely, Adams, & Kennerley, 2002, cited in Sarraf and Nejad, 2020). Performance measurement is imperative in measuring an organisation's growth and advancement (Aguinis and Burgi-Tian, 2021). Organisations employ different tools and strategies to measure employee performance, which include graphic rating scales, management by objectives, forced ranking and performance appraisals. Performance appraisals are the most commonly used performance measurement tool, along with key performance indicators (KPIs) (Vuong and Nguyen, 2022). One of the performance measurement approaches considered broadly in recent years is a balanced scorecard. A *balanced scorecard* is

a strategic planning tool developed by Kaplan and Norton in 1992 (Sarraf and Nejad, 2020). Umgeni Water uses performance appraisal tool to measure employee performance and a balanced scorecard strategy to measure organisational performance.

Fair rating when evaluating the performance level is another vital criterion that enhances the organisation's optimal performance (Chandani, et al., 2016). The other company's excellent performance is when employees show initiation, which is a sign of passion and dedication. According to Sundi (2013), employee performance is very influenced by leadership style. For this research, Sundi's (2013) definition will be adopted because it is aligned with the objectives of this study.

2.3. Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework refers to the theories that the researcher uses to guide the research study or meet the research objectives (Imenda, 2014). Thus, it is an application of a set of concepts pulled from one theory to clarify a particular phenomenon. The primary purpose of the theoretical framework is to help the researcher understands the key variables and concepts in a given research. The theoretical framework also guides and provides a general approach to the research in terms of research design, sample, data collection and analysis. The following theories will be considered to guide the study:

2.3.1 Situational and Contingency Theory

Fred Fielder developed a contingency theory in the mid-1960s (Mirumbe,2020). Contingency theory examines leaders concurrently with the situation the leader is in. This theory implies that the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the current connection between the leader's characteristics and the situation aspects. The theory assumes that the relationship between leadership style and organisational outcomes is moderated by situational factors that are related to the conditions. Hence, the outcomes of an organisation cannot be determined by leadership style but rather by the existing situation (Cheng and Chan, 2002). The theory further states that leadership efficiency needs leaders to adopt a particular leadership style that matches the existing situational analysis. Situational leadership theory contends that leaders can work effectively in any condition by altering their style accordingly.

The theory is linked to the study as it presents how leadership style can influence employee performance. Employees working for the organisation contribute towards the organisational outcomes. Therefore, the leadership style's impact on employee performance depends on the situation. The conditions in which a leader exists influence the leadership style applied. This

then impacts the performance of employees, which affects an organisation's overall performance.

2.3.2. Traits and behavioural Theory

Traits and behavioural theory were developed in the 1940s. This theory assumes that great leaders are born with distinguished personality traits making them fit in the leadership position. Gordon Allport is an early innovator in the study of traits (Mirumbe,2020). The theory further states that the traits make one different from others and hence qualify to be referred to as a leader. Stogdill (1974) identified leadership traits that influence a person's ability to become a leader. According to his observation, leadership circumstances vary and thus leading to the emergence of different demands on leaders, destroying trait theory and thus leading to the emergence of situational and behavioural approaches. The behaviour of leaders differentiates them from their followers. The theory focuses on the leader's action instead of the existing situation, particularly since the theory believes that great leaders are born and not made. The theory further states that followers can become leaders through learning and observation. This theory relates to the study since it talks about the leadership traits which distinguish leaders and followers. These traits, therefore, influence the style of leadership preferred by the leader, which affects employee performance and, subsequently, overall organisational performance.

2.3.3. Transformational and Transactional Theory

Several research emerged around transformational–transactional leadership theory over the past twenty-five years (Anyango, 2015). The transactional theory emphasises the supervision role, and group and organisational performance. It bases leadership on the reward system and the punishments for not meeting specific targets. Bass (1985), as cited by Chan (2005), theorised the transactional leaders' plea to the subordinates' self-interests. The subordinates' needs are met through bargaining and exchange. Therefore, leaders and followers focus on reaching the negotiated performance level. The transformational theory's emphasis is on the connections between leaders and followers. Transformational leadership is the leader's ability to encourage employees to work beyond their expectations to improve organisational performance (Bass, 1985, 1996, as cited by Murphy and Drodge, 2004). Bass (1985) theorised the transformational leadership style as the qualities that come deeply from personal values that cannot be negotiated and appeal to the subordinates' sense of moral obligation and values. Four types of transformational leadership behaviour are idealised influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, and intellectual stimulation

(Bass,1985). The existing relationship between the theory and this study is that the theory underpins the study focus; leadership styles influence employee performance.

Adopting one of the two leadership styles can lead to either improved or decreased performance. Agarwal (2019) confirmed that transformational leadership theory pursues the creation of positive change in individuals, encourages teamwork, and considers each other's interests. The four components of the transformational leadership style are inspirational motivation, individualised influence, intellectual stimulation and personal and individualised attention.

i. Inspirational Motivation

Influential leaders encourage positive determination in individuals, a practice that results in high levels of satisfaction and employees gaining the leader's admiration and trust and eagerly striving to achieve the organisational vision (Boamah, Laschinger, Wong and Clarke, 2018).

ii. Charisma or Idealised influence

Malik, Javed and Hassan (2017) maintain that energising workplace environment is created from idealised inspiration, an environment that also strengthens empowerment as;

- a) a responsibility and motivator among the personnel.
- b) attainment of power because it prompts more peer persuasion.

Haleem, Jehangir and Khalil-Ur-Rahman (2018, p.373) contend that "in any practical situation where the employees remain constrained by company rules within a hierarchy, such idealised influence is probable to appear amongst upper than the middle managers. Satisfaction arises from the capacity to participate in innovative decision-making".

iii. Intellectual Stimulation

Transformational leadership involves intellectual stimulation and mission alignment; hence, transformational leaders positively affect job satisfaction (Choi, Goh, Adam, and Tan, 2016). The conventional approach to thinking and the demanding status quo in transformational leadership encourage worker innovation and the ability to improve efficiency, resulting in problem-solving capability. Transformational leaders create a creative environment that is cognizant of intellect.

iv. Personal and Individual Attention

Arnold (2017) states that transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction and employee performance as it embodies individualised considerations. Transformational

leadership pivots on the company leadership's ability to consider the employees' aspirations and needs. By mentoring the employees, transformational leaders stimulate employees to make informed decisions in a supportive work environment that creates an autonomous state.

2.3.2.1. Research knowledge gap

Global literature has indicated that leadership styles influence employee performance (Anyango, 2015; Mohiuddin, 2017; Iqbal, Anwar and Haider, 2015; Itunga and Awuor, 2019). There are several studies on leadership styles conducted in Africa. For instance, Rampersadh (2015) studied the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in the Consultant Civil Engineering Industry. Chingurue (2019) examined the impact of leadership styles on performance in Zimbabwe state-owned enterprises: the case of air Zimbabwe and the national railways of Zimbabwe (between 2000-2010). The studies have contributed to understanding the impact of different leadership styles on employee performance. However, little has been studied about how leadership styles influence employee performance in the South African Water Sector, thus creating a knowledge gap. This study filled the gap by evaluating the impact of leadership styles on employee performance – the case of Umgeni Water.

2.3.2.2. The impact of leadership styles on employee performance

Research conducted by Chandani, et al., (2016) revealed that leadership commitment plays a huge role in the worker's performance. Andersen (2016) indicated that good leaders motivate and value their workers to get the job completed and produce the intended outcomes. According to Tajasom, Hung, Nikbin and Hyun (2015), leadership styles help employees achieve company targets. On the other hand, certain leadership styles lead to dissatisfaction and inefficiency (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Hurduzeu (2015) investigated the impact of leadership on organisational performance, where both qualitative and quantitative research method were used. The results revealed that there was a robust effect of leadership behaviours on organisational performance. Ojokuku, Odetayo, and Sajuyigbe (2012) study findings also revealed a positive and negative correlation between performance and leadership style.

According to Mesick and Kramer (2004), leadership traits depend not only on personal ability or characteristics but also on the leader's environment and situation. Motivation and attitude significantly impact achieving effective organisational performance, as outlined by Akpala (1998). Many SMEs fail within five years of operation because there is a lack of adequate research on market demand and suitable leadership styles (Akpala, 1998).

In the 21st century, leadership styles were perceived as tools that leaders use to exercise their power to ensure work completion without using the "command and control" style (Al Khajeh, 2018). There are many leadership styles; however, Anderson and Sun (2017) have listed frequently studied new styles as; ideological, pragmatic, servant, authentic, ethical, spiritual and integrative public. Not all leadership styles and approaches fit all circumstances.

The use of the leadership style depends on different factors (Arnold, Connelly, Walsh and Martin Ginis, 2015). The diverse nature of leadership emanates from the dynamics of organisational environments, work ethics and personal traits. According to the study conducted by Shokanie, Slabbert and Stanz (2004) on the nature of leadership in organisations, the results indicated that in South Africa, the nature of leadership is diversified between transactional and transformational leadership dimensions. Most researchers identified five major leadership styles in South Africa which included transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership. According to Newstrom and Davis (1997, p. 208), the most successful managers are those that consider both productivity and the employees' wellbeing for success. Graetz (2000) added that organisations must find the balance between instrumental and inspirational leadership. In line with the concept of successful managers, the researcher finds transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles suitable for the objectives of the study.

Teamwork, communication and engagement are some of critical factors in the pursuit of innovation, creativity and competitive advantage. Most leaders realise the importance of workforce participation in decision-making to maintain work consistency. They allow equal participation of everyone in a process of decision-making. Although leaders give the final verdict, team members partake equally during brainstorming. Thus this type of leadership is called participative or democratic leadership. The study will also look at autocratic leadership which is often considered the opposite of democratic leadership. Autocratic leadership is demeaning and self-centred leadership.

Given the characteristics of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, democratic and autocratic leadership styles, it became essential for the researcher to investigate how these leadership styles influence employee performance at Umgeni Water.

2.3.3. Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

The transformational leadership theory promotes motivation, morale, courage and performance of followers by employing varying approaches (Bushra, Ahmad and Naveed, 2011). According to Doucet, Marc, Gilles, and Michel (2015), transformational leadership provides vision and

motivation to the followers to perform beyond expectations. This leadership theory encompasses other leadership theories, such as traits and behaviour. It also entails charismatic, situational and transactional leadership. Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson (2003) describe this type of leadership as a transformational process that can be seen through several leadership behaviours such as attributed charisma, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

The leaders adopting transformational leadership tend to be courageous and stress the importance of achieving desired outcomes (Wahab, et al., 2016). The main objective of transformational leaders is to empower their followers (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Yukl (2007) states that when the transformational leadership style is applied, it can improve performance since this style improves employees' knowledge and potential. Leaders with transformational leadership skills afford opportunity and confidence to their subordinates to perform duties under leaders' mind-set to accomplish goals set by the organisation. Butler (1999) indicates that a transformational leader inspires subordinates to have a vision and mission. They encourage and motivate followers to demonstrate greater performance, act critically and solve problems by applying different approaches. With the transformational leadership style employees are treated individually thus attentive motivational support is provided and subsequently positive attitude towards work. Transformational leadership behaviours bring substantial positive effects to increase psychological empowerment and the quality of employees.

2.3.4. Transactional Leadership and Employee Performance

Transformational and transactional leadership were first introduced by Burns (1978 cited in Keskes, 2014). The word "transaction" means "exchange". Hence, there is an exchange between transactional leaders and followers (Paracha, et al., 2012). Yukl (2007) affirms that the transactional leadership style emphasises the transaction between leaders and subordinates. This leadership style becomes valid when the leader prioritises goals and targets accomplishment (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Leaders who exercise a transactional leadership style are viewed as results-driven leaders. They use specific reinforcements to achieve the results targeted. The reinforcement can be either positive or negative. Smith, et al (2016) stated that this leadership has two dimensions: contingent reward and recognition, which can be translated as the more employees work, the more they are rewarded or, the more the production, the more the appreciation. The leaders reward the employees who meet their expectations, and actions may be taken against underperforming employees (Eliyana, et al.,

2019). Transactional leadership encourages and influences subordinates by substituting reward with exceptional performance.

Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson (2003) support that transactional leadership characteristics entail contingent reward and exception management aspects. The contingent reward is where leaders and subordinates agree on the duties to be carried out, and the reward is offered when the target is achieved. Whereas exception management is where deviations are monitored from the set standards, corrective actions are taken to achieve organisational goals. Transactional leadership can be perceived as negative or positive by followers. A positive effect can occur when followers find transactional leaders trustworthy, as leaders who stick to their promises. A negative effect can occur when followers consider that transactional leaders cannot be trusted because they are dishonest or not transparent. The model by Kark, Van Dijk and Vashdi (2018) suggests that while transformational leadership endorses creativity, partially by improving employee's situational promotion, transactional leadership style is associated with employees' prevention situational, which is aligned with leaders' hindering of employee's creativity.

2.3.5. Laissez-faire Leadership and Employee Performance

Laissez-faire leadership is a lack of supervision. It is a pure lack of ownership and accountability by a leader. Leaders adopting this style avoids making decisions. Laissez-faire leaders tend to give their followers the power to make decisions regarding their activities (Chaudhry and Javed, 2012). Usually, laissez-faire occurs when managers have no complete control over their employees (Ololube, Dudafa, Uriah and Agbor, 2013). According to Kumar (2015), under a laissez-faire leadership style, more freedom is allowed to followers. Followers are not guided in procedures and methods they decide to follow and in independent verdicts. However, according to Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and Van Engen (2012), the leader is always available to assist and guide the followers. Contingency theories to leadership support much empirical freedom in leadership (laissez-faire style) (Northouse, 2019). Different researchers found it helpful and reliable to clarify how effective leadership can be achieved. Contingency theory stresses the prominence of paying attention to personal relations between the leader's style and the demands of different employees and situations. The absence of leadership style brings about a lack of direction from the leader resulting in low morale and a lack of interest in the work (Bhatti, et al. 2012).

A study by Kerns (2004) supports that the laissez-faire style bridges the gap between the employer and employee. He emphasized that laissez-faire would create a conducive environment where employees and employers felt like a family irrespective of their positions. This study aims to investigate further how laissez-faire contributes to employee performance.

2.3.6. Autocratic Leadership and Employee Performance

The autocratic leadership style originates from transactional theory, which emphasises the relationship between leaders and followers. The words autocratic or authoritarian both define the type of leaders who give instructions and expect immediate compliant without any dispute (Iqbal, Anwar and Haider, 2015). So, followers take orders but are not involved in any decisions (Ololube, et al., 2013). The autocratic approach is characterized by an “I tell” philosophy, emphasized Iqbal, et al. (2015). Autocratic leaders are a “do as I say” type because they retain their decision-making rights for themselves.

Strategies, policies and procedures are prepared in isolation from the group (Iqbal, et al., 2015). Followers are forced to submit to their leaders because of the reward system and punishment when goals are not met (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas and Halpin, 2006). Autocratic leadership style shortcomings seem to prevail over the benefits. It is often beneficial in cases of crisis when quick decisions must be made. Iqbal, et al. (2015) further stated that in autocratic leadership, instructions are given to the followers without explanation or future intentions and objectives. Dawson (2002), states that the autocratic style may indicate good outcomes in a short-term period, however, too much use of power will distort productivity in the long-term period.

Usually, these leaders have no experience with leadership drive, be it a new position or assignment involving people management. Autocratic leaders can destroy the organisation by forcing their followers to implement strategies and services in a very constricted method based on the subjective idea of success. There is no shared vision between leaders and followers other than intimidation. Determination, inventiveness and improvement are usually rejected by autocratic leadership. In essence, most followers of autocratic leaders can be described as individuals waiting for the inevitable failure produced by leadership. Iqbal, et al. (2015) identified the autocratic style traits as unrealistic in demands, use of undue discipline and punishment, critical of opposing views, hardly showing appreciation, actions oriented, highly competitive and only beneficial in the short term focus.

2.3.7. Democratic Leadership and Employee Performance

The literature review finds the democratic leadership style as a complete contradiction of the autocratic leadership style. According to Hendriks and Karsten's (2014) theory of democratic leadership, the democratic leadership idea is inherently contradictory. The concept of democracy is famous for authority or power, which is self-governance by independent citizens and is essentially based on democratic philosophy (Hendriks and Karsten, 2014). The democratic or participative leadership style originates from the transformational theory (Burke, et al., 2006). The democratic approach is characterized by an “I share” philosophy. Leaders prioritise change and vision and encourage individual and organisational goals. Followers can develop their leadership skills and participate in leadership decision-making (Bhatti, et al., 2012). Leaders do not decide alone but seek groups’ opinions. Followers are allowed to make their decisions democratically, which leaders then “rubber stamp” (Iqbal, et al., 2015). This style is arguably efficient compared to autocratic leadership (Bushra, et al., 2011). Followers feel involved or have a sense of belonging in the organisation. However, this style is more efficient when employees are fully competent, interested and satisfied; as a result, it improves their performance.

Leadership style has a positive and negative impact on job satisfaction. Employees enjoy working in a friendly environment where they can share and interchange their opinions. Workers communicate with their leaders courageously, creating a sense of ownership among the employees, hence giving them satisfaction. According to the study conducted by Bhatti, et al. (2012), leadership style correlated with job satisfaction, indicating a highly significant relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction in terms of their standard connection. Employees seek more job satisfaction when their score on the democratic leadership style is high. Hence it can be concluded that leadership style benefits the employees’ satisfaction and quality improvement (Bhatti, et al., 2012). Democratic leaders are theoretically the best type of leaders (Iqbal, et al., 2015). Democratic leadership style is the most effective, concluded Lewin, et al. (1939, cited in Bhatti, et al., 2012); however, Smith and Peterson (1988, cited in Bhatti, et al., 2012) stated that the success of group leaders is reliant on the standard which was being used to evaluate leadership. Therefore, if leadership is evaluated in terms of productivity, then the autocratic style is the most effective; however, if it is evaluated in terms of maintaining good morale and a stable level of work, the democratic style is the most effective. The democratic style gives employees discretionary power to conduct their duties, hence their performance is better when compared to the autocratic leadership style (Iqbal, et al., 2015). Democratic leadership style improves performance in both the short and long term and can be used for any type of work.

2.4. Leadership styles and employee performance at Umgeni Water

Umgeni Water leaders practice different leadership styles, and it sometimes depends on the situation that a particular division or organisation is facing. Different leadership styles as well inspire employees differently. The organisations offer development programmes such as Assisted Education, Young Professionals, Toastmasters and internal learning programmes. These interventions can be translated into transformational leadership styles. The organisation also considers performance management through individual performance contracts and appraisals and overall organisational performance through Auditor General. So the annual performance bonuses are paid out to the qualifying individuals provided the individual, division and organisation have achieved the key performance areas and met the targets. This can be translated into a transactional leadership style. At some point, the organisation will request employee views and suggestions in providing names for a specific project and the buildings, which may then translate to democratic leadership styles to a certain extent. The study objective is to find the most dominant and preferred leadership styles influencing employee performance at Umgeni Water.

Umgeni Water comprehends that organisational performance stems from individual performance. The organisation uses policy to manage and control employee performance. This policy aims to set out parameters along which the individual performance of employees is planned, monitored and evaluated (Umgeni, 2020). To ensure the achievement of Umgeni Water's strategic goals (recognising good performance and managing poor performance effectively). The performance management policy applies to all permanent employees of Umgeni Water, including fixed-term contract employees and Graduate Trainees. Umgeni Water's performance management system provides feedback and coaching to individual employees concerning their job performance. Individual performance appraisals are formally conducted twice within a performance cycle (for example, in January/February and July/August).

Performance management final score, the total of Individual, Divisional and Organisational scores, is one of the conditions determining the payment of an annual bonus for all qualifying employees. The final performance management score also determines the salary increase for managers. The performance rating scale used by Umgeni Water means a five-point rating of 1 to 5 – as shown below:

1. Not meeting all the standards
2. Meet some of the standards

3. Meet all the standards
4. Meet all and exceed some standards
5. Meet and exceed all standards

2.5. Conceptual Framework

Different researchers have provided numerous definitions of leadership and its significance in an organisation. Generally, leadership has been perceived as a transaction between a leader and subordinates. Also, it had been described as a process of persuading people towards a specific goal. Leadership style is a combination of traits, characteristics, skills and behaviours a person exhibits. Leadership styles are also influenced by different situations encountered by the organisation.

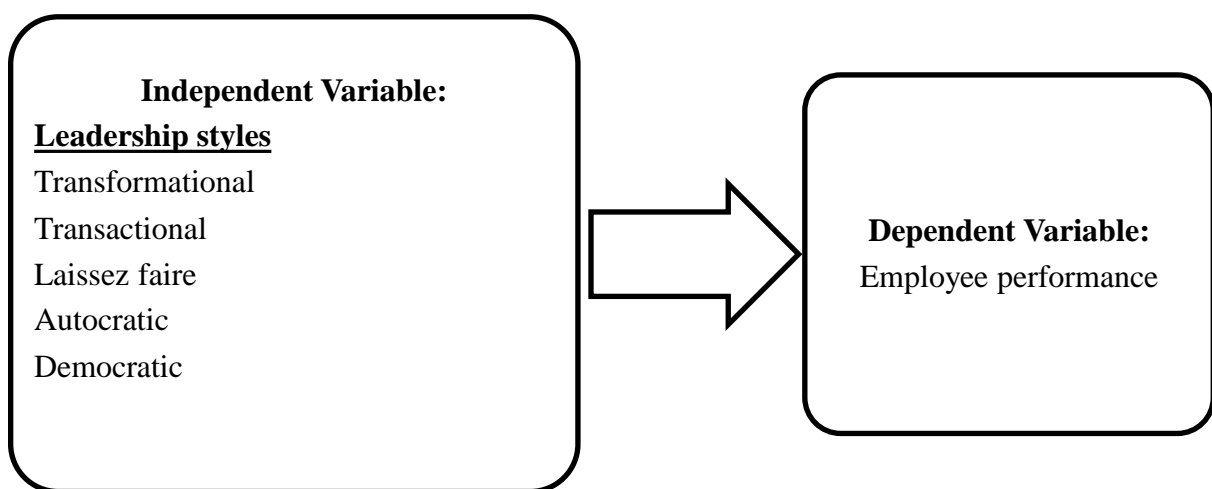


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The study sought to find different types of attributes of transactional leadership presented by Umgeni Water to its employees and employee performance is affected. To evaluate whether employees are motivated by rewards offering or whether the absence of rewards affects their performance. The study also seeks to gain insight into how the attributes of transformational leadership affect employee performance at Umgeni Water. Understanding the extent of laissez-faire leadership in Umgeni Water and how it affects the performance of employees is also part of the study assignment. Furthermore, the study sought to understand how autocratic or authoritative leadership affects employee performance at Umgeni Water, to know how coerced the employees feel and how this improves or reduces their performance. Lastly, the study sought to understand how democratic leadership affects employee performance. Whether the sense of involvement and ownership reduces or improves employee performance. The

contextual data to be collected to gain more insight into the research included the following factors; age, gender, race, education levels and the division where the responded is employed.

2.6. Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to analytically review existing literature on the correlation between leadership, leadership style and employee performance. To meet the research objectives. This chapter also discussed the factors that influence employee performance, the qualities of different leadership styles, and their impact on employee performance. An insight into leadership theories was provided. It is evident from the literature that these concepts have been researched systematically. The literature indicated a positive link between job satisfaction, leadership style and employee performance. However, the existing research lacks a link between individual perception of job satisfaction fundamentals and individual motivation towards excellent performance. More research needs to be done in South Africa on leadership styles and their impact on employee and organisational performances, particularly in the Water Boards. Hence, this study aims to bridge that rift in research by identifying the currently applied and preferred leadership style(s) in reaching performance goals. This study also intends to reveal the factors influencing employee performance tailored to Umgeni Water.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology is discussed with a focus on the research design and its components (population, sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data preparation). The discussion focuses also on the description of the demographic variables and the composite variables used in the study's data analysis. The discussion of the variables and their composition was considered important to comprise an elaborate presentation of the variables to contextualise the results presented in the data analysis. An elaborate procedural explanation of factor analysis which was utilized in the creation of the three composite variables measuring employee experience, leadership styles and work environment is presented. This includes the factor analysis procedure, correlation pattern analysis and prediction of scores to create the composite variables. Finally, the data analysis is discussed as the Statistical software(s) employed, the ethical considerations, validity and reliability and methodological limitations of the study. The chapter summary concludes the discussion of the research methodology.

3.2 Research design

The study was designed as a quantitative research study employing statistical modelling at a descriptive and inferential level to assess the nature of the relationship (impact) between leadership styles and employee performance. Since both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses as designed in this study sought to assess co-relationships of influence among key variables, the research design adopted was a Correlational Quantitative Descriptive Design. In a correlational descriptive design, there is no attempt made to influence the variables describing the quantities being measured (Baker, 2017). The correlational approach is important as it attempts to measure the strength and direction of the bivariate relationship existing among two variables. By implementing regression analysis, the strength of the influence of each variable on the quantity of interest, in this case, employee performance, can be documented. Correlation analysis is useful as it enables the identification of patterns of relationships and the strength of those relationships. In this research, it is expected that more accommodative leadership styles are positively associated with better employee performance.

The importance of correlation analysis and its importance in this study can be argued furthermore from the nature of the three key variables being assessed. The study collected Likert Scaled Data points on composite attributes measuring job satisfaction, leadership styles, and perspectives of employee ideal work environment. The three quantities cannot be measured

unitary, therefore a composite number of attributes were collected using a rating system of the importance, the research participants associated with each measured attribute. The researcher would expect similar attributes to be grouped and this requires examining the correlations among the attributes. This method of assessing correlations and thus implementing a descriptive correlational approach to reduce dimension and describe the pattern of relationship among composite variables termed “Factor Analysis” is implemented and aligns with the adopted research design.

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 Sampling Method

There are two main types of sampling design: probability and non-probability sampling (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). Probability sampling is considered when the sample representative is to be used for a broader generalisation of findings. “Probability sampling is associated with survey research to make inferences from your sample about a population to answer your research question(s) and to meet your objectives. Non-probability sampling provides alternative techniques to select samples which include an element of subjective judgement” (Saunders, et al., 2016, p.276). The difference between probability and non-probability sampling are tabulated as follows:

Table 1: Probability and non-probability sampling designs

Sample design	Description	Advantage	Disadvantage
Probability sampling			
Systematic sampling	Every nth element in the population is chosen to start from a random point in the sampling frame.	Easy to use if a sampling frame is available.	Systematic biases are possible.
Simple random sampling	Each member of the population has an equal opportunity of being involved in the study sample.	High generalisation of findings eliminate sampling bias.	It is not very easy to achieve (such as time, effort and money). Not as efficient as stratified sampling.

Stratified random sampling	<p>The population is first divided into meaningful segments.</p> <p>A researcher divides the population into sub-groups, for example, low-income, medium and high-income groups. Then sample units are then selected from the subgroups.</p>	Most efficient among all probability designs.	Stratification must be meaningful—more time-consuming than random and systematic sampling.
Cluster sampling	<p>Groups that have heterogeneous members are first identified.</p> <p>Sampling units are not individuals but groups such as hospitals or schools.</p>	In geographic clusters, the costs of data collection are low.	The least reliable and efficient among all probability sampling.
Area sampling	Cluster sampling within a particular area or locality.	Cost-effective. Useful for decisions relating to a particular location.	It takes time to collect data from an area.
Double sampling	The same sample or a subset of the sample is studied twice.	Offers more detailed information on the topic of study.	Original biases, if any, will be carried over, and individuals may not be happy responding a second time.

Non-probability sampling			
Convenience sampling	The most easily accessible members are chosen as subjects. The researcher chooses the closest live persons as respondents.	Quick, convenient and less expensive.	Not generalizable at all.
Judgement sampling	Subjects were selected based on their expertise in the subject investigated. The participants are chosen according to the researchers' judgment, bearing in mind the purpose of the study.	Sometimes, the only meaningful way to investigate. Only those individuals that are relevant to the research design are selected.	Generalizability is questionable; not generalizable to the entire population.
Quota Sampling	Also known as dimension sampling. Subjects are conveniently chosen from targeted groups according to some predetermined number or quota.	Very useful where minority participation in a study is critical.	Not easily generalizable.
Snowball Sampling	Also called "chain referral sampling," the sample is collected in various stages. This sampling method is most useful when there are few methods to secure a list of the population or when the population is inscrutable.	It is cost-effective. It is quicker to find samples.	Sample hesitant subjects Sampling bias and margin of error Lack of cooperation

Source: Sekaran and Bougie, 2020; Showkat and Parveen, 2017

This study used a probability sampling design. All elements of the population were given an equal chance to participate in the study. A survey participation invite with a questionnaire link was sent to the selected participants via email. A simple random sampling method was employed to ensure an equivalent opportunity for inclusion. According to Sekaran and Bougie

(2020, p.237), “a simple- random sampling procedure is recommended in the case where policy is formulated for the company as a whole”.

3.3.2 Population Of The Study

The study objective was to give the research population an equal opportunity of selection to answer the study questions. Generalising study outcomes from the sample to the total population requires probability sampling (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Such characteristics reduce the levels of bias and sampling errors. It also increases the confidence level that the study sample is an actual depiction of the total population.

This study employed questionnaires as its research method. The aim was to give participants liberty and time to confidently state their views and feelings without intimidation. A questionnaire allows participants to create time and reflect before responding to the questions in the questionnaire (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). The research population in this study was limited to Umgeni Water employees who had access to emails from lower-level, middle and senior management. These employees chosen by the researcher were believed to be key in the organisation's operational and technical processes, management and decision-making. The study population that the researcher had to conduct the study was 1039 employees who have access to computers. The researcher was permitted to approach the employees through the Human Resource Department at Umgeni Water.

3.3.3 Sample Size And Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan’s guidelines, as outlined in Table 2, for sample size decisions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). The table is applicable for a confidence level of 95% and a margin error of 5%. A 95% confidence is the conventionally acceptable level for most business research (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). It was impossible to conduct a study using the whole population of Umgeni Water. Hence, the researcher chose the direct employees as the sample signifying the total population of the organisation. To get a representative sample for the study, a simple random sampling method was employed to get the employees who were studied. The researcher sent the survey to a sample of 200 respondents, drawn randomly from a pool of 1039 Umgeni Water staff acquired through the Human Resource Department.

Table 2: Sample Size for a given Population Size

Population size	Sample number	Population size	Sample number
10	10	220	140
15	14	230	144
20	19	240	148
25	24	250	152
30	28	260	155
35	32	270	159
40	36	280	162
45	40	290	165
50	44	300	169
55	48	400	196
60	52	500	217
65	56	600	234
70	59	700	248
75	63	800	260
80	66	900	269
85	70	1000	278
90	73	1100	285
95	76	1900	320
100	80	2000	322
110	86	2200	327
120	92	2400	331
130	97	2800	338
140	103	3000	341
160	113	5000	357
180	123	7000	364
190	127	9000	368
200	132	10000	370

Source: Sekaran and Bougie, 2020.

The sample size guidelines above were derived from the formulae for determining needed sample sizes by Krejcie, R.V., and Morgan D.W. (1970)

$$s = \frac{x^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + x^2 P(1 - P)} \text{ (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020).}$$

Where;

s = required sample size.

x = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level of 3.841.

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 to provide maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

Since these direct employees are permanent staff and have been at the company for at least a year, the researcher considered them fit to represent the entire study population at Umgeni Water. They also had a reliable assessment of the leadership styles employed and an insight into their performance on the job and with their subordinates. The 200 employees selected randomly through the Human Resource Department from a pool of 1039 included managers and employees at different levels from different divisions. A link to the research questionnaire was sent to the randomly selected 200 employees simultaneously.

3.3.4 Construction of the instrument

The questionnaire was carefully formulated without ambiguity, therefore, ensuring that there was no confusion. It was designed for respondents to navigate easily. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used. Open-ended questions allowed the respondent to respond fairly and were used for additional insights and information. Open-ended questions were the most basic version of quantitative data collection (Moser and Korstjens, 2018). Scales were used for closed-ended questions to assist the researcher with coding and, therefore, enable mathematical methods to analyse collected data.

Since the questionnaire was administered electronically, QuestionPro was used to capture the questionnaire. QuestionPro is a web-based software for producing and dispensing examinations. A questionnaire link was sent to respondents via emails to gather responses, records and analyses them. Therefore, results became available in time. A consent letter was attached to the questionnaire link. The consent letter is requested to gain the respondent's consent and ensures confidentiality and anonymity.

3.3.5. Data collection

This study used questionnaires to collect primary data since it was quantitative research. A questionnaire was planned, a written arrangement of questions to which the respondent answered. Although there were various ways of directing questionnaires, it includes personal (face-to-face interviews), mail and electronic. This study used electronic questionnaires since it is cost-effective, fast, easy to administer, turnaround time is fast, and respondents could respond on their own time. There was no restriction regarding age, gender, race, level of management, and designation when distributing questionnaires. The participants were reached through the company's internal emailing system. The data collection timeframe was projected to be four weeks, this was designed to allow more participants to respond to the questionnaire.

To ensure that more responses were received and respondents do not lose interest and focus, the questionnaires were constructed such that it does not take longer than 10 minutes to complete. Upon survey questionnaire completion, the results were automatically collated for analysis.

3.3.6. Data Preparation

In investigating the impact of leadership styles on employee performance using Umgeni Water as a case study, the data used in the analysis in this study was created using participant responses from an online survey conducted using the QuestionPro platform¹. The participant responses were downloaded from the QuestionPro online platform upon completion as an excel file for data cleaning in preparation for statistical analysis. The task of data preparation was to remove any errors, transform the data schema into a format easy for analysis, and remove non-complete cases (rows) and cases with at least 50% omissions from the raw data. The target sample size proposed using sample size guidelines proposed by Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) was 200 cases selected from a pool of 1039 employees who were randomly selected to participate in the online survey.

The raw data from the QuestionPro platform had identifier variables such as auto-generated response identifier, response status, timestamp country code, region and so forth, which were not useful to the analysis in this study, these were removed from the data. There were empty or blank rows coded with a response identifier, yet only viewed by the participants and with no responses to the questions, these were excluded from the excel file. Other errors included dual responses, to a single question, particularly with Likert Scaled questions, the survey coded the

¹ <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/quantitative-research/>

responses as column variables, making the possibility of multiple responses where one response was expected. Since there existed no strategy for identifying the preferred participant's response, all cases with such conflicts were expunged from the sample size. Cases also with at least 50% missing data, that is the participants who did not respond to at least 50% of the survey questions, were excluded. This was required due to the statistical procedures utilized in the analysis which would not accommodate a higher percentage of missing values.

The resulting dataset was reduced to 80 cases, that is 40% of the proposed sample size was used to create the estimation sample with complete cases used in this study. Cases with at most 20% missing in the data, were retained, although there was no attempt made to use imputation to replace missing values, the case-wise deletion was used during analysis to remove missing values from the statistical computations. The decision not to utilize multiple imputations on missing values was based on the need to exclude the possibility of adding any parametric bias into the estimation sample, as imputed values are based on computed estimates of parameters such as average values (mean), medians or most frequent values (mode) which may not represent the true estimate of the variable's distribution.

The reduced sample of 80 cases was retained and used in the study, despite 60% attrition after data preparation because the resultant sample was acceptable as it met the minimum assumptions for performing robust statistical estimation in correlation and regression analysis which require minimum sample sizes of 50 observations (Krefis, et al., 2010; Bujang, Sa'at and Bakar, 2017). The reduced sample size for the estimation sample in this study implies that the results cannot be generalized but must be contextualized to the experiences of the 80 participants whose data were used for estimation in this study, although the methods employed in this study have merit and influence for future research studies.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of deriving meaning, patterns and trends from data. This empirical study was quantitative in approach; mathematical and statistical methods were used to analyse the primary data derived from questionnaires. The results presented in this study to answer the main research questions were computed using the STATA version 17 software for data analysis. STATA offers facilities for performing descriptive and inferential statistical analysis including factor analysis, bivariate correlation analysis and a variety of regression models, and enables the incorporation of survey design into the analysis. The software was used to perform bivariate descriptive analysis focusing on relationships between 2 variables and examining the

associations between them. Typically, descriptive analysis of this form investigated the distribution of the average values of constructs of employee performance, leadership styles and ideal work environment among the demographic profiles of the employees. Inferential analysis was conducted using regression analysis to model the influence of leadership styles on the 3 measures of employee performance. Statistical significance was established by assessing the reported estimated parameter at the 5% level of significance. The results were presented with the associated probability values demonstrating statistical significance. The results are presented under themes from the research questions with tables being used to present statistical findings due to ease of interpretation. The findings aligned with each research objective were examined and discussed.

3.4.1. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability measure the instrument's accuracy and consistency. The data collected was measured to ensure its validity and reliability. Validity is the generalisation of the measured score to the study population (Bolarinwa, 2015). According to Creswell (2014), the validity of the study refers to the extent to which the answers were dependable, credible, confirmable and transferable. Reliability is when data collection and analysis methods produce reliable results (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

This study used Cronbach's alpha test to determine validity and reliability, usually used in Likert scale questionnaires for internal consistency checks. Cronbach's Alpha helps determine the reliability since it measures the internal consistency of items involving a scale (Adeniran, 2019). Cronbach's Alpha was established to discover an independent way of measuring the internal consistency reliability of an instrument used in a research study. According to Tavakol & Dennick (2011), Cronbach's Alpha method of measuring reliability is mainly used in studies that have multiple-item measures of concept. The nearer the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the units in the scale will be. The Cronbach's Alpha value generally ranges between 0.0 and 1.0. A value of 0.0 means no consistency in measurement, while a value of 1.0 depicts perfect consistency (Adeniran, 2019). The acceptable range is between 0.70 and 0.90 or higher, depending on the type of research. Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70 is acceptable for exploratory research, while 0.80 and 0.90 are acceptable for simple research and applied scenarios respectively (Temilade, 2015). When the alpha scale ranges between 0.65- 0.80, it is considered acceptable (Vaske, Beaman and Sponarski, 2017). The number of items used usually affects the estimated reliability. The value of 0.5 or less could be due to the low number of questions or lack of interrelations between

items. A value of 0.9 or higher could be due to the redundant items in the instrument used (Temilade, 2015).

The formula for Cronbach's Alpha is

$$\alpha = 1 - \frac{kr}{(1+(k-1)r)} \quad (\text{Adeniran, 2019})$$

Where;

k is the number of indicators or number of items.

r is the mean inter-indicator correlation.

3.5. Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration is important to ensure participants' rights and dignity is protected, as well as for the protection of the study's integrity. Ethics is the moral and professional obligation of each researcher to be ethical, even when research participants are uninformed of or unconcerned about ethics (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). According to Vos and Meganck (2009), research ethics refers to a well-recognized set of moral principles that describe the ideal conduct expectations towards those that participate in the research study.

Given this, the study participants were not subjected to any harm or forced to participate. The dignity of the participants was prioritized, and full consent was obtained before the commencement of the study. Vos and Meganck (2009) noted that anonymity must be guaranteed and maintained to ensure that participants are divulged information without worrying about privacy, confidentiality and prejudice. Questionnaires were completed anonymously to protect the respondent's privacy. Confidentiality of the research data was ensured by not collecting any personal details or information that could potentially link responses to participants. Data collected were not shared with any third parties. Misleading information or misrepresentation of primary data findings in a biased way will be avoided. Ethical clearance (HSSREC/00004763/2022) was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's research ethics committee before the commencement of data collection. This also includes obtaining gatekeeper's letters from the organisation under study. The participants will not be deceived in any way to obtain information for this research.

3.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the research methodology that this study used. The chapter has also indicated that the study used a quantitative research approach. The sampling and data collection method, data preparation and data analysis that was used were presented. This study selected electronic questionnaires as the instrument used for data collection. This chapter indicated that Stata version 17 would be used for data analysis. The information on the population, selection of the sample, and how validity and reliability were maintained was also provided in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter presented a discussion on the ethical considerations of the study and its relevancy to the progressive stages of the study. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

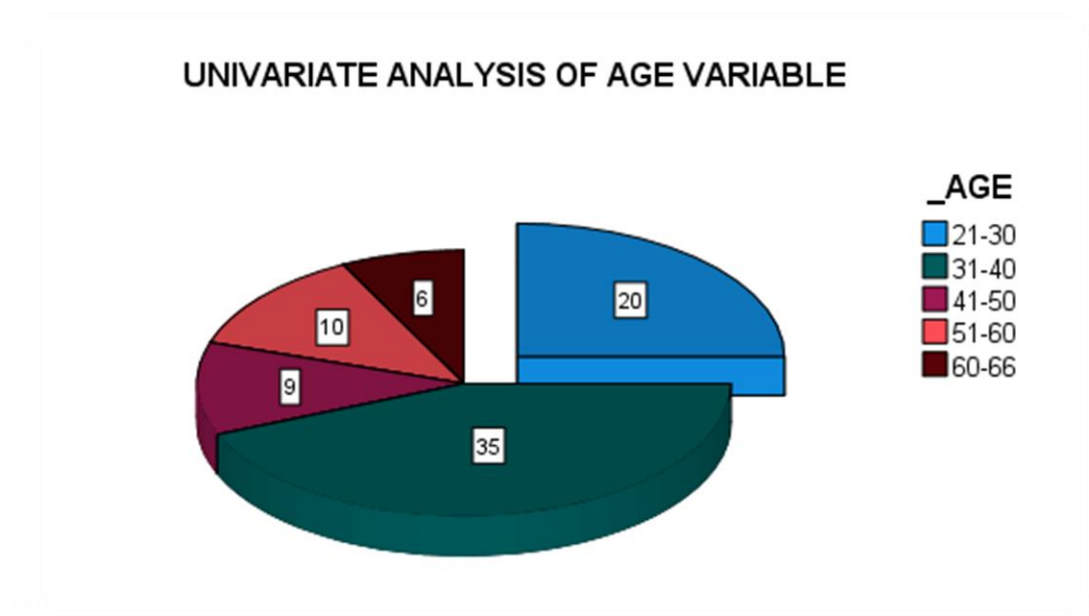
In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented and discussed under three themes related to the research questions, factors influencing employee performance, leadership styles in the organisation and the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. Under each theme, the presentation of the findings focuses on the core variables of the analysis, employee performance, leadership styles and ideal work environment. The results concerning themes 1 and 2 are based on descriptive analysis while the results presented on theme 3, are based on the multiple linear regression modelling of each of the constructs of leadership styles on each of the constructs of employee performance.

4.2 Variables description and preparation.

The analysis focused on two sets of measurements termed variables, which were the basis for the data analysis employed in finding answers to the questions posed in this research study. The first set of variables were descriptive variables, viz, age of the employee, gender of the employee, level of education of the employee, work department placement and population grouping (race). The second set of variables were composite variables measuring job satisfaction, leadership style and perspectives of ideal work environment among employees.

4.2.1. Demographic Variables

4.2.1.1. Age

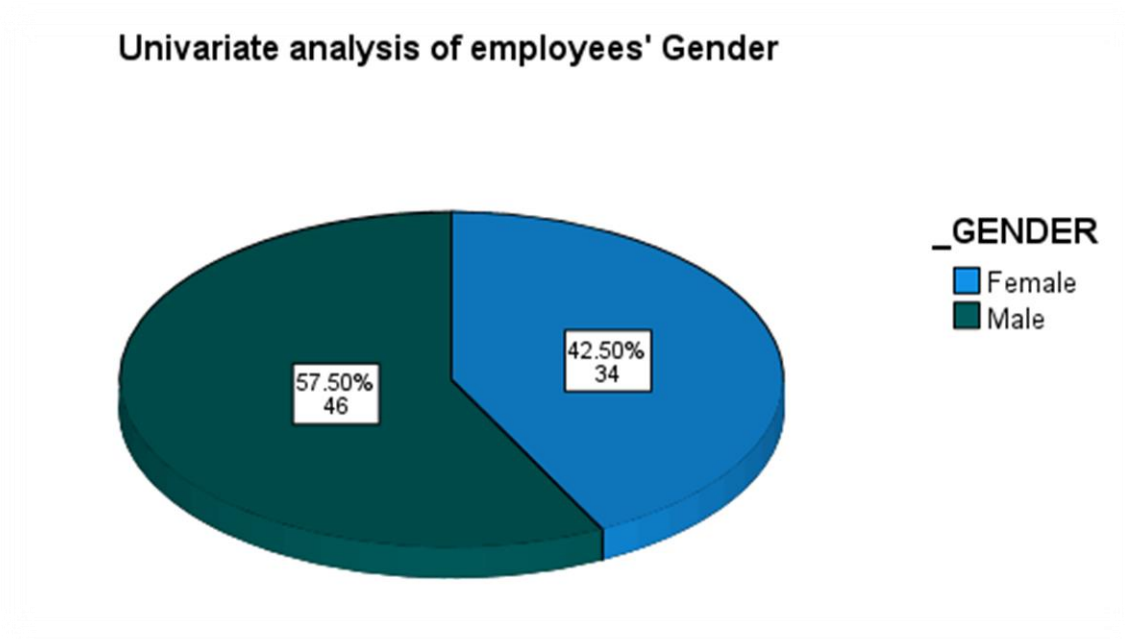


Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Figure 2: Univariate analysis of age.

The variable age was a 6-level nominal variable coalescing information about the different age groups of the employees at Umgeni Water who participated in the study. The age groups were split into evenly spaced 10-year bins from 21 years to 60 years. The rest of the information in the variable captured ages between 18-20, the young worker cohort and between 61 and 65, the pre-retirement years. The univariate analysis of age showed that there were no employees among the participants aged between 18 and 20, while employees comprising the highest age cohort were a very small percentage of the aggregate participants. A study argued that age is generally unrelated to job performance with absenteeism being higher among younger employees in Europe (Warr, 2020), another study also argued the differential approach to motivators for job performance among different employee age cohorts (Siengthai and Pila-Ngarm, 2016). The design of the age variable in this study was viewed as important in investigating the interplay of these effects observed in international studies.

4.2.1.2. Gender

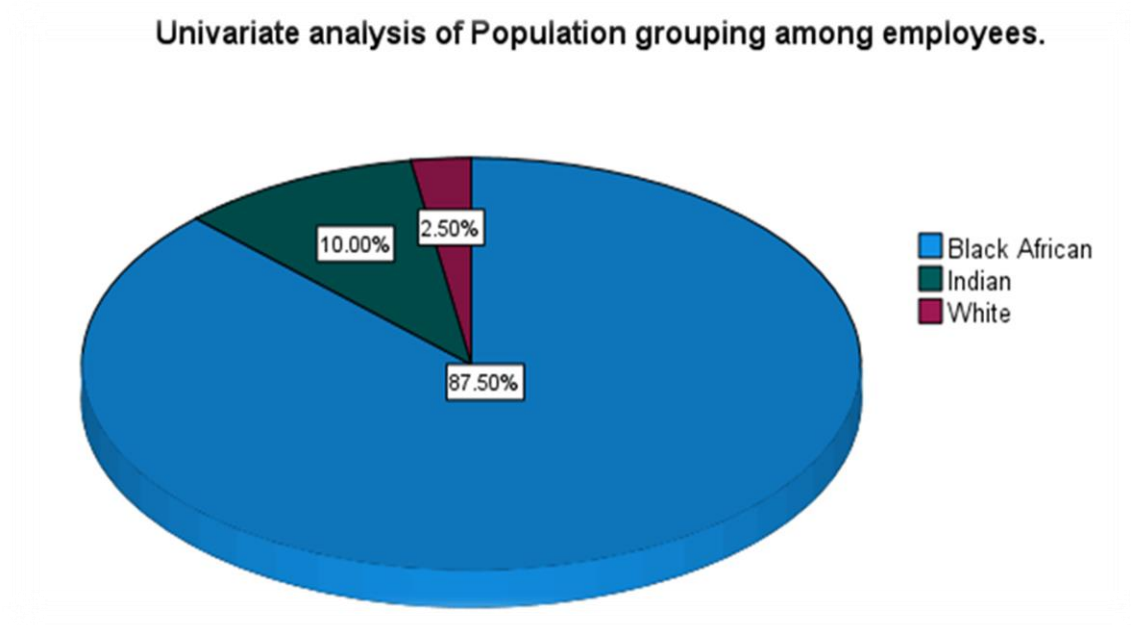


Source: Author calculations using survey data

Figure 3: Univariate analysis of employee gender.

The gender variable was designed using binary identification, essentially categorising employees into two groups males and females. The chart in figure 3 shows that there were more males among the participants in the sample when compared with females. The gender variable was important in the study in assessing the gendered differences in job satisfaction, perspectives on leadership styles and ideal work environment. Given the current debate around masculine work environment design (Silvestri, 2017; Matos, O'Neill and Lei, 2018; Swim, Gillis and Hamaty, 2020), assessing leadership style and its influence on employee motivation from a gender lens was seen to provide important insights into differences as well as points of homogeneity among males and females essential to engaging in this current debate.

4.2.1.3. Population Group Variable



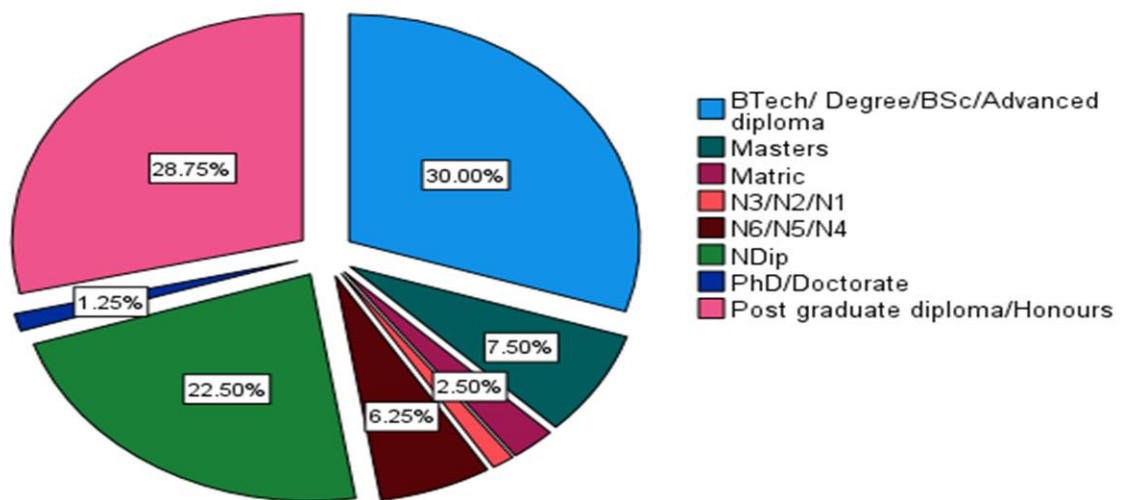
Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Figure 4: Univariate analysis of Population group.

The analysis of the race variable showed that African race group employees made up 87.5% of the sample with the rest of the participants divided between Indian employees (10%) and White employees (2.5%). The observed race distribution implies that the employee performance analysis in this study will be biased towards the perspective of African employees, who are overrepresented among the sample of workers at Umgeni Water. This also will limit the extent to which the recommended interventions from the findings can be implemented since they will not fairly represent the perspective across all groups of workers. Although it was found to be useful in this study to observe differences in attributes of employee satisfaction among different population groups.

4.2.1.4. Univariate analysis of education among employees

Univariate analysis of Educational Levels among Employees.



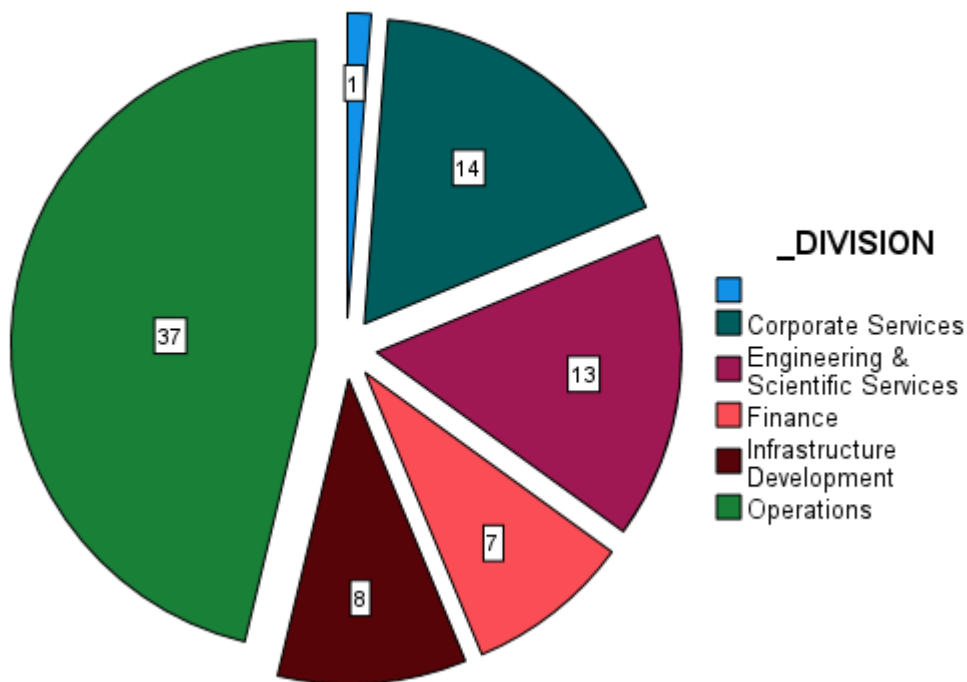
Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Figure 5: Univariate analysis of Education Levels among employees.

The education level variable had 8 levels of education from matric certificates towards tertiary education qualifications. The representation among highly qualified employees in the data was very small as shown in figure 5 above, where individuals with Masters and PhDs were very few when compared to lower levels of tertiary education. A Ghana study found extrinsic motivators being adversely correlated with education levels (Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016), another study found that individuals with higher educational levels, found more satisfaction with increased developmental opportunities and compensation (Devito, Brown, Bannister, Cianci, and Mujtaba, 2016). In line with these studies, in seeking to understand employee motivation, the education level variable was included on sound theoretical grounds.

4.2.1.5. Univariate analysis of Workplace positioning

Univariate analysis of Departmental placement at Work



Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Figure 6: Univariate analysis of departmental positioning at work.

The work-positioning variable was composed of 5 levels based on the work departments at the Umgeni Water plant. These include operations, engineering and scientific services, corporate services, infrastructure development and finance. A study investigating work environment and employee motivation found the important mediating effects of personal characteristics and an indirect relationship between work environment and employee performance (Porter, Riesenmy and Fields, 2016). The work environment was found to be important in another study investigating intrinsic and extrinsic motivators of employee performance (Singh, 2016). In another study, self-determination was found to be an important personal characteristic of highly motivated employees in diverse work designs (Güntert, 2015). In this study, departmental positioning was employed as a proxy for work placement, to observe the correlations between departmental placement and observed attributes of job satisfaction and leadership styles.

4.2.2. Composite Variables: Employee performance, Leadership and Work environment.

The three central variables in the analysis in this study were measurements of employee performance, which in this study was measured through job satisfaction, the measurements of leadership styles and the measurements of the perceived ideal work environment. There exists no unitary measure of three variables, therefore in practice recourse is made to the use of

multiple attributes measuring a theoretical aspect associated with either employee performance, or leadership style of the ideal work environment. A study measuring employee performance focused on attributes such as productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and increased attendance at work (Rodriguez and Walters, 2017). Another study argued the non-existence of a unitary criterion to measure individual performance at work and advocated through confirmatory factor analysis to construct a composite variable using attributes such as productivity, work quality, in-role performance, work quantity, extra-role performance and other measures of effort, management, leadership, interpersonal behaviours, problem-solving and teamwork (Campbell and Wiernik, 2015).

In a review study measuring leadership behaviour and employee well-being, various studies using approaches similar to the latent analysis found a range of leadership behaviours such as social cognitive, motivational, affective, relational and identification, demonstrating the absence of a singular construct in measuring leadership styles (Inceoglu, Thomas, Chu, Plans, and Gerbasi, 2018). A study on the American corporate sector using survey methods modelled leadership styles through multiple identifying attributes based on correlations among attributes (Uzonwanne, 2015). Thus, extant studies have employed a similar methodological approach to measure leadership styles as composite constructs generated from the latent structure of theoretical components of the leadership construct.

In this study, a similar approach is followed in measuring the key variables, although exploratory factor analysis instead of confirmatory factor analysis is used. Thus, employee performance, leadership styles and ideal work environment in this study are composite variables created using exploratory factor analysis and modelled as index variables in this study. The exploratory factor analysis procedure is shown only for the construction of the employee performance variable. It must also be noted that other competitive methods in generating composite index variables exist which could have been used among which are structural equation modelling and latent analysis (Fan, et al., 2016).

4.2.2.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis: Employee Performance

Exploratory factor analysis is a dimension reduction statistical procedure that attempts to identify the latent structure of a set of variables or factors that explain the patterns of correlations within the set of variables (Yong and Pearce, 2013). Using the identified correlations, the variables can be grouped into factors which coalesce a group of variables similarly correlated and explain a specific proportion of the total variance or contribution in mapping the construct. The factors are then transformed into composite index variables and are

usable in various analyses including regression analysis (Yong and Pearce, 2013; Rushambwa, 2022). In implementing factor analysis in this study, the Stata version 17 software for statistical analysis is used.

In generating the variable measuring employee performance, using factor analysis and retaining the first three factors, the statistical results are reproduced in Table 3 below. The results show that the analysis was conducted using an estimation sample of 80 observations. The Likelihood Ratio Test with a Chi-square (χ^2) value of 407.87 and a small probability (p) value of 0.000 shows that the factor analysis model is supported by the data and that the unique correlations among the variables are significant in explaining latent variation at the 5% level. The factor analysis results in Table 6 show that the 17 attributes measuring employee performance, can be explained by the first three factors accounting for a cumulative 93.56% of the total variability. The number of retained factors is determined by the minimum eigenvalue set differently in studies between 0.9 and 1 (Jolliffe, 2002; Krishnan, 2010). The explained variability being high enough implies that the latent dimensions of employee performance are captured in factor 1, factor 2 and factor 3. The next step is examining the correlation patterns by rotating the attributes associated with each factor and evaluating the associated factor loadings (correlations).

Table 3: Factor Analysis Procedure using Stata

Factor Analysis/Correlation		Number of Obs = 80		
Method: Principal Factors		Retained Factors = 3		
Rotation: (unrotated)		Number of Parameters = 48		
Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	4.36524	3.06572	0.6220	0.6220
Factor 2	1.29953	0.39772	0.1852	0.8071
Factor 3	0.90181	0.35156	0.1285	0.9356
Factor 4	0.55025	0.13599	0.0784	1.0140
Factor 5	0.41426	0.09541	0.0590	1.0730
Factor 6	0.31885	0.10459	0.0454	1.1184

Factor 7	0.21426	0.08385	0.0305	1.1490
Factor 8	0.13041	0.06357	0.0186	1.1675
Factor 9	0.06684	0.05321	0.0095	1.1771
Factor 10	0.01363	0.09047	0.0019	1.1790
Factor 11	-0.07684	0.01240	-0.0109	1.1681
Factor 12	-0.08923	0.03183	-0.0127	1.1554
Factor 13	-0.12107	0.01880	-0.0172	1.1381
Factor 14	-0.13986	0.08545	-0.0199	1.1182
Factor 15	-0.22531	0.06394	-0.0321	1.0861
Factor 16	-0.28925	0.02562	-0.0412	1.0449
Factor 17	-0.31487	.	-0.0449	1.0000

LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(136) = 407.87$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Factor Rotation

Factor rotation was applied as shown in Table 4 to show the observed patterns of correlations among attributes describing employee performance. Rotation is used to suppress very small correlations by focusing on correlations between variables of at least 0.3, this makes the relationships among the variables (attributes) to be apparent and enables lucid interpretation of the analysis and the dimensions (Krishnan, 2010). Factor can be observed to be associated with attributes of job satisfaction such as “*rewards for when you go above and beyond...*” (0.7749), “*bonuses*” (0.6806), “*goals set for you that are agreed upon by management*” (0.5253), “*career path guidance and development*” (0.3264), “*recognition for work accomplished*” (0.3302) and “*benefits (medical aid, pension, allowances)*” (0.3234). The attributes describe compensation and factors that influence it with the highest loading in factor 1 being rewards

(0.7749). A composite index variable was accordingly generated which coalesces these factor 1 attributes by their correlations into a single construct and coded “*Compensation*”.

Table 4: Rotation Factor Matrix, Employee Performance.

Attribute/Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Work that challenges you		0.4661	0.3621
Work that allows you to utilise your skills and talent			0.5830
A variety of work (in different competencies)			0.4988
Opportunities to learn new work			0.4913
Self-taught because you are expected to complete whatever work you are given		-0.3384	0.6115
Career path guidance and development	0.3264		
Job security		0.3601	0.4078
Goals set for you that are agreed upon by management	0.5253	0.3661	
Market-related salary			0.3610
Benefits (medical aid, pension, allowances)	0.3234	0.4817	
Recognition for work accomplished	0.3302	0.4531	
Bonuses	0.6806		
Rewards for when you go above and beyond what is expected in your job	0.7749		
Flexibility in working hours			
Relationships with co-workers and supervisor			0.4006

A clean, safe and healthy environment	0.5643
Being treated fairly without prejudice and bias	0.7373

(blanks represent abs(loading)<.3)

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

Factor 2 is observed to be associated with attributes of job satisfaction such as “*fair treatment*” (0.7373), “*health work environment*” (0.5643), “*Benefits*” (0.4817), “*meaningful work*” (0.4661), “*recognition*” (0.4531) and “*employment security*” (0.3601). The attributes concern the qualitative aspects of work, in the perceived way an employee is being treated, the work environment and being recognized, the coded variable was termed “*Fair treatment*”. Since the oblique rotation technique was used in placing attributes to each factor based on patterns of correlations, the overlapping correlations such as attributes 1, 5, 8, 10 and 11 with dual loadings, demonstrate that employees are not only singularly concerned at any particular time with treatment and work environment without considering the associated compensation etc.

Factor 3 is observed to be associated with attributes of job satisfaction such as “*being trusted*” (0.6115), “*work linked to skills*” (0.5830), “*nonmonotonous work*” (0.4988), “*opportunities for learning*” (0.4913), “*employment security*” (0.4078) and “*interpersonal relationships*” (0.4006). These attributes centre around work practices, job design and positionality of the employee within the organisation. The coded construct was termed, “*Job-Design*”.

Using factor analysis, therefore, employee performance was found to be explained by three constructs or index variables coded as Compensation, fair-treatment and job/work design. To assess whether the constructs created using factor analysis demonstrated internal consistency and that the attributes fulfilled the threshold of sampling adequacy, the Cronbach Alpha and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO measure of sampling adequacy) were calculated respectively. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.

Measure	Items	Values
Cronbach Alpha (Unstandardized raw items before factor analysis)	Average interitem covariance	0.1033
	Number of Items in the Scale	17
	Scale reliability coefficient	0.8268
Cronbach Alpha (unstandardized items) predicted variables after factor analysis (constructs)	Average interitem covariance	0.3067
	Number of items in the scale	3
	Scale reliability coefficient	0.6566
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy	Overall Statistic	0.7588

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

The results in Table 5 show that the number of items measuring employee performance totalling 17 demonstrate internal consistency and are a closely related set of items measuring a specific construct with an alpha value of 0.8286. In statistical theory (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011), the minimum acceptable Cronbach alpha statistic is 0.7, with the computed statistic showing very high internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha was also computed to observe if unidimensionality existed among constructs generated from factor correlations and as shown in Table 8, the Cronbach alpha statistic is 0.6566 and below the acceptable thresholds. This demonstrates that the index variables capture different dimensions of the employee performance construct. Finally, the KMO statistic measures how adequate is the data for factor analysis, and assesses sampling adequacy for each item and the complete construct and it returns a value between 0 and 1. KMO values between 0.8 and 1 indicate that sampling is adequate. KMO values less than 0.6 indicate inadequate sampling and a need for remedial action. Values between 0.7 and 0.79 are considered moderate and acceptable and do not require remedial action (Dziuban and Shirkey, 1974). In Table 8, the KMO value is 0.7588 which is considered acceptable. Thus, the constructs generated to explain employee performance, coded as Compensation, Fair Treatment and Job Design are considered statistically reliable and demonstrate internal consistency and sampling adequacy in this study.

4.2.2.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis: Leadership Styles

A similar procedure as explained above was used in the construction of constructs identifying leadership styles. The step-by-step approach is not replicated, although the discussion about rotation and categorisation of attributes and construction of new variables is discussed and presented. The measures of internal consistency and sampling adequacy are computed and presented. The factor analysis procedure on the 16 items measuring the leadership construct in the study revealed 2 dimensions with an aggregate 82.55% contribution to the explained variation in the construct. In Table 6 below, the pattern of correlations among items is investigated following oblique factor rotation.

Table 6: Rotated Factor Items, Leadership styles.

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2
Your manager motivates you to perform	0.4800	
Your manager influences your performance through support, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration	0.6165	
Your manager uses rewards to get you to perform well	0.4140	
Your manager gives you little or no guidance regarding your work		0.4438
Your manager has taken the time to get to know you, your talents, skills and aspirations	0.5830	
Your manager and you have a strictly professional relationship as communication is about work solely		
Your manager is impatient, unreasonable and unapproachable		0.5898
Your manager helps you work to the best of your ability	0.5805	
Your manager gives you the freedom to get the job done	0.3498	
Your manager assists in highly pressured situations	0.4048	
Your manager regards you as incompetent		0.7889
Your manager feels you need close supervision else you will not work satisfactorily		0.8382

Your manager recognises and acknowledges your ideas and explains if they won't work	0.5377	
Your manager mentors you, for example, helps you to find, develop and nurture your skills	0.7004	
Your manager's leadership has a positive effect on your performance	0.5438	
Your manager's attitude towards you has a positive effect on your performance	0.3889	0.3571
(blanks represent abs(loading)<.3)		

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

The results of factor rotation showing the correlation patterns among items describing leadership show Factor 1 as associated with attributes such as “*Your manager mentors ...*” (0.7004), “*your manager influences your performance...*” (0.6165), “*your manager has taken time to get to know you...*” (0.5830), “*your manager helps you work to the best...*” (0.5805), “*your manager's leadership has a positive...*” (0.5438) and “*your manager recognises and acknowledges...*” (0.5377). These attributes explain a leadership style in which the leader motivates and encourages his/her subordinates, coded, “*Democratic*”. Factor 2 is associated with attributes of leadership such as “*your manager feels you need close supervision...*” (0.8382), “*your manager regards you as incompetent*” (0.7889), “*your manager is impatient, unreasonable...*” (0.5898), and “*your manager gives you little or no guidance...*” (0.4438). The shared attributes load more on factor 1 when compared to factor 2. Factor attributes describe an alpha-type leadership persona, coded in this study as “*autocratic*”. Thus, factor analysis of leadership style yielded two dimensions factor 1 and factor 2 and post evaluation of the correlation patterns and the nature of attributes, 2 composite index variables coded “*Democratic*” and “*Autocratic*” were created. These were used in the subsequent analyses.

Table 7: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.

Measure	Items	Values
Cronbach Alpha (Unstandardized raw items before factor analysis)	Average interitem covariance	0.3689
	Number of Items in the Scale	16
	Scale reliability coefficient	0.8227
Cronbach Alpha (unstandardized items) predicted variables after factor analysis (constructs)	Average interitem covariance	0.3160
	Number of items in the scale	2
	Scale reliability coefficient	0.5462
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy	Overall Statistic	0.7417

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

The Cronbach alpha statistic calculated for the 16 items measuring leadership styles was demonstrated as significant and acceptable being greater than 0.8. The leadership construct thus demonstrates very high reliability or internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha significantly falls when calculated for the construct variables generated using factor analysis to 0.5462, showing that the two variables are unique and not closely related as a set. Thus, factor analysis is demonstrably unique in constructing unique dimensions measuring observed leadership styles. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy statistic in Table 7 is 0.7417, showing that the data is acceptable for factor analysis without requiring remedial actions due to inadequate sampling.

4.2.2.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis: Ideal work environment.

The factor analysis of the 15 items measuring perceived ideal work environment among employees as Umgeni yielded 2 dimensions contributing 88.34% of the total explained variability among the items measuring ideal work environment in the study. Implementing the oblique factor rotation procedure yielded the results in Table 8 below which shows the observed correlation patterns among the items in the construct.

Table 8: Factor Rotation, Ideal Work Environment.

Variables/Attributes	Factor 1	Factor 2
Your manager would make time for you, encourage and motivate you to do your best	0.5198	
You work best when your manager keeps pressurising you by checking your progress every few minutes		0.5478
Your manager offers assistance, guidance and training whenever needed	0.5748	
You work best when your manager outlines procedures, and outcomes and explains exactly what you need to do and how it fits into everything else		0.3223
Your manager would be understanding when issues/concerns are raised (personal or otherwise)	0.6090	
You work best when you experience job satisfaction		0.5204
Your manager recognizes and acknowledges the contributions that you make and explains if they do not work	0.5777	
You work best when you are rewarded		
Your manager would strive to make your working environment comfortable	0.5731	
You work best when your manager simply gives you work and a deadline and leaves you to fill in the blanks		
Your manager communicates effectively with patience and understanding	0.6461	
Your managers know you personally	0.6113	
Your manager would not be biased concerning gender and academic qualification		

You work best when you have a challenge or rather an opportunity to show your capabilities 0.6259

Your manager would adapt their leadership to suit the prevailing situation

(blanks represent abs(loading)<.3)

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

From the results in Table 8, Factor 1 is associated with attributes such as “*your manager communicates effectively...*” (0.6461), “*you work best when you have a challenge...*” (0.6259), “*your managers know you personally*” (0.6113), “*your manager would be understanding...*” (0.6090), “*your manager recognises and acknowledges...*” (0.5777), “*your manager offers guidance, assistance...*” (0.5748), and “*your manager would strive to make...*” (0.5731). These attributes describe an accommodative environment, with training and space for personal growth and development, and the construct was accordingly coded as “*Accommodative*”. Factor 2 is associated with attributes of an environment where “*there is constant managerial supervision*” (0.5478), “*there is job satisfaction*” (0.5204) and “*managers outline procedures and clarify expectations*” (0.3223). The dimension of the ideal work environment measured using factor 2 was coded as “*Supervised*”.

Table 9: Assessing internal consistency and sampling adequacy.

Measure		Items		Values
Cronbach (Unstandardized raw items before factor analysis)	Alpha	Average	interitem	0.4251
		covariance		
		Number of Items in the Scale		15
		Scale reliability coefficient		0.7813
Cronbach (unstandardized predicted variables after factor analysis (constructs))	Alpha	Average	interitem	0.2684
		covariance		
		Number of items in the scale		2
		Scale reliability coefficient		0.5347

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy	Overall Statistic	0.7442
----------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------	---------------

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

The Cronbach alpha for the 15 items measuring the construct of the ideal work environment of 0.7813 is below the threshold of very high internal consistency, which requires at least 0.8. However, the computed alpha of the 2 composites is 0.5347, below the minimum acceptable threshold, showing that the 2 constructs representing dimensions of the perceived ideal work environment in the study captured only dimension with unique variance. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy with a value of 0.7442 demonstrates statistically that the data and the sampling are suitable for performing factor analysis without any remedial action being needed on the data.

4.3. The Results

4.2.1. Objective one: To identify the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water.

Table 10: Employee performance Constructs.

Compensation	Fair Treatment	Job Design
Rewards for when you go above and beyond what is expected in your job	Being treated fairly without prejudice and bias	Self-taught because you are expected to complete whatever work you are given
Bonuses	A clean, safe, and healthy environment	Work that allows you to utilise your skills and talent
Goals set for you that are agreed upon by management	Benefits (medical aid, pension, allowances)	A variety of work (in different competencies)
Benefits (medical aid, pension, allowances)	Recognition for work accomplished	Opportunities to learn new work
		Job security
		Relationships with co-workers and supervisor

The results presented in Table 10 are from a descriptive analysis of correlations among attributes associated with each factor, with the correlations being the product of factor analysis discussed in chapter 3. The results show that employee performance is influenced by three factors which are compensation, fair treatment, and aspects of job design, with compensation being the most important factor. The average values of these three factors were evaluated across employee age groupings, employee gender and employee race.

- **Employee Performance across employee age.**

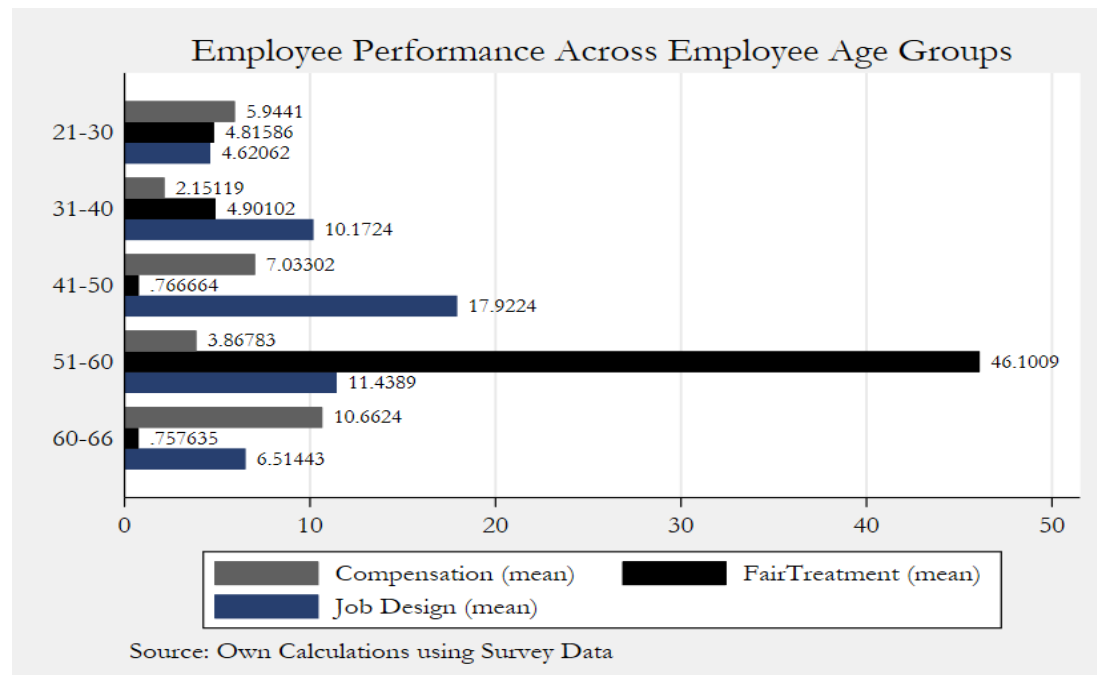


Figure 7: Employee Performance across employee age.

Table 11: Employee Performance across Age Groups.

Employee Age Groups	Statistics	Compensation (log values of mean)	Fair Treatment (log values of mean)	Job Design (Log values of mean)
21-30	Mean	5.944	4.816	4.620
	Sd	10.6	7.58	7.15
	CV	1.78	1.57	1.55
	F	20	20	20
31-40	Mean	2.151	4.901	10.172
	Sd	3.96	11.362	21.446

	CV	1.84	2.31	2.11
	F	35	35	35
41-50	Mean	7.033	0.767	17.922
	Sd	12.846	0.958	34.814
	CV	1.83	1.25	1.94
	F	9	9	9
51-60	Mean	3.868	46.101	11.439
	Sd	5.344	120.508	14.60
	CV	1.38	2.61	1.28
	F	10	10	10
61-66	Mean	10.662	0.758	6.514
	Sd	11.682	1.099	5.30
	CV	1.1	1.45	0.81
	F	6	6	6

Source: Author calculations using survey data.

In Figure 7, the mean values of the composite indexes' compensation, fair treatment and job design across the employee age categories are presented. For each index, the average value (mean) is reported, and the standard deviations and frequencies are presented in table 11. In the data, the employees aged between 21 and 30 years totalled 20 individuals and had a mean value of 5.94 for compensation with a standard deviation of 10.6, showing high variability in the importance of compensation as a factor influencing performance within this age category. This high variability is demonstrated by the high coefficient of variation of 1.78. The mean values of compensation for the age range 41-50 and 60-66 are 7.03 and 10.7 over a total of 9 and 6 individuals respectively. The coefficients of variation for the 41-50 and 60-66 age groups are 1.83 and 1.1 respectively. The importance of Compensation as a primary factor of employee performance seems highest for the 60-66 age range, the 21-30 and the 41-50 with very high variability among the individuals within each age category. Thus, the importance of compensation does exhibit a strong deterministic factor of performance as individuals approach retirement years.

The mean values of fair treatment as a factor influencing employee performance are greater for employees in the age range 51-60, with very high variability among the individuals within this age group as demonstrated by the coefficient of variation of 2.61 (Table 11). Comparable mean values for Fair Treatment are very low for other age groups. The importance of job design in Figure 7 exhibits an increasing trend in mean values from age ranges 21-50, then declines in

the age ranges 51-60 and 61-66. This seems to demonstrate the cycle of work, where in the lower age ranges, younger employees are still developing their careers and developing job experience and focus increasingly on job design as their experience grows and transitions between jobs. However, at ages above 50 job design does not seem to be important as individuals have become more settled in their careers and hence job types, while competition from younger age categories eliminates space for bargaining over job specifications hence the decline in importance as shown by lower mean values.

- **Gendered profile of Employee Performance**

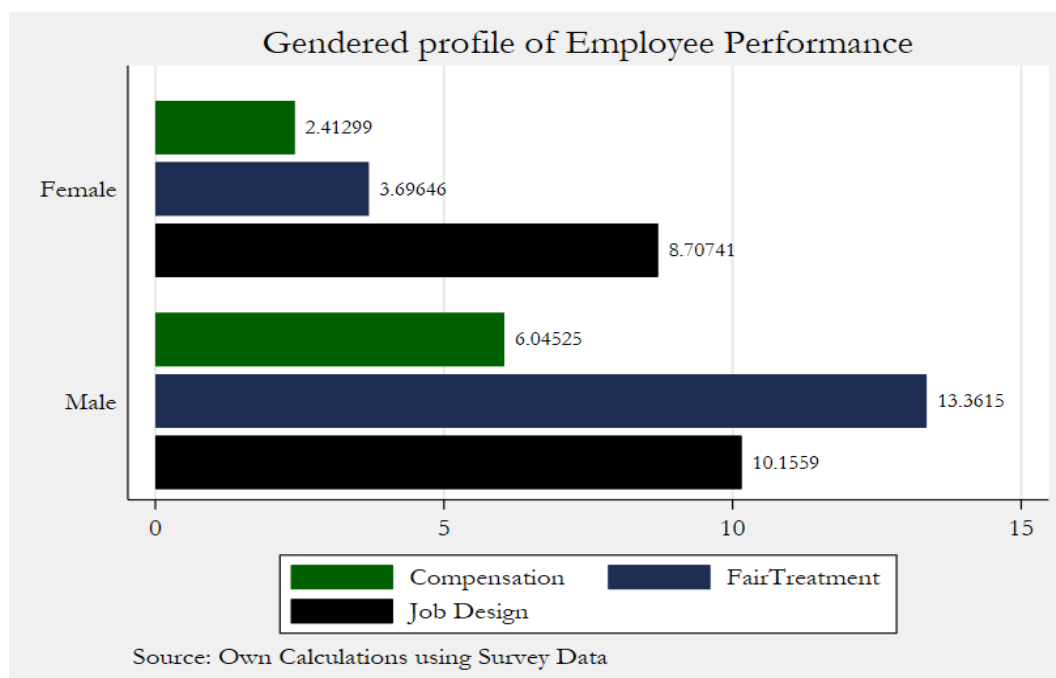


Figure 8: Gendered profile of Employee Performance.

Table 12: Gendered Profile of Employee Performance.

Employee Performance Construct	Male	Female
Compensation	6.045	2.413
	9.82	5.080
	(1.62)	(2.11)
	46	34
Fair Treatment	13.361	3.696
	57.50	6.27
	(4.30)	(2.04)
	46	34
Job Design	10.156	8.707
	23.16	12.79
	(2.28)	(1.47)
	46	34

In Figure 8, the three constructs measuring employee performance (compensation, fair treatment, and job design) are assessed in their mean values over gendered employee profiles. The figure shows that males have comparatively higher mean values when compared to females across all constructs of employee performance. Given the representation of males and females in the estimation sample (46 and 34 respectively), these results indicate that males place more emphasis on compensation, fair treatment and job design when compared to females. This is against the background of individuals participating in the study and responding based on their work experience at Umgeni Water.

- Employee performance over educational level.

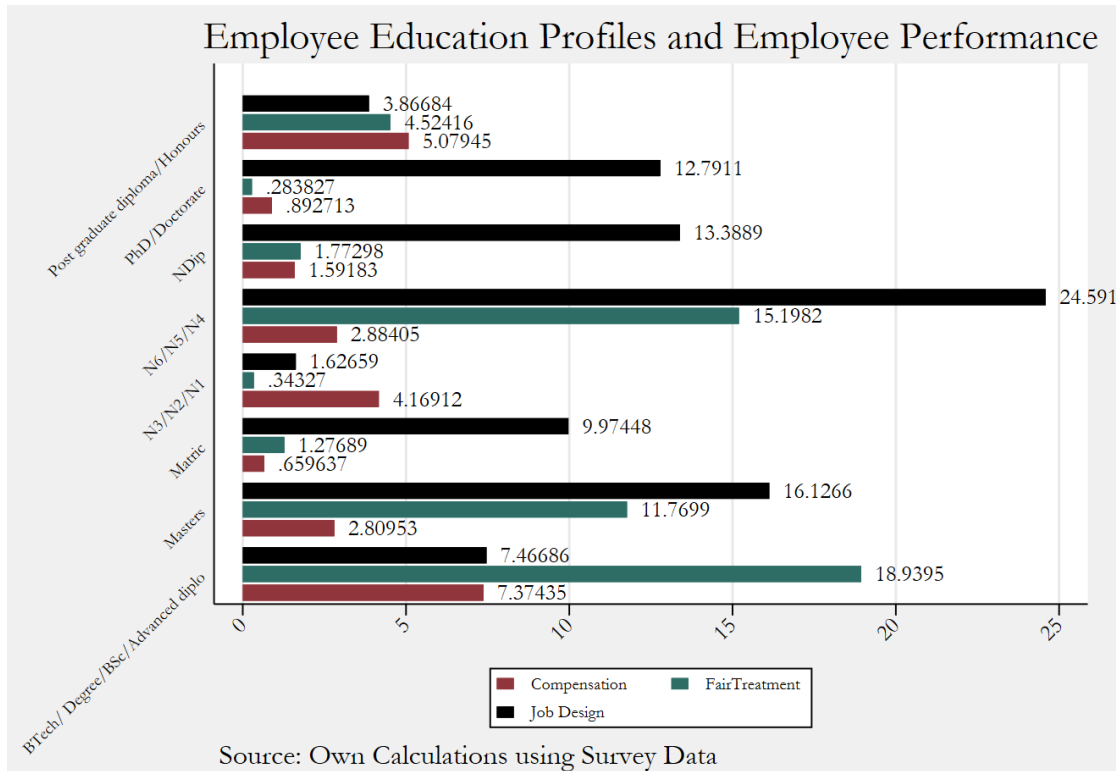


Figure 9: Employee performance over educational level.

Table 13: Employee performance over educational competency.

EMPLOYEE EDUCATION LEVEL	COMPENSATI ON	FAIR TREATMENT	JOB DESIGN
Matric Certificate	0.660	1.277	9.974
	0.367	1.806	14.001
	2	2	2
N3/N2/N1	4.170	0.343	1.627
	0.000	0.000	0.000
	1	1	1
N6/N5/N4	2.884	15.200	24.591
	2.94	19.23	47.076
	5	5	5
National Diploma	1.592	1.773	13.389
	2.306	3.55	28.29
	18	18	18

BTech/Degree/BSc/Advanced	7.374	18.939	7.467
Diploma	10.45	78.409	8.781
	24	24	24
Post-Graduate Diploma/Honours	5.079	4.524	3.867
	10.28	7.61	6.151
	23	23	23
Master's Degree	2.810	11.770	16.127
	3.14	25.53	18.63
	6	6	6
PhD Doctorate	0.893	0.284	12.791
	0.000	0.000	0.000
	1	1	1

In figure 9, metrics of employee performance were assessed over the educational levels of the employees in the sample. Individuals with low levels of education, which is below the postgraduate level of study seem to be more concerned with fair treatment when compared to individuals with much higher levels of education, based on the reported mean scores on the chart. This is found to be true also of job design when the mean values across all levels of education are assessed.

Thus, it can be concluded that employee performance when assessed in its three constructs in this study of compensation, fair treatment and job design, varies over dimensions of employee age, gender and educational levels. Fair treatment and compensation seem to be important factors driving employee performance for older employees when compared with the younger employee cohort. Gendered analysis shows that males are more concerned with compensation, fair treatment and job design when compared with women. Finally, fair treatment and job design are influenced by educational levels, which may be attributed to the fact that as one's level of education increases, the level of specialization increases as well thus eliminating the concern with job design as well as fair treatment.

4.3.2. Objective two: To investigate the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation.

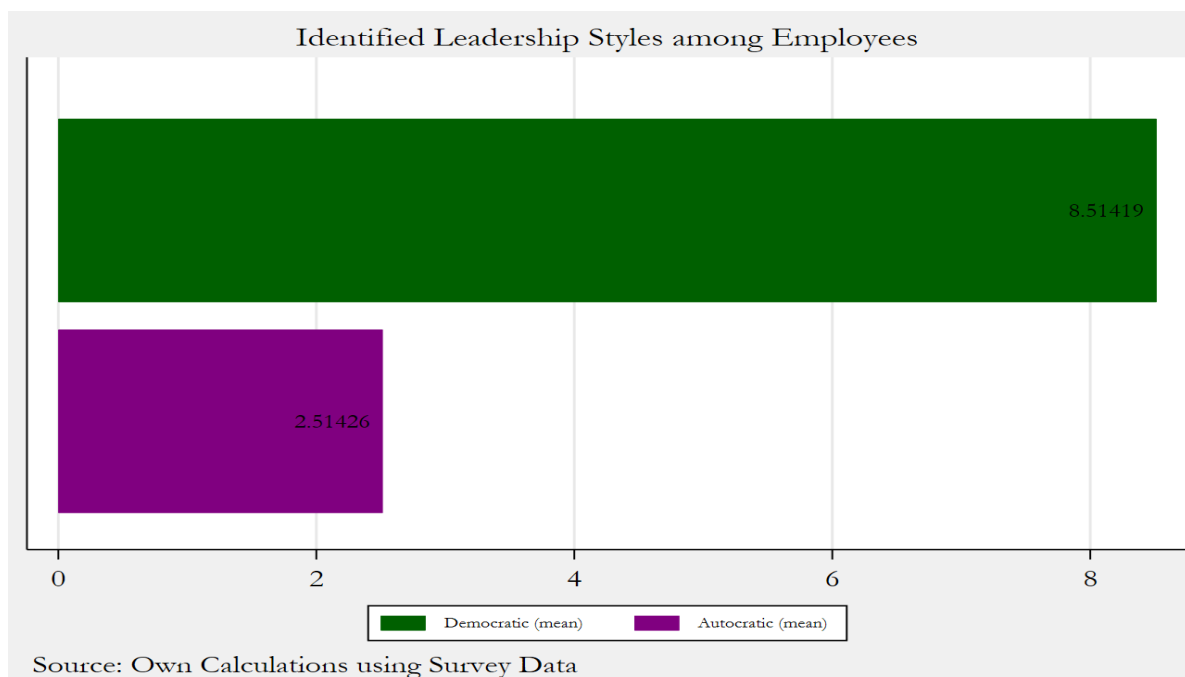


Figure 10: Identified Leadership Styles.

The analysis of preferred leadership styles among employees at Umgeni Water revealed 2 dominant leadership styles, the highly represented democratic style and the less represented autocratic style of leadership. This representation was characterized by the distribution of the mean values with the democratic style having a higher mean value of 8.51 against the autocratic style having a mean value of 2.51. The representation does not suggest mutual exclusivity since the responses were from the same group of participants but rather suggests situational considerations in leadership style preference, where the democratic style of broadly preferred over multiple situations while the autocratic style is seen to be preferable in some situations.

- Comparing leadership style preferences among employees by age

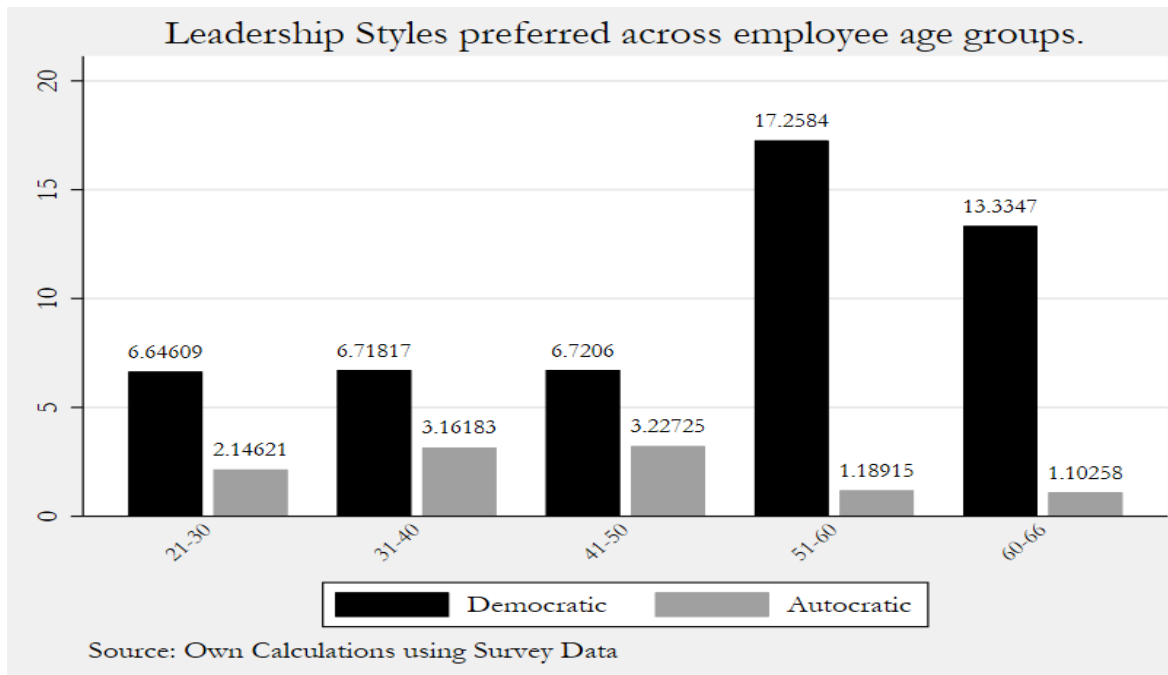


Figure 11: Comparing leadership style preferences among employees by age.

In figure 11, the results of the comparison of leadership styles among employee age groups are presented. While the democratic style of leadership is broadly popular, it can be observed that higher values are associated with the older employee cohort than the younger employee cohort. It is also observed that while the autocratic leadership style has broadly lower mean scores, they are slightly higher for the younger employee cohort, which could be characteristic among less experienced employees who may require constant supervision and administration.

- **Leadership Style preferences by employee Gender and Racial Group**

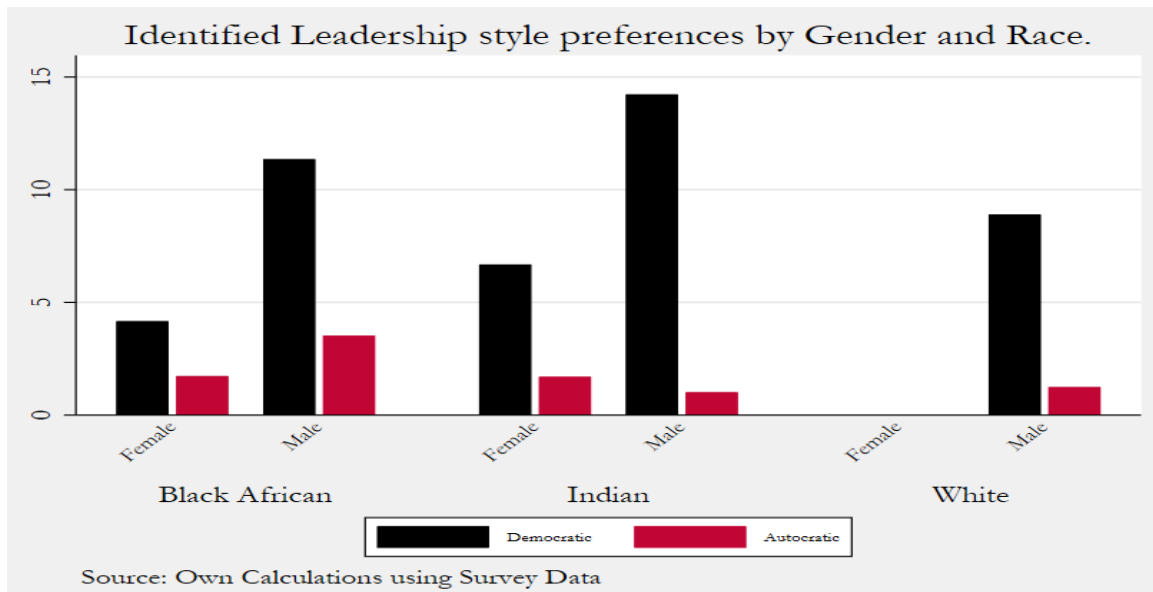


Figure 12: Leadership Style preferences by employee Gender and Racial Group.

In figure 12, mean scores of leadership styles are compared across gender and racial groups. Three racial groups were characteristic of the sample, and there were no white females among the sample of participants. While the democratic style of leadership can be seen to be the predominantly preferred style of leadership among employees, slightly higher mean scores for autocratic leadership can be observed among black african male employees. The sample under consideration has 42.5% female employee representation, with the low mean scores even for democratic leadership style among females being concerning, when compared to mean scores for males. In a study of leadership style preferences across three industries, healthcare, finance and pharmaceuticals, the democratic leadership style was found as most preferable among males and females (Cunningham, Salomone and Wielgus, 2015). This agrees with the findings in this study on gendered preferences in leadership styles.

4.3.3. Objective three: To assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.

To assess the impact of leadership style on employee performance, a two-stage analytical approach was adopted, where Pearson correlation analysis was utilised to test bivariate relationships between composite measures of leadership style and those of employee performance. In the second stage, regression analysis was conducted to assess the influence of leadership style on employee performance. The results are presented in statistical table below.

Table 14: Correlation/Covariance analysis between Leadership styles and Employee Performance.

Leadership styles versus employee performance	Statistic	Democratic Leadership Style	Autocratic Leadership Style
Compensation	Correlation (Covariance)	-0.0766 (0.0685)	-0.0643 (0.0161)
Fair Treatment	Correlation (Covariance)	0.0936 (0.0370)	0.1483 (0.1321)
Job Design	Correlation (Covariance)	0.2315 (-0.0494)	-0.0763 (-0.0118)

In Table 14, the results of the correlation (strength of association between variables) and covariance (co-influence between variables are presented). The correlation statistics overall show that as measured in this study, the metrics of employee performance and leadership styles are weakly correlated. All the statistics and measures of association are below 0.5 and the measures were not significant at the 5% level. A study on leadership styles and job satisfaction in the Lithuanian higher educational sector found a positive impact of leadership style on job satisfaction (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). As discussed in the research methodology, the composite measures for employee performance (Compensation, fair treatment and job design) in this study were derived from measures of job, therefore a positive relationship is expected between leadership styles and employee performance. Another study on the Pakistan banking sector showed a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance outcomes (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016).

4.3.3.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

Since factor analysis had created three constructs explaining employee performance. The multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the influence of leadership style on employee performance, where three separate regression models were run with the three constructs; Compensation, Fair Treatment and Job Design as dependent variables and constructs on democratic and autocratic leadership styles as explanatory variables. The results are displayed in the three tables as follows:

Table 15: Regression Analysis, Leadership styles on Compensation.

Characteristic	Beta	95% CI¹	p-value
Democratic	-0.04	-0.19, 0.10	0.55
Autocratic	-0.09	-0.46, 0.27	0.62
Accommodative	-0.02	-0.10, 0.07	0.66
Supervised	0.07	-0.12, 0.25	0.47
¹ CI = Confidence Interval			
<i>Survey Data</i>			

The analysis in Table 15 reports the multiple linear regression analysis of the impact of leadership styles on compensation. The variables capturing work environment were included and the overall analysis shows that the coefficients (Betas) on the constructs of leadership styles on compensation are not statistically significant at the 5% level, given the larger p-values. It is thus concluded that based on the sample survey data used in this study, leadership styles do not exhibit any impact on employee performance, that is, on the expected compensation as a driver of employee performance and neither does the ideal working environment. Generally, one would not expect employee expectations of compensation to be influenced by leadership style, since the latter influences work patterns.

Table 16: Regression Analysis, Leadership styles on fair treatment.

Characteristic	Beta	95% CI¹	p-value
(Intercept)	4.1	0.61, 7.5	0.022
Democratic	0.08	-0.10, 0.26	0.39
Autocratic	0.28	-0.16, 0.72	0.21
Accommodative	-0.04	-0.14, 0.07	0.48
Supervised	-0.07	-0.30, 0.15	0.52
¹ CI = Confidence Interval			
<i>Survey Data</i>			

In Table 16 above, the results of the regression analysis of the impact of leadership styles on employee performance focusing on the metric of fair treatment shows better variation. Leadership styles do not in this data have an impact on fair treatment as can be observed from the p-values associated with the coefficients (Beta) which are large, showing no statistical significance. The lack of statistical significance of leadership style on fair treatment is concerning since fair treatment rests largely on the expected relationship between managers and subordinates. A study on the effect of leadership style on employee perceptions of justice showed that all leadership styles impact employees' perceptions of justice (Lau, 2010).

Table 117: Regression Analysis, Leadership style on job design.

Characteristic	Beta	95% CI ¹	p-value
(Intercept)	5.9	0.23, 12	0.042
Democratic	0.26	-0.04, 0.56	0.084
Autocratic	-0.19	-0.91, 0.54	0.60
Accommodative	0.04	-0.13, 0.21	0.66
Supervised	0.03	-0.34, 0.41	0.85
¹ CI = Confidence Interval			
<i>Survey Data</i>			

The results of the analysis of leadership styles on job design are shown in Table 17. It can be observed that at the 5% level, job design is best predicted by a model with no predictors. However, at 10%, it can be observed that a 1 unit change in the score for the democratic leadership style increases the score on job design (employee performance) by 0.26 points to a unit. It can be concluded that based on the existing sample design, the democratic leadership style influences employee performance, most probably through the channel of negotiated job or task set-up that maximizes the employees' skillset. In line with this finding, a study on the effect of leadership styles on employee performance found that democratic leadership style positively influences employee motivation by allowing exchange between leaders and subordinates, such as accepting and receiving inputs from individual team members and employee consultation (Iqbal, et al., 2015).

4.4. Discussion of Results

The results of the foregoing analysis presented in section 4.2, have shown that employee performance varies among employees based on their age groups, gender, and educational status. The construct of compensation as a measure of employee performance was seen to be important as the age of employees increased, which may imply that while compensation may be an important consideration for younger employees, other aspects of work may also be important and exert a larger deterministic influence. A study using multiple regression to assess factors influencing young employee retention found training and development opportunities to be among the priority predictors while compensation had a smaller coefficient (Nguyen, 2020). Another study similarly measuring employee performance as in the present study found work environment and demographic variables to be important determinants of job satisfaction and hence employee performance. Considerations of working environment expected compensation and interpersonal relationships were seen to have a higher coefficient, the higher the recorded age of the study participants (Vrinda and Jacob, 2015). The declining importance of job design among very young employees and much older employees seems to imply limited bargaining power and declining bargaining power among young employees and older employees respectively. Inexperienced workers are usually settling into jobs and improving their skills while garnering experience, which might be the reason for the low importance of job design as a determining element of employee performance. Among the older employees, competition from upcoming experienced employees might be the contributing factor to the low importance of job design. This was also established in a study examining lifespan characteristics of job design, that is the relationship between job design and age. The paper argued that younger employees tend to find fulfilment in complex job designs, while older employees tend to prefer specialised jobs with less complexity (Truxillo, Cadiz, Rineer, Zaniboni, and Fraccaroli, 2012).

In the study, the three constructs of employee performance, compensation, fair treatment and job design were observed to exhibit a disproportionate gendered trend. The three constructs were significantly important for males, with significantly higher average values (Figure 8) when compared with females. Females showed very low mean values for considerations of fair treatment when compared to males, which might imply a negative power balance in which women work in an environment with limited bargaining power. Examining gendered trends in educational attainment in the data, it was observed that males showed higher educational attainment than females, which may explain the disproportionate distribution of constructs of employee performance among males and females. While inequalities in the treatment of women versus males have been observed and pervasive in recent research (Jampol and Zayas,

2021; MacArthur and Dyer, 2021), the analysis in this study seems to explain differences between males and females due to educational attainment differentials with males having slightly higher education levels.

The theoretical review in Chapter 2 argued for various leadership styles including transactional, transformational, laissez-faire, democratic and autocratic leadership styles. The analysis of the sample data using dimension-reducing factor analysis showed the prevalence of democratic and autocratic leadership styles as prevalent among the participants. The methodology of factor analysis as employed has important implications since in factor rotation, oblique as opposed to the orthogonal rotation was used. Oblique rotation allows the possibility of correlations between constructs while orthogonal looks for points where factors have no association. The importance of this observation agrees with the conclusion that participants in the study did not consider a particular leadership style to be unitary. Yet were concerned with a situational approach to leadership where the context determines a combination of both leadership styles, although largely, the autocratic leadership style had very low mean values when compared to democratic leadership. This finding aligns with contingency and situational considerations in leadership strategies where effective leaders employ a mix of leadership strategies dependent on situational considerations (Hunt and Fedynich, 2019). Situational leadership theory contends that leaders can work effectively in any condition by altering their style accordingly.

While democratic leadership was observed as the most preferred leadership style, correlation and regression analysis showed that leadership styles did not have a significant influence on employee performance. Using regression analysis, it was observed except for the influence of democratic leadership on job design, and other constructs are generally non-significant on employee performance as measured. A recent study using a descriptive correlational design to study the effects of leadership styles on employee performance in Pakistan focused similarly on autocratic, democratic, and bureaucratic leadership styles. While transformational and transactional theory find these two leadership styles as the most common leadership styles, with transformational being the most effective in employee performance. The study concluded that institutions can be strengthened by establishing democratic leadership styles that foster understanding and consultation between management and employees (Fiaz, Su, Ikram and Saqib, 2017).

In the analysis of the dominant leadership style at Umgeni Water, it was observed that while the democratic leadership style was predominant, there was an observed preference for autocratic leadership style among employees across all gender and racial categories. This was

observed to be a situational concern among employees, that while democratic leadership is preferred, there is space for autocratic qualities that leadership styles have their context. In a study of the impact of leadership styles on organisational performance, democratic, transformational, bureaucratic and autocratic leadership styles were found to be positively associated with organisational performance (Al Khajeh, 2018).

4.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter comprehensively analysed the data received from 124 respondents. The analysis was completed using Stata version 17 software. 48 Likert-scale statements were used, which were found to be adequate and reliable. Conclusions from this study can be made. However, the findings are contextualised to the population due to the reduced number of respondents who successfully answered the entire questionnaire. This study indicated that job satisfaction is the main factor influencing an employee's performance, particularly compensation, fair treatment and job design. These three constructs varied over dimensions of employee age, gender and educational levels.

In Chapter 4, the results of the data analysis conducted were presented together with the interpretation of the results, explaining the statistics used in the analyses presented. In the first section descriptive analysis compared relationships between key constructs measuring employee performance and leadership styles. In the second stage, regression and correlation analysis were used to investigate the influence of leadership styles on employee performance. In the interpretation of the results, several gaps were filled by a more focused analysis of results using extraneous variables such as demographic variables and constructs measuring environment.

The results uncovered that the organisation predominantly applied the democratic leadership style. The findings further revealed that participants broadly preferred a democratic leadership style over multiple situations, while the autocratic style is preferable in some situations. The findings show that leadership styles have an impact on employee performance. However, the overall correlation measurements indicated that the metrics of employee performance and leadership styles were weakly correlated, which dissociates with the discoveries of other researchers.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The organisational growth necessitates good leadership to ensure customer satisfaction and sustainable service delivery. For the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives, leaders need to influence their subordinates towards achieving the organisational goals. Employee engagement is a foundation of sustainable competitive advantage (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Leadership and employee performance are critical to gain competitive advantage. Umgeni Water has grown from providing services to four District Municipalities to seven Municipalities in KwaZulu Natal (Umgeni, 2020). The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water, assess the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation and assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. This study is, therefore, essential for Umgeni Water to explore the prevailing leadership culture aligned with the vision and mission of the organisation.

This study employed questionnaires as its research method and was designed as a quantitative research study employing statistical modelling at a descriptive and inferential level. The study collected Likert Scaled Data points on composite attributes measuring job satisfaction, leadership styles, and perspectives of employee ideal work environment. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's guidelines, as outlined in Table 2, for sample size decisions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2014). Since the questionnaire was administered electronically, QuestionPro was used to capture the questionnaire. Factor Analysis was implemented to assess correlations and implement a descriptive correlational approach.

The previous chapter presented and discussed the results from the data collected. This chapter reiterate the research problem, research question and objectives. This chapter draw conclusion based on the findings. The recommendations are proposed, limitations of the study and recommendations for the future research are presented.

5.2. Conclusions of the study.

The following conclusions were made:

- Umgeni Water is reasonably diverse in all demographic variables considered. However, the organisation need to improve its race and gender diversity. Most participants were black african and aged between 31-40; this age balance seems to be appropriate as the legal employment age is above 18 years, and the retirement age is 65 years. Many studies have

revealed that diversity is a significant variable that influences creativity in the workplace and, thus, performance.

- Out of 124 respondents, only 81 respondents completed the survey, while 43 dropped out. Umgeni Water should consider educating and encouraging participation in studies as the organisation practically emphasise and support the importance of furthering the studies that eventually contribute to the organisational research and development. This will assist further researchers pursuing research studies within the organisation.
- It can be concluded from the findings that job satisfaction is the main factor contributing significantly to employee performance in the workplace. Job satisfaction was measured by compensation, fair treatment and job design, the most significant component depends on age cohort, level of education, individual priorities and preferences.
- Using factor analysis, it was demonstrated that the data captured only democratic and autocratic styles of leadership based on the responses, therefore the study could not establish the influence (positive/negative) of the transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance. However, democratic leadership typically exhibit similar characteristics as the transformational leadership style. Both leadership styles accentuate a common vision and common goals for the teams as a basis of effective leadership. Both leadership styles are team-first, where the leader focuses on the employee's well-being, rather than himself or herself.
- The results of the multiple regression analysis showed no statistical significance of the influence of the democratic style of leadership on two constructs of employee performance namely, compensation and fair treatment, however, at the 10% level, it was found that the democratic leadership style influences job design due to consultation and therefore employee performance. Therefore, the study established that democratic leadership influences employee performance positively, through the work itself (job design).
- The multiple regression analyses showed that autocratic leadership did not influence employee performance. The coefficients of autocratic leadership on all three constructs of employee performance in the regression analysis showed no statistical significance at the 5% or at the 10% level. Therefore, the study could not establish a relationship between autocratic leadership style and employee performance.

5.3. Recommendations

This study was instrumental in revealing factors influencing employee performance and leadership style preferences among employees at Umgeni Water. While to a large extent, the study failed to establish the expected relational effect of leadership styles on employee performance, several aspects were considered and important both to Umgeni Water and concerning future research studies which are outlined below:

- While gender representation at Umgeni based on participation in this study seems to be balanced, the educational competencies and possibly skill differences between males and females will likely maintain higher male dominance in higher echelons of organisational leadership stifling gender diversity. Organisational platforms for training and development, or inclusion of educational incentives for women to further their educational competencies are useful strategies for transforming the gendered imbalance which manifested in employee performance. Lack of bargaining power among females due to lower educational attainment, when compared to males, might be a salient factor which in future might entrench male dominance and prevent gender diversity in leadership.
- In the data analysis, the two constructs measuring work environment revealed an accommodative work environment and a supervised one. The average score for females on the accommodative construct was significantly higher with a very large variance, whereas for supervised, the construct was higher for males with large variability. The higher preference for an accommodative environment among females is significant and generally paints a picture of the existing gendered dynamics at Umgeni Water. Comparing employee performance and the expected environment for females, gender imbalance exists and negatively affects gender diversity and needs to be addressed.
- The existence of organisational environmental variables and individual differences which in both cases are negatively affecting females demonstrates the need for workplace cultural redefinition, where the need for females' sense of being accommodated can be met, while skills differences can be addressed so that the workplace environment and opportunity space can be more inclusive.
- Prevalent organisational cultural environment: The combination of slightly higher average values for scores for autocratic leadership preference among males, higher differences in education and higher preference scores for supervised work environment among males when compared to females seem to imply a strong male-dominated work environment, with women at a structural disadvantage. While this has not been established in this study as it is outside the scope of the present analysis, evidently requires further research and analysis and if confirmed, cultural transformative training and development are recommended for Umgeni Water. Given the importance of the institution, its sustainability requires a multifaceted approach to decision-making and a culture that promotes equity in participating in better decisions.

- The observed differential influence of employee performance constructs on age and gender is important and should be considered in work design. It was discussed that younger employees are more concerned with gaining experience and job design in honing their skills, while much older employees are more concerned with compensation, specialisation and fair treatment. These aspects can be important considerations if incorporated into work design at Umgeni Water to improve employee performance. It was observed that females largely scored higher average values on the fair treatment employee performance construct. This last point reinforces the foregoing recommendation for the need for cultural transformation at Umgeni Water towards a more accommodative and inclusive working environment.
- The prevailing problems observed in the data with male-dominated work environments, poor gender diversity and stark differences in educational competencies by gender, clearly show the transformative limitations of the observed leadership styles, democratic and autocratic. There is a need for leadership transformation towards transformative direction within the organisation. However, due to the sample limitations of the present study, future comprehensive studies are needed to confirm these identified challenges and develop frameworks for implementing strategies suggested in this study.
- Timeous performance monitoring should be continued so that the declining performance can be observed early and necessary actions are taken. Managers should acknowledge the employee's perceptions of leaders' behaviours and how it relates to performance. Leadership development programs could help gain insight into the relationship between effective leadership styles and employee performance. The research study findings have revealed a complete toolbox of basics that employees consider helpful in achieving optimal performance.
- Training and development departments can use this study's results to improve training programs that precisely support leadership development. The programs can be designed based on employee and organisational requirements to achieve the best from the programs. The organisation's vital source of competitive advantage is leadership; hence, its success depends on its leaders.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The study was affected by design limitations, which in subsequent sections have been highlighted as areas of improvement in future studies. The most important of these listed here are:

- The sample size was reduced after data preparation. This attrition was mainly due to non-response errors in the second set of questions. This issue could have been addressed by running

a pilot sample to test the performance of the survey instrument and remedy the problem appropriately. However, proper procedural approaches were implemented in the study, variable construction and data analysis to ensure that the remaining sample provided accurate results.

- The constructs measuring employee performance were derived as substitutes since it was observed that the instrument did not measure attributes of employee performance directly in the design. The issue was remedied by variable construction in chapter 3. It was demonstrated that this approach was used in several studies, which also found a significant influence of leadership styles on employee performance using multiple regression analysis.
- Due to large-scale attrition and consequent sample size reduction, the study's results are considered exploratory. They cannot be argued to be generalisable as the conditions were undermined by lack of participation. Due to time considerations for the research study, the issue was only remedied by sending reminders and approaching individuals. Hence the study's results and conclusions cannot be generalised to the entire organisation.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

Following the discussion of results, the conclusions, recommendations to practice and limitations discussed above, the following recommendations are important for future research studies:

- Designing a large-scale study to analyse all leadership styles will require survey instruments with a lot of questions. The challenge with that will be a resultant large questionnaire, with an aggravated risk of high non-response error. Such studies must be designed with large time frames allocated for data collection.
- Researchers should use a proportionally stratified sampling method to better understand which leadership style is preferred for achieving performance objectives for each profession.
- Pilot sampling and analysis should be considered early in the research to avoid participation challenges and their implications such as consequent loss of generalisability of the study.
- Researchers should also consider the qualitative research method or mixed approach method to avoid related limitations. Qualitative research methods are less stringent than quantitative methods. Respondents can provide outside-the-box responses to questions, and their opinions and beliefs can be included in data collection and analysis. Richer data can be obtained.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The objectives of this research study have been fully achieved. Despite the limitations of the study, significant findings were discovered. The impact of leadership styles on employee performance requires ongoing research. Although this study indicated the positive influence of job satisfaction on employee performance, more research should be conducted, given the limitations and recommendations discussed above. The study findings discovered a weak correlation between leadership styles and employee performance at Umgeni Water. Hence, numerous recommendations have been put forward. The optimal performance can be increased and sustained if these recommendations can be considered, generating a sustainable competitive advantage. The research study aimed to identify the factors that influence employee performance at Umgeni Water, investigate the leadership styles currently applied in the organisation, and assess the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. This objective was achieved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: INFORMED CONSENT

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(HSSREC)

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: October 2022

Dear Respondent

My name is Hlengiwe Ngcobo, a Master of Business Administration student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal. My email address is 220042633@stu.ukzn.ac.za, mobile number: is 0763323380. You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the topic: “*The impact of leadership styles on employee performance: a case of Umgeni Water*”.

The study aims to evaluate the impact of leadership styles on employee performance at different professional levels. This study is essential to gain insight into leadership and draw up conclusions and recommendations that can be useful in achieving optimal performance levels. It is hoped that the study will provide Umgeni Water leaders with insight into leadership styles' impact on employee performance. The study will also discover the most preferred leadership styles to effectively build optimal attitudes and behaviour towards achieving organisational goals, hence allowing them to introspect and improve. In addition, the study will provide the basis for aspiring leaders and managers to improve their leadership skills. The study is expected to enrol approximately 200 participants, about five to ten employees in each position of all divisions in the organisation. This study will use primary data collected by questionnaires. The questionnaire should take about 10 -15 minutes.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00004763/2022). In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at: 220042633@stu.ukzn.ac.za/0763323380 or 031- 260 8192 (Dr VN Mtembu: Supervisor) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in the study. Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

All data collected, either electronic or hard copy will be safely stored during the study and archived for 5 years. When the 5-year period elapses, all data will be deleted or destroyed. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

CONSENT

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled “The impact of leadership styles on employee performance: a case of Umgeni Water” by Hlengiwe Ngcobo.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study and that participation is voluntary. I have been allowed to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits to that I usually am entitled. I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 220042633@stu.ukzn.ac.za/0763323380. If I have any questions or

concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic details

1. Age (years)

18 -20	
21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-60	
Above 60	

2. Gender

Female		Male	
---------------	--	-------------	--

3. Race

Black African	
White	
Indian	
Coloured	
Other (specify):	

4. Education - What is your highest qualification?

PhD/Doctorate		N1/N2/N3	
Masters		Matric	
Postgraduate diploma/Honours		Other (specify):	
BTech/ Degree/BSc/Advanced diploma			
NDip			
N5/N6			
N3/N4			

5. Division

OPERATIONS	
ENGINEERING & SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	
CORPORATE SERVICES	
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	
FINANCE	

Section B: Job Satisfaction

Using the scale shown below, rate the level of importance of the following regarding job satisfaction:

	Irrelevant	Not important	Neutral	Important	Crucial
Work that challenges you					
Work that allows you to utilise your skills and talent					
A variety of work (in different competencies)					
Opportunities to learn new work					
Self-taught because you are expected to complete whatever work you are given					
Career path guidance and development					
Job security					
Goals set for you that are agreed upon by management					
Market-related salary					
Benefits (medical aid, pension, allowances)					
Recognition for work accomplished					
Bonuses					
Rewards for when you go above and beyond what is expected in your job					
Flexibility in working hours					

Relationships with co-workers and supervisor					
A clean, safe and healthy environment					
Being treated fairly without prejudice and bias					

Section 3: Leadership

Please rate the following concerning your current employment:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Your manager motivates you to perform					
Your manager influences your performance through support, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration					
Your manager uses rewards to get you to perform well					
Your manager gives you little or no guidance regarding your work					
Your manager has taken the time to get to know you, your talents, skills and aspirations					
Your manager and you have a strictly professional relationship as communication is about work solely					
Your manager is impatient, unreasonable and unapproachable					
Your manager helps you work to the best of your ability					
Your manager gives you the freedom to get the job done					

Your manager assists in highly pressured situations					
Your manager regards you as incompetent					
Your manager feels you need close supervision else you will not work satisfactorily					
Your manager recognises and acknowledges your ideas and explains if they won't work					
Your manager mentors you, for example, helps you to find, develop and nurture your skills					
Your manager's leadership has a positive effect on your performance					
Your manager's attitude towards you has a positive effect on your performance					

IN YOUR IDEAL WORK CONDITION:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
Your manager would make time for you, encourage and motivate you to do your best					
You work best when your manager keeps pressurising you by checking your progress every few minutes					
Your manager offers assistance, guidance and training whenever needed					
You work best when your manager outlines procedures, and outcomes and explains exactly what you need					

to do and how it fits into everything else					
Your manager would be understanding when issues/concerns are raised (personal or otherwise)					
You work best when you experience job satisfaction					
Your manager recognizes and acknowledges the contributions that you make and explains if they do not work					
You work best when you are rewarded					
Your manager would strive to make your working environment comfortable					
You work best when your manager simply gives you work and a deadline and leaves you to fill in the blanks					
Your manager communicates effectively with patience and understanding					
Your managers know you personally					
Your manager would not be biased concerning gender and academic qualification					
You work best when you have a challenge or rather an opportunity to show your capabilities					
Your manager would adapt their leadership to suit the prevailing situation					

Your manager would allow you to work at your own pace without the pressure					
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

Comments - Please take this opportunity to share your opinions on anything above

End of Survey – Thank You!

Appendix 3: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER



Improving Quality of Life and Enhancing Sustainable Economic Development

Ref: H Ngcobo Research

Enquiry: Z Dube

Telephone number: 033 3411093

Mrs Hlengiwe Ngcobo

211 Wyebank Road

Kloof

3620

7 March 2022

hlengiwe.ngcobo@umgeni.co.za

Dear Mrs Ngcobo

Re: Application to conduct study research at Umgeni Water

After careful consideration of your application to conduct research at Umgeni Water for study purposes on the **The impact of leadership styles on employee performance: a case of Umgeni Water**. Umgeni Water Research Panel in its meeting held on the 25th February 2022, has approved your application based on the following conditions:

- Submission of ethical clearance from the institution prior to conducting / collect data
- Umgeni Waters' rights will be reserved
- The participant's names, their positions and location will not be mentioned in the study report
- Upon completion of the study, findings and recommendations of the study will be shared with Umgeni Water.

Mr. Zakhele Dube

UMGENI WATER

HEAD OFFICE • P.O.Box 9 • Pietermaritzburg 3200
310 Burger Street • Pietermaritzburg 3201 • Republic of South Africa
Telephone (033) 341-1111 • Fax (033) 341-1084
E-mail: info@umgeni.co.za • Internet: <http://www.umgeni.co.za>

Acting Chief Executive: Mr Moonisani Dlamini

Non-Executive Directors: Z Mathenjwa (Chairperson) • N Chamane • S Shabalala • M Zakwe • V Reddy • W Mapena • T Mthembu • T Nkomo • L Ngcobo • B Zulu • S Badat • M Ndlovu • S Chamane •

Think water, think Umgeni Water

Appendix 4: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



03 October 2022

Hlengiwe Balindile Ngcobo (220042633)
Grad School of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear HB Ngcobo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004763/2022

Project title: The impact of leadership styles on employee performance: a case of Umgeni Water.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 16 September 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

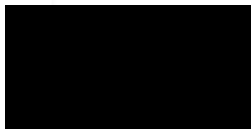
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 03 October 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 5: TURNITIN REPORT

Dissertation - H Ngcobo

ORIGINALITY REPORT

7 %	7 %	1 %	4 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1 %
2	docobook.com Internet Source	1 %
3	www.slideshare.net Internet Source	<1 %
4	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1 %
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