# DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT? EXPLORATORY STUDY OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES WITHIN THE QATAR POLICE DEPARTMENT

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# STUDENT DECLARATION FORM

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**Print name: _____Musaab Jasim Mohammed_____**

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# DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my uncle Abdulwahid Sulaiman Al-Kubaisi, May Allah's Mercy be upon him. He was a friend, counsellor, motivator and supporter of my journey of education and development. He died young, but his spirit and impact will last as long lived legacy in my heart and mind.

I wish he were with me in this end of journey, he would have been pleased and proud.

May Almighty Allah bless his soul in Paradise, and give us the chance to meet again in the other life.

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# ABSTRACT

Given the importance of employee engagement in workplace performance, there is ongoing interest among organisational leaders and scholars in the topics of leadership and employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; MacLeod & Clarke, 2009; Anitha, 2014; Popli& Rizvi, 2016; Saks, 2017). The aim of this study is to explore the role and relative importance of leadership in employee engagement or disengagement in the Qatar Rescue Police and to elucidate the drivers of engagement in an Islamic cultural context as well as the practices that can be implemented to improve employee engagement among employees. The research is based on a qualitative approach, employing interviews and observations in which leaders and subordinates' views are expressed, and their actions are observed. The perspectives of each leader and subordinate were examined and cross-referenced against observations and existing literature, indicating highly variable approaches to leadership and a significant degree of consensus regarding the effects of these varying leadership practices on engagement among subordinates. A unique cultural and religious perspective on the relationship between leaders and subordinates in Qatar was revealed. The study revealed a need for greater sensitivity to context in the approach to leadership as well as a dearth of interaction between administrative leadership and operational personnel. The Islamic view of business hierarchies as being akin to family relationships and the concepts of "brotherhood" and "fatherhood" in leader-subordinate interactions were of particular interest as drivers of engagement. In addition, various organisational limitations were identified, particularly with regard to staffing and financial constraints, highlighting the limitations of operational leadership in the Qatar Rescue Police in fostering engagement through material rewards and employee benefits. At operational level, subordinates and leaders suggested specific non-monetary rewards and practices which could be used to promote engagement despite these organisational constraints. However, a pressing need for improved communication between organisational leadership and operational personnel was identified. The study indicates evidence-based interventions that may be applied to improve leadership practice and employee engagement among subordinates working as first responders in the Qatar Rescue Police and examines attitudes towards accepted drivers of engagement including autonomy, training, supportiveness, even-handedness and personal recognition as suggested by authors such as Mani (2011), Anitha (2014), MacLeod & Clarke (2009) and Sundaray (2011). This research highlights the need to view accepted knowledge through the lens of organisational and cultural context as influenced by Leadership As Practice (LAP) approach which provides

stronger emphasis on context where leadership practices are studied and investigated. Although its findings and recommendations are specific to the Qatar Rescue Police, its conclusions may have relevance to those seeking to understand the role of leadership practices in employee engagement in both private and governmental organisations in the Islamic world.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


STUDENT DECLARATION FORM ..... 2

DEDICATION ..... 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... 4

ABSTRACT ..... 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... 7

LIST OF FIGURES ..... 13

LIST OF APPENDICES ..... 14

Chapter 1 ..... 15

INTRODUCTION ..... 15

1.1 Problem Statement ..... 15

1.2 Aims and Objectives ..... 18

1.3 Study Background ..... 21

1.4 Scope and limitations of the study ..... 22

1.5 Methodology Outline ..... 24

1.6 Structure of the thesis ..... 24

1.7 Defining Key Terms ..... 25

Chapter 2 ..... 27

LITERATURE REVIEW ..... 27

2.1 Overview ..... 27

2.2 Introduction ..... 28

2.3 Conventional Approaches to Leadership Practice ..... 31

2.4 The Role of Employee Engagement in Success of Organisations ..... 34

2.5 Leadership in Context ..... 43

2.6 Implications of Local Values and Context on Traditional Leadership ..... 45

2.7 Illustrating the Challenge ..... 49

2.8 Leadership As Practice (LAP) ..... 54

2.9 The Relationship Between Top Management, Line Managers, and Employees In Qatar .... 60
2.10 Chapter Summary .... 63
Chapter 3 .... 66
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .... 66
3.1 Research Philosophy .... 67
3.1.1 The Interpretivism Philosophical Paradigm .... 68
3.1.2 Researcher's Ontological Perspective .... 70
3.1.3 Researcher's Epistemological Perspective .... 71
3.2 Research Design .... 72
3.2.1 Preferred Research Approach .... 73
3.3 Qualitative Research Designs .... 75
3.4 Phenomenology Research Approach .... 76
3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size .... 79
3.5.1 Sample Technique .... 79
3.5.2 Sample Size .... 80
Field Notes - Observations .... 83
3.6 Data Collection Method .... 84
3.6.1 Interview Protocol .... 85
3.6.2 Observations .... 87
3.6.3 Data Analysis .... 87
3.6.4 Credibility of the Research/ Observational Data .... 90
3.6.5 Pilot Study .... 92
3.7 Ethical Considerations .... 93
3.8 Chapter Summary .... 97
Chapter 4 .... 99
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS .... 99
4.1 Introduction .... 99
4.2 To examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and followers in the Qatar Rescue Police. .... 100

4.2.1 Leaders' Perspective: What is Leadership? ..... 100

4.2.2 Followers' Perspective: What is Leadership? ..... 103

4.3 To explain factors causing subordinates' disengagement towards work, and how these can be addressed from local not Western perspectives ..... 108

4.3.1 Leaders Perspective and Practices: What causes disengagement in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police? ..... 108

4.3.2 Followers Perspective: What causes disengagement in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police? 116

4.4 To explore ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the Qatar police department 126

4.4.1 How can leaders promote engagement? Leaders' perspectives ..... 126

4.4.2 How can leaders promote engagement? Followers' perspectives ..... 139

4.5 To suggest leadership practices suitable for managing the police department ..... 144

4.5.1 Leaders' perspective: what practices are suggested to improve engagement within the Qatar Rescue Police? ..... 144

4.5.2 Followers' perspective: what practices are suggested to improve engagement within Qatar Rescue Police? ..... 146

Chapter 5 ..... 151

DISCUSSION ..... 151

5.1 To examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and subordinates in the Qatar Rescue Police ..... 151

5.2 To explain factors causing subordinates' engagement towards work, from local perspectives 160

5.3 To explore ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the Qatar police department 171

Chapter 6 ..... 175

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 175

6.1 Contribution to Practice and Theory ..... 175

6.2 Recommendations ..... 177

6.2.1 Organisational leadership is recommended to develop and follow an organisation-wide strategy for improved employee engagement ..... 177

6.2.2 Organisational leadership should periodically engage with operational leaders as well as their followers. ..... 178

6.2.3 Instituting a clear framework for leadership practice with the aim of promoting follower engagement and improved performance. ..... 182

6.2.4 Organisation-wide training initiatives for leaders ..... 185

6.2.5 Providing formal training opportunities for followers that empower them to work more effectively and with greater autonomy when performing their duties. ..... 186

6.2.6 Instituting clear guidelines for the provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards 187

6.2.7 Attempting to formulate a uniform policy for the deployment of staff taking cultural context and the nature of the work required into account. Consideration of the concept of more permanent employee partnerships. ..... 189

6.2.8 Access to confidential counselling for constables experiencing family or work-related problems 190

6.2.9 The encouragement of formal and informal opportunities for social interaction between leaders and their followers: “fun” with the workplace family..... 192

6.2.10 Factors not related to leadership per se but having a role in engagement: practical evidence of a need for ongoing consultation with followers..... 193

6.3 Summary and Final thoughts ..... 194

REFERENCES..... 199

APPENDICES ..... 220

Participant invitation email: ..... 220

Participant Information Sheet (31/3/2021): ..... 221

Consent Form:

University of Central Lancashire
UCLan

**Participant consent form**

Version number & date: **6 – 31/03/2021**
Research ethics approval number: ..... Name of researcher: **Musaab Jasim Mohammed**
Title of the research project: ***Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Rescue Police Department***

1. I confirm that I read and understood the information sheet dated [31/03/2021] for the above study. I had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that taking part in the study involves [an audio or video recorded interview]. ☐
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. I am also free to decline to answer any particular question or questions. ☐
4. I understand that if I withdraw from this study data collected prior to my withdrawal will be retained but no further data will be collected. ☐
5. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Central Lancashire. ☐
6. I understand that signed consent forms and [original audio/video recordings/files] will be retained in [possession of the researcher, in his own PC] until [The end of his study]. ☐
7. I understand that the research team will respect my confidentiality and I give permission for them to have access to my responses. ☐
8. I agree that my responses can be quoted in research outputs such as [research papers, university, journals, internal organization's reports and presentations]. ☐
9. I understand that any samples or information given to research groups will be anonymised and my identity will be protected. ☐
10. I understand that my contact information will be collected and retained within the [Pre-Visit Check form] for the purpose of facilitating contact tracing by the Ministry of Public Health, but this information will be destroyed 21days after our last face-to-face interaction. ☐
11. I understand that there is still a potential increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 by attending face-to-face, despite the mitigating actions detailed in the information sheet dated 31/03/2021 to reduce the risk. ☐
12. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
13. I understand that I can ask for specific interactions to be removed by specifying the part to the researcher, specifically relevant to..... ☐

| Participant name | Date | Signature |
|---|---|---|
| Name of person taking consent | Date | Signature |

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Version 6-31/03/21

..... 223

Interview Protocol for Leaders:..... 224

Interview Protocol for Employees:..... 226

Observation activity:..... 235

**LIST OF TABLES**

**Table 1:** Leaders Interviewees' details …… **81**

**Table 2:** Followers Interviewees' details …… **82**

**Table 3:** Observations of Leaders – Followers Interactions …….. **83**

# LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1:** Context-Specific Leadership Practices link to Employee Engagement..... 65

**Figure 2:** Summary of Data Revealed – Context Specific Findings …….. 150

**Figure 3:** Fostering Engagement in Context: Primary Findings VS MacLeod & Clarke's (2009) Drivers of Engagement …… 177

**Figure 4:** Communication Framework for Improved Employee Engagement…..... 180

**Figure 5**: Summary of Data Revealed and Recommended Practices ….....… 196

# LIST OF APPENDICES

- **Participant invitation Email**
- **Participant information sheet**
- **Participant consent form**
- **Interview guide and questions (leaders)**
- **Interview guide and questions (followers)**
- **Interview transcript example**
- **Observation field note example**

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has recently come to the forefront of leadership discourse as an important foundation for achieving organisational goals while enhancing both innovation and competitive advantage (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Although employee engagement is an important component towards enhancing organisational success, questions regarding how to realise this outcome in practice remain a challenge to practitioners. This is especially true when attempting to build employee engagement in non-Western organisations like public institutions in Qatar, where traditional approaches to building worker engagement may not be as effective due to the difference in cultural and social norms that operate in these environments. While a plethora of studies, including those authored by Kahn (1990), Anitha (2014), Breevart et al. (2014), Popli and Rizvi (2016), Saks (2017) and Sundaray (2011) explore employee engagement from a Westernised or Non-Islamic context, a significant number of them examined either leaders in an organisation or those that are being led, rather than considering the relationship between these two positions and the organisational structure in which they operate.

This premise serves as the foundation for engaging in the current research project, which will examine the role of leadership in shaping employee engagement within the context of the Qatar Rescue Police. This chapter includes background information about the topic, as well as the problem statement, research aim and objectives, and the scope and limitations of the study. A brief introductory account of the research methodology is also highlighted here to substantiate the chosen method for the current study. The chapter concludes with a review of the structure of the thesis, followed by definitions of key terms used within the context of this study**.**

### 1.1 Problem Statement

The nexus between leadership and employee engagement has been explored over the years in scholarly studies sparked by Kahn's (1990) first recorded use of the term "employee engagement." Since this conversation is still being debated among scholars, this suggests that the impact of the relationship between leaders and their subordinates on their engagement and hence organisational outcomes is of importance, hence the ongoing interest in the subject

matter. However, the importance of this relationship seems to have been ignored in the last few decades (O'Neill et al., 2015), particularly among organisations in the Middle East.

A recent study (Al-Sada et al., 2017) revealed that effective leadership leads to the achievement of three major outcomes among firms in Qatar, particularly in the contexts of job satisfaction, motivation, and gaining employees' trust and commitment. Even though employee engagement has been defined in several ways, these three outcomes give a sufficiently inclusive description of what is meant by employee engagement. However, effective leadership in militaristic organisations such as the Qatar Rescue Police may differ significantly from what is effective in private firms or even governmental organisations with a more "civilian" approach.

To date, leadership remains a highly contested area of study, and one of the most researched concepts (Walker, 2006) among management scholars. But while most leadership research focuses on Western organisations as well as organisations operating in Westernised countries, the Arab Gulf region in the Middle East, often referred to as GCC, is yet to witness a proliferation of leadership studies, particularly in the public sector. Of particular concern is the fact that recommendations and policy implications resulting from Western leadership studies may be irrelevant in context, or may require adaptation to achieve relevance to organisations operating in the Middle East (Ly, 2020), particularly countries within the GCC region. Drawing inferences from studies conducted outside of the Qatari context with the intention of applying them to the functioning of government organisations such as the Qatar Rescue Police may therefore produce inconsistent or misleading results.

In support of this, Biygautane et al. (2017) stated that Western ideologies may not reflect the cultural and moral tenets of the Gulf region, thus making it difficult to implement reform practices of any sort despite the best intentions of the governments in the region. Furthermore, fiscal policies in GCC countries, whose economies depend heavily on oil, are impaired due to a decrease in oil prices. Hence, the application of findings might have implications on other sectors of the economy if their implantation requires increased government expenditure. In addition, findings from studies based on literature alone may not have explored leadership practices in the GCC region and may not be fully relevant to national and cultural contexts within the region or to the specific government departments to which they are applied.

Under the transactional model of leadership, tangible factors such as salaries and benefits are often utilised as a foundation for engaging workers in the workplace (Anitha, 2014). Although these may not be the sole source of employee engagement, salaries and job security represent significant issues that contribute to the development of proactive staff behaviours. These behaviours ultimately translate to job retention (Anitha, 2014). In the Gulf region, however, budgetary limitations within government institutions may limit their applicability. This poses challenges for those occupying leadership positions, as well as those who are being led, hence the need to critically review the concept of leadership in the Qatar Rescue Police to determine the degree to which organisational limitations such as budgetary constraints impair engagement and in order to determine how leadership practices may be employed to mitigate disengagement and promote engagement.

A recent study (Al Haj, 2017) identified some commonly practised leadership principles in Qatar by examining the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employees' motivation at the workplace. Findings from the study revealed that leaders struggle to identify factors that may motivate or enhance employee engagement in the public sector. Public institutions in the GCC region that have conducted leadership research, and which reached similar conclusions, include those in the education sector (Al-Sada et al., 2017) energy sector (Williams et al., 2017), and the health sector (Balkhy *et al,* 2018) but no studies have, as yet, addressed leadership and its impacts on employee engagement among first responders in Qatar's police departments.

Research addressing factors that promote staff engagement in the public sector appears to be extremely limited in the Gulf region, possibly because public sector employees in the region are considered to lack basic skills and competencies needed to perform their jobs effectively (Biygautane et al., 2017). The Qatar police department, as a unique public institution, may not be exempt from facing these challenges. In addition, the question of how leaders in the Qatar Rescue Police can engage effectively with employees to gain their trust and confidence, as well as boost their morale and improve their level of job performance is posed.

This thesis strives to address the knowledge gaps discussed above. Leaders and employees in the Qatar Rescue Police narrate accounts of their lived experiences in the workplace through storytelling and personal observations and these will be interpreted with reference to existing literature while attempting to discover any novel conclusions that may be of interest. Outcomes of the study may contribute to the currently limited body of existing research on

leadership and employee engagement in the public sector among GCC countries in general, and Qatar in particular.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

By adding to the currently limited existing body of research on public sector leadership and employee engagement in Qatar, this thesis will identify and suggest leadership practices considered suitable for managing public institutions among countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). With these aims in mind, the following objectives were set:

- To examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and subordinates in the Qatar Rescue Police
- To explore factors affecting subordinates' engagement towards work, from local perspectives
- To explore ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the Qatar police department
- To construct a conceptual framework informing recommendations for leadership practices fostering employee engagement in the Qatar police department.

A detailed explanation linking each objective to the identified research gaps is provided below, as well as the rationale for addressing the objectives.

Recognizing the ways in which leadership is understood is imperative to this thesis partly due to the controversial nature of leadership as argued by Walker (2006). Knowing how leadership is being understood and demonstrated will highlight how leaders view themselves in an organisation, how followers perceive leaders, and whether there are differing or conflicting views of the concept of leadership within the organisation (Juntrasook, 2014). It will address the knowledge gap surrounding the concept of leadership in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police and may have relevance to similar organisations within the GCC countries.

More than one interpretation of leadership is expected. With regards to differing perceptions on how leaders see themselves, a doctoral research study (Timiyo, 2016) conducted among leaders in UK higher education institutions revealed that leaders exhibited differing orientations when viewing the concept of leadership. The study provides compelling evidence to show that leaders' perception of the concept of leadership differs from one leader to another. Hence, it might be interesting to know whether leaders and subordinates also share differing views of leadership within the police department and whether these views have an impact on employee engagement.

Another gap identified from the problem statement is the potentially impractical nature of adopting unmodified Western practices to lead institutions in GCC countries. As pointed out in a recent study (Biygautane et al., 2017), Western managerial practices and ideologies may be ineffective in leading firms in the Gulf region. According to this study, traditional methods, such as pay increases and other fringe benefits, have failed to achieve the intended objective of motivating workers in the Qatar public sector. In comparison with private sector employees, those working in Qatar public institutions earn higher salaries (Al Haj, 2017); consequently, salary alone may not foster employee engagement.

On the other hand, in a study dealing with first responders in the US, Petersen (2019) noted that a lack of basic workplace satisfaction factors, including tangible rewards, led to disengagement in the form of poor employee retention and a lack of interest in accepting further responsibilities. Thus, while tangible rewards may not necessarily promote engagement, their absence may lead to disengagement. It is therefore important to this study's conclusions to determine the extent to which tangible rewards influence engagement or act as factors contributing to disengagement.

In addition, other factors leading to engagement or lack of it should be considered. Govindarajo (2014) identified several factors including: wage, welfare, work environment, lack of safety and security, poor organisational support, rigid rules and regulations, and lack of individual motivationas contributing to disengagement. Beyond this, leadership practices may lead to disengagement, as confirmed by Nikolova et. al (2021) in their work on defining and measuring disengaging leadership. Thus, in seeking leadership practices that promote engagement, disengaging leadership as well as the role of the organisation must also be considered within the cultural and organisational contexts of the Qatar Rescue Police.

Several studies on employees' engagement have discussed the topic of disengagement as an important factor that sustains employee passion and performance, causing lower rates of engagement (Imperatori, 2017: Johnson, 2004: Seijts & Crim, 2006: Kular et al. 2008). Kahn (1990) conducted a qualitative study looking at the psychological conditions influencing engagement and disengagement and concluded with the identification of those factors. One important aspect of those is the fact that employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performance as a repayment for the resources they acquired from their

work place. When the organisation fails to provide the expected resources, employees may start to withdraw or disengage themselves from their roles (Kahn, 1990: Kumar & Swetha, 2011).On another level, Maslach et al. (2001) believes that the perceived role of supervisors in providing support for the employees is likely to be an important predictor of employee engagement. In fact, the author argues that the lack of that support from supervisors has been found to be an especially important factor linked to burnout and the root for employee disengagement (Bates, 2004: Frank et al., 2004). Thus, it is very important to study engagement and disengagement factors (Saks, 2006), in accordance with LAP approach, where studying Leadership and engagement should be looked at from Leader, Employee and Organisation's contexts. Shuck et al. (2010) explored the employee engagement and disengagement from three dimensions; manager, environment and personality of employee and concluded that these three factors have one thing in common which is the relationship that connects them together and cause the employees to be engaged, and that the concern with each may lead to disengagement.

Wellins & Concelman (2004) identify employee engagement as the hidden force that motivates employees to produce higher levels of performance.

Thus, after identifying what leadership means in context, leadership practices that result in disengagement as well as those with a role in promoting engagement should be examined and accounted for. To ensure relevance, the values system and culture prevailing in Qatar should be taken into account at all times. The format of the study allows participants to propose practical solutions to address workers' disengagement by letting them tell their own stories, which is a crucial aspect of a phenomenological research study. Among other things, research has established that "one way by which humans construct their reality is through storytelling" (Walker, 2006: 42).

Research (Al Haj, 2017) has shown that leaders in Qatar public institutions struggle to motivate subordinates to achieve needed results. This implies that they are unable to foster employee engagement in their institutions. This thesis supports mainstream research (Mumford, 1972; Kahn, 1990, 1992; Juntrasook, 2014; Al-Sada et al., 2017), which describes employee engagement as the tendency for leaders to motivate subordinates to give their best towards achieving organisational goals and objectives. The thesis proposes that one way of achieving this goal is to find out, from the subordinates themselves, what leaders need to do to foster their engagement with the organisation. In this way, organisation-specific and

culturally relevant findings can be made with potential benefits for the improvement of leadership practices and employee engagement. Hence, the need to address the current knowledge gap relating to the leadership of policing personnel in Qatar.

Following the outcomes of the third objective, this thesis will propose appropriate leadership practices deemed suitable for managing (public) institutions like the Rescue Police Department. Thus, the fourth objective provides the basis for examining the opinions of leaders and subordinates regarding what leadership practices are suitable for managing their institution. As leaders' perception towards the concept of leadership varies (Juntrasook, 2014; Timiyo, 2016), their suggestions of appropriate leadership practises suitable for managing the police department will also differ. Even though leadership is treated as a universal construct (Den Hartog *et al.,* 1999; Timiyo and Yeadon-Lee, 2016), applied in almost all organisations around the world, its interpretation and applications by individuals from different cultural and social settings are different. The fourth objective of this thesis is intended to examine these differences in order to develop a conceptual framework inspired by the Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) approach as well as any other approaches to leadership that appear to be relevant based on the study's findings to advance or guide future research relating to this subject area. According to Raelin*et al.* (2018) the concept of leadership-as-practice suggests that leadership is not the result of behaviours undertaken by individuals within the organisation. Rather, it emanates "from an emerging collection of practices" (Raelin*et al.,* 2018: 372).

## 1.3 Study Background

The research findings of Biygautane, Gerber and Hodge (2017), outlined how the emergence of the petroleum industry among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the 1950s resulted in the development of a large public sector workforce. And that, although public sector institutions were already present in Middle Eastern countries, the inflow of oil revenue from the petroleum industry made it possible for the government to markedly expand public services. The authors' claim is that, over the course of a 50-year period, countries such as Qatar have been able to establish modern public sector institutions commensurate with those in developed Western nations. While public institutions in GCC countries serve as the foundation for providing important services to citizens, the authors found that these entities serve as a means for distributing oil revenues equitably among the people.

For those hired in government positions, the situation is unique. Public agencies in GCC countries have become a way to provide many workers from Qatar as well as its neighbouring countries with access to well-paid employment. Biygautane et al. (2017) further emphasised that public sector employment has become a mode of distributing wealth among GCC countries. Although not extensively detailed in the literature, they believe public sector institutions in the region are unmatched in their spending allocations for staff salaries despite having some of the most ineffective workforces in the world.

These authors go on to argue that public sector employees continue to retain their jobs and to acquire raises regardless of their performance and level of competency. The situation has become problematic to the extent that the World Bank has recognized the deterioration of overall quality and performance of government departments in GCC countries (Biygautane et al., 2017). Since improved performance is argued to be one of the primary outcomes of heightened employee engagement (Sridevi, 2010), determining how leaders can promote employee engagement may, in part, contribute to the resolution of this problem.

This is of particular importance in an organisation responsible for assisting in public emergencies and maintaining public order, namely Qatar Rescue Police, since poor workplace performance would have negative implications for society at large. The means to address this issue within the unique context of Qatar are not fully clarified by studies conducted in other contexts, and addressing this knowledge gap could result in substantial benefits for the organisation, its employees, and the general public.

## 1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

As stated earlier, the focus of this study is to explore leadership practices within the Qatar Police and their potential relevance for enhancement of employee's engagement. To accomplish this goal, under the LAP approach, leadership should be viewed as sets of practices (Raelin, 2016a) rather than a set of interventions perpetuated by an individual to establish the foundations for organisational life (Wilkinson and Kemmis, 2015). These assertions draw attention to the fact that leadership is something that occurs in the context of the organisation rather than as something that results from the actions taken by a single individual (Kempster and Gregory, 2017). This study will therefore seek to analyse leadership practices and their effects on employee engagement within the specific context of

the Qatar Rescue Police, and may therefore have limited applicability to other organisations in Qatar.

By referring to literature with reference to real-world experiences and the Islamic cultural context and values system, it is possible to evaluate the current leadership environment that contributes to fostering employee engagement. In this regard, researchers have identified several elements of Islamic values that may contribute to employee engagement. Islamic leadership traits suggested by Meiani and Putra (2019) and Nasrah et al. (2021) include truthfulness (Siddiq), trustworthiness (Amanah), advocacy (Mashourah) and wisdom (Hikmah). This study may shed some light on the extent and manner in which leaders in the Qatar Rescue Police implement these values in practice, the practices that demonstrate them, and the degree to which they influence employee engagement.

However, these approaches study the practices of leaders as individuals and do not consider ways in which they might become part of the accepted practice or question whether they can, in fact, contribute to disengagement in a culture where those occupying positions of leadership may see themselves as a source of inarguable wisdom. Hence, this study strives to determine whether operational leadership matters in employee engagement and if so, whether constructive leadership practices can be identified as well as how they could be embedded in operational policies and procedures for "mid-management" officers.

Insight gained from this project will facilitate understanding of how leadership practices may contribute to enhancement of employee engagement. Knowledge gained will be useful for understanding leadership practice in Islamic contexts as well as for formulating recommendations for improving leadership practice in order that leaders can achieve improved engagement among their employees in the Qatar Rescue Police.

Although the data obtained from this study will provide novel insight into how leadership occurs in practice to foster employee engagement in an Islamic cultural context, there are some limitations to the work. In particular, the research focuses on the Qatar Rescue Police, suggesting that it may not be possible to extrapolate results to leadership practice beyond this setting. Further, to make the scope of the project manageable, data will only be collected from a small number of participants. In addition, all respondents are male since no women are directly employed by the Qatar Rescue Police. This may also limit the use of the findings beyond the scope of the current study.

## 1.5 Methodology Outline

Qualitative methodologies were viewed as being the most salient choice for the proposed topic. These approaches are typically used in exploratory studies in which variables are unknown and/or variables cannot be succinctly quantified (Creswell, 2014). The proposed subject matter appears to accord this approach to research as the current leadership practices of police in Qatar and their subsequent effect on the engagement of staff have not been delineated in the literature or in practice. The qualitative methodology identified as having the most relevance to the current study was phenomenology since this approach focuses on "lived experiences" and perceptions. The methodology chosen consists of semi-structured interviews and observations. A purely theoretical approach may deliver results with limited applicability to the specific context being studied and would fail to examine how leadership is applied in practice and how this affects engagement.

Observation is frequently used in qualitative studies as a supplement to the data. As noted by Kawulich (2005) observation of participants may reveal details that they were unwilling to impart. As such, it is a potentially valuable tool, but can be open to bias based on the observer's frame of reference. In order to mitigate this in the context of anthropological research, Johnson and Sackett (1998) suggested that the researcher must structure the way in which observations are recorded as well as the settings in which this occurs. Since observations were direct, were conducted during routine meetings between leaders and subordinates, it was difficult to completely eliminate subjectivity. However, the observations are structured in terms of what was observed and the perceived effects of approaches to interactions with leaders were noted. These can be viewed as an additional perspective that contributes to the findings of this research.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces key aspects of the thesis and background information regarding the rationale for the study, the problem, aims for the research, methodology, scope and limitations.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature. Topics covered in this chapter include: a review of mainstream approaches to leadership practice, a description of employee engagement and its role in leadership practice, a review of criticisms of generally accepted theories regarding

leadership practice and the relationship of these approaches to employee engagement; and a review of LAP as an inspiration for the current study.

Chapter 3 provides a thorough review of the methodology used for the study. It includes: a justification for the selected methodology; the selection of a specific qualitative design (phenomenology); an overview of the setting, population, and sample; data collection and analysis; instrumentation; and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 consists of findings and data analysis, including results of the study as well as information regarding the participants and identified themes from the qualitative data collected. Whereas chapter 5 discusses the results of the study in relation to existing literature and Chapter 6 provides a reflection on how the results can be applied as recommendations for leadership practice and possible areas that may imply a need for future research within the subject area.

## 1.7 Defining Key Terms

Certain basic words are defined below to allow for contextual meanings and interpretations.

***Leadership*:** is a contested term, and attempts to define it date back for centuries. It has been discussed as a set of traits, or as an activity (Northouse, 2010). For the purpose of this thesis, the focus is on the practice or activity of being a leader. Raelin (2016) observed that "*leadership should be viewed as a practice that works towards an organisational goal as opposed to leadership being associated to the behaviours of an individual that is identified as a leader.*" However, apart from referring to leadership as a practice, it will also be used as a noun indicating individuals or groups that have been formally tasked with leadership. Casagrande and Rivera-Aguilera (2020) clarify this with the assertion that "*Leadership is a concept that starts from an assumption of authority, that there must be some people in organisations who give orders, make decisions and expect obedience.*" In this thesis, leadership is therefore considered as a set of practices that are initiated by people who have been granted authority by the organisation.

***Effective leadership:*** Effective leadership has been defined as the ability for leaders to successfully address employees' needs and the organisational demands during different situations (Taylor et al*.,* 2007). Yukl (2005) asserts that the ability of leaders to influence

followers in order to attain organisational goals constitutes effective leadership. In Raelin's (2008) approach to Leadership as Practice (LAP), however, a greater emphasis is placed on ways in which the practice of leadership within an organisation contributes to the realisation of organisational goals. Yukl (2008) notes that the practices leaders implement to raise performance standards (a measure of employee engagement and an indicator of organisational performance) is of importance. Hence, this thesis views effective leadership as a set of practices that may lead to greater engagement and improved organisational performance.

***Leader*:** A simplistic definition of a leader is that the leader is someone who is able to influence group decisions (McCleskey, 2014). Within the context of this thesis, it refers to individuals possessing authority and responsibility to make decisions on behalf of others, and include senior officers, administrative/unit heads, or operational managers. This definition will also be viewed in relation to the collective theory of leadership practices issued by Raelin (2018). While Raelin recognises the need to allocate leadership roles to individuals, he proposes the creation of a "leaderful organisation" in which leadership is shared "concurrently and collectively." For the purposes of this thesis, leaders will be identified as those individuals to whom leadership roles have been assigned.

***Follower:*** Followers are also referred to as subordinates or employees, that is, anyone whose actions are being influenced by the decisions of leaders (Smircich and Morgan, 1982). According to Raelin (2003), conventional models consist of "one leader with many followers."

***Employee engagement:*** This term describes a situation in which employees are fully involved and committed to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives (Mumford, 1972). This definition concurs with that of Kahn (1990) who noted that engaged employees "*express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally*" in their work. Hence, they dedicate their full energy on every level to the tasks which they have been assigned.

***Employee disengagement**:* In contrast to engagement, disengagement refers to a situation in which employees show apathy towards the needs of an organisation (Kahn, 1990).

***Autonomy:*** This term describes the ability for followers to exercise their own discretion when performing their responsibilities within the organisation. Gagne and Bhave (2011) are among the many scholars who assert that autonomy is an important driver of engagement.

***Empowerment****:* This enabling factor describes the process of ensuring all necessary resources are made available by leaders so that followers can perform their jobs with autonomy. It is frequently cited as an important factor in employee engagement (Mani, 2011; Sundaray, 2011).

***Self-determination:*** In its broader context, self-determination refers to the right of people to decide their own destiny. In the context of this thesis, self-determination in the workplace refers to a situation in which followers set their own goals to be accomplished and are self-motivated. Self-determination promotes psychological well-being and is seen as having a role in promoting employee engagement (Meyer and Gagne, 2008).

***Leadership-As-Practice:*** Also abbreviated as LAP, this is an evidenced-based leadership approach that recognises and promotes group achievements over individual accomplishments and sees leadership as a set of ever-evolving practices that contributes to the realisation of organisational goals instead of consisting of individual behaviours on the part of people who have been designated leadership roles. (Raelin, 2016a, 2016b).

# Chapter 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Overview

In this literature review, the concept of leadership and the lack of a single definition of leadership is examined, the importance of context is explored, and the relationship between leadership and employee engagement is examined along with the nature of engagement, and its benefits to organisations are extrapolated with reference to published literature. Tangible

transactions as a factor in engagement will be briefly examined, but, since leaders at the level of study respondents have limited influence in determining fiscal policy, non-monetary drivers of engagement will also receive attention. Finally, constructivism as an approach to gaining new knowledge in the field of leadership practice and the importance of cultural context are considered with Leadership as Practice (LAP) providing inspiration as a means of gaining a greater understanding on the concepts of leadership and engagement in the Qatar Rescue Police.

## 2.2 Introduction

Over the course of the last two decades, the understanding of leadership has expanded, with scholars examining a wide range of variables and their implications for both theory and practice. A review of the literature on leadership indicates that scholars have extensively examined critical issues such as gender, power, and race to further comprehend how leadership is structured and practised (Stead, 2014; Choi, Hong and Lee, 2018; Lewis, 2018). This shift in research has challenged previously accepted views on leadership and prompted the application of constructivist and relational paradigms for extending knowledge on the subject (Endres and Weibler, 2017; Ospina 2017; Crevani, 2018). Despite these efforts, however, leadership is frequently viewed through a monocultural lens; one in which Western thought and values dominate discourse on the topic (Srivastava, 2016: 69).

The absence of national context or local values in the framework of leadership practice prompts concern, especially in the light of what Srivastava (2016) noted regarding the implications of local context for outcomes within the organisation. This is particularly important when addressing the culture of a group of people in a given society because "*business culture differs from country to country due to influence of its national culture*" (Srivastava, 2016: 61). The author goes on to argue that while underlying business culture is shaped by the context in which a business is developed, leaders also play a role in shaping the values and behaviour of employees. Leaders that are educated and trained to utilise Western views and conceptualisations of leadership practice may fail to integrate essential components of local context into practice resulting in significant challenges for successfully connecting with employees and motivating them to perform. The author noted that without the appropriate leadership support in place to motivate and engage employees, the end result is typically the loss of employee productivity which can hamper the overall success of the organisation.

The challenges that exist regarding Western influence over leadership practice are further highlighted in the context of globalisation and these are also of interest in non-global, non-Western organisations that base their practices on Westernised models. As managers and leaders from the United States and other Western countries transfer skills and knowledge to new local contexts there is concern that attempts to translate Western theories to other cultural settings without any modification may not be fruitful. Perkins (2009) brought attention to this by analysing certain commonly accepted premises in the field of leadership and noting their limitations in other cultural contexts. An example of particular interest in this author's work was that "leadership traits" valued in the West may be counterproductive in certain cultures, especially those in which an understanding of the leader's role in the organisation is of greater importance than "qualities" such as assertiveness. However, the author observed that by analysing the cultures of specific countries, leaders could seek ways to identify specific reasons why certain theories may not be effective, and adapt them accordingly.

Another group of scholars illustrated this point by noting that in many non-Western cultures, the proliferation of globalised organisations implementing received knowledge with Western roots serves as a basis for creating a level of "cultural ambiguity" (Liu and MacDonald, 2016:311) in which established values, beliefs, and cultural norms become more uncertain. In the context of leadership practice, these issues are quite profound. Likewise, Castelli (2016) demonstrated this point by arguing that modern organisations have consistently found that in the context of globalisation, traditional leadership practices, or "business as usual," are often ineffective for addressing the needs of a culturally diverse workforce not all of whom share the values systems on which they are based. Liu and MacDonald go on to assert that when responding to globalisation in business, organisations have recognized that a new approach to conceptualising leadership is needed; one that focuses on a broader approach to understanding how leadership occurs in practice. In non-Western, local organisations, the task is considerably less complex since only the local or regional context requires integration into leadership practice. However, works on globalisation are of interest, since they highlight the influence of culture on effective leadership.

The nexus of this problem has, to some degree, been evaluated in the context of employee engagement. Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) argued that over the course of the last decade, global companies have come to recognize the importance of employee engagement as a

strategic tool for achieving organisational objectives. They emphasised that "*employee engagement is a matter of concern for leaders and managers in organisations across the globe, as it is recognized as a vital element in determining the extent of organisational effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness*" (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014:107). These authors go on to argue that employee engagement is typically conceptualised as a function of leadership practice as leaders are expected to connect with employees to promote their engagement in work. Based on this assessment, it is possible to see that in the absence of effective leadership practice, those serving in leadership roles may be unable to foster employee engagement: a situation that the authors believe could lead to a broad range of negative outcomes including the inability of the organisation to achieve essential goals.

This assessment of employee engagement prompts the need to consider how this outcome can be pragmatically achieved in practice. Current research (Breevaart et al*.,* 2014) on employee engagement in organisations seems to suggest that leaders shape follower engagement through transactional influence. Transactional influence, according to Breevaart et al. (2014) focused mainly on the ability of leaders to provide tangible rewards or benefits that will meet the expectations of employees. They claimed that this will lead to a positive state of influence in which employees will be motivated to achieve goals established by the employer. Popli and Rizvi (2016) are of the opinion that when leaders are capable of positively influencing followers, engagement will result, leading to goal achievement. They believe when leaders are unable to successfully influence followers, chaos may ensue, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the leader to achieve desired goals.

In his study, MacGillivray (2018) argued that the traditional Western views of leadership support a pragmatic understanding of practice: a situation where the behaviours, traits, and skills of the leader when employed in practice will result in the ability of the leader to influence followers and achieve desired outcomes. While this approach to building engagement enables leaders to implement the process in practice, engagement in this model is identified as nothing more than a transaction between leader and follower. According to MacGillivray, leaders provide a certain level of support and the followers respond in kind by engaging and meeting desired goals.

While considerable attention has been given to the role and importance of tangible resources in fostering employee engagement, it is pertinent to consider what happens when the promotion of engagement is the direct task of leaders who have limited influence on

organisational factors such as salaries and job security. In these scenarios, the ability of leaders to promulgate engagement through transactions is notably weakened. In this environment, the linear relationships that develop between the leader and the follower may be less important to achieving desired outcomes. This observation prompts the need to consider how employee engagement can be achieved when transactional leadership practice is limited by organisational constraints. This observation also prompts the need to consider how leadership occurs in practice rather than attempting to examine leadership from the viewpoint of a particular model that dictates how leadership occurs.

The introductory concepts cited here provide a starting point for reviewing the literature on the topic of leadership. More specifically, this literature review addresses critical issues currently shaping leadership discourse and will fully explore: traditional conceptualisations and applications of leadership; the development of employee engagement; the lacunae in research regarding non-Western approaches to leadership practice; and the potential role of leadership as practice (LAP) for examining the operationalization of employee engagement in a non-Western organisation in which negotiations regarding compensation and benefits are limited by organisational constraints. Through an exploration of these specific areas it will be possible to fully elucidate the challenges of applying traditional leadership paradigms to non-Western cultures, with a focus on the topic of employee engagement. This will, in turn, justify the need for the current study to further develop understanding of leadership practice in a regional context such that professionals and organisations are able to foster employee engagement in settings such as those prevailing within the GCC countries or recognise the need to apply a modified approach to Western concepts in non-Western cultural settings.

## 2.3 Conventional Approaches to Leadership Practice

Mainstream approaches to leadership practice are often linked to the "characteristic ability of extraordinary individuals" (McCleskey, 2014: 117) who have the ability to influence decisions of other individuals in a group setting. According to Day et al. (2014) the "Great Man" theory which was proposed more than a century ago and is often identified as the starting point for the development of modern leadership theory and practice. Embedded in this theory is the belief that effective leadership practice is integrally linked to the personality of the individual serving in a leadership role (McCleskey, 2014). Although this approach to leadership does have some salience for understanding the success of leaders in practice, Day *et al.* (2014) believe the evolution of research and discourse on leadership demonstrated that

there were other variables that could contribute to leadership success including the applied behaviours and skills of the leader. Based on this approach to leadership, scholars have consistently argued that education and training can contribute to the ability of the individual to effectively lead. Aldulaimi (2018), for example, found that leadership training within the Saudi Petroleum Company (ARAMCO) was effective in developing leadership within the organisation, and Channing (2020) concluded that effective leadership can be taught. By inference, applying constructive leadership practices is a skill that can be learned, and need not necessarily be a construct of individual personality.

Adding to the debate, Rast (2015) posits that while trait and behavioural theories have served as the foundation for building modern understanding of leadership practice, further exploration of leadership prompted a proliferation of paradigms to understand leadership that has widely been described as psychological in nature. According to him, scholars examining this approach argue that the focus of understanding leadership practice has shifted, with efforts made to evaluate the psychological implications of this process. This includes issues such as influence, meeting follower needs, and the ways in which the actions of the leader shape follower behaviour.

In another study, Oc and Bashshur (2013) examined traditional leadership theory and practice, noting that current understanding of this topic focuses on the process of leadership as one in which followers are passive recipients of the actions taken by those in leadership roles. They found that under these theories of leadership, follower behaviour can be linearly predicted based on the specific types of psychological and physical supports provided by the leader. Expanding on this, the specific types of support adopted as leadership practices would be influenced and informed by organisational and cultural context. Zander (2021) confirms that the psychological dimension of interpersonal leadership varies from country to country and that these variations can be ascribed to the prevailing culture.

Efforts to understand and quantify traditional leadership theory have resulted in the production of research regarding these paradigms in practice. Over the course of the last five decades, scholars have thoroughly investigated and defined leadership paradigms including laissez-faire, participative, contingency, and situational approaches as well as transactional and transformational leadership, among others (Lord et al*.,* 2017). Research has specifically focused on methods to quantify leadership in practice with the idea that this will facilitate the

ability of organisations to leverage leadership in an effort to achieve desired goals (Choudhary et al., 2013). One example of how quantification of leadership practice has occurred can be seen when reviewing the Big Five Personality Model. This model has been extensively employed to examine leadership styles and capabilities such that practice can be augmented to improve leadership behaviour; a process that should result in quantifiable outcomes for the organisation (Hassan et al., 2016).

The rigorous study of leadership has produced a wealth of information and insight regarding the topic. However, research has failed to produce a single, succinct definition of the term. Scholars examining this topic assert that over the course of the twentieth century more than 350 definitions of leadership have been proposed (Yaghoubipoor et al., 2013). Another renowned leadership scholar takes this assertion a step further, by confirming the existence of a plethora of leadership definitions in academia (Northouse, 2012).The myriad of definitions of leadership that have been reported in the literature have prompted efforts to build a consensus regarding what the term encompasses. Some scholars have argued that modern leadership practice involves the establishment of relationships between leaders and followers that are built on influence (Yaghoubipoor et al., 2013). This focus for modern leadership practice has given rise to a situation in which the interpersonal relationships that develop between the leader and follower are often viewed as being the most important resource for leadership success. However, the role of the organisation itself in creating a favourable leadership environment must be accounted for as noted by Tsai (2011).

Reviewing this evolution of traditional leadership practice, a few important insights from the information can be garnered. First, it is possible to see that the current understanding of leadership has evolved significantly over the course of the previous century. Landis, Hill and Harvey (2014) illustrate this point by asserting that over the course of the last century, scholars have begun the complex process of organising information and knowledge regarding leadership and its application. As argued by these authors, leadership has been part of human society since the dawn of time. However, Landis, Hill and Harvey (2014) stated that it was not until the twentieth century that scholars began organising information and data on the topic so that a unified body of knowledge could be constructed. Understanding of leadership has been markedly enhanced through efforts to quantify what constitutes leadership and what outcomes constitute effective or ineffective leadership. Efforts to measure and quantify leadership practice appear to be essential for both building practice and constructing

knowledge in such a way that leadership can be commodified as something that can be taught and built in practice (Clegorne and Mastrogiovanni, 2015).

Second, a review of the evolution of leadership theory indicates that, even though extensive research on the topic has yielded some understanding of what leadership is, a standard definition upon which all scholars can agree remains elusive (Yaghoubipoor *et al.*, 2013). Leadership is a multifaceted topic that may be difficult to explicate with a single definition or theory. While this does explain the multiple paradigms that have been developed in attempts to define leadership, these frameworks are necessarily generalised and may only scratch the surface for fully conceptualising the topic particularly when considered within specific organisational contexts. Generally accepted theories of leadership practice appear to revert to the same rudimentary foundations: the ability of the leader to influence followers and how this influence shapes follower behaviour and outcomes for the organisation.

Finally, an assessment of the evolution of leadership demonstrates that, most recently, the psychological or interpersonal nature of leadership has been emphasised with efforts made to quantify how the leader's actions influence follower and organisational outcomes. There is a glut of research demonstrating that specific leadership styles lead to specific outcomes for followers such as higher productivity or greater job satisfaction (Breevaart *et al.,* 2014; Humborstad *et al.*, 2014). A focus on these outcomes is imperative as it serves to quantify what is important about leadership and what can be gained from the process. By commodifying leadership in this manner, it is possible to teach practice and to fortify leaders with the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in their roles. Further, organisations that buy in to this view on leadership may spend considerable time and money training leaders to ensure that these individuals can implement what is needed to achieve desired goals.

## 2.4 The Role of Employee Engagement in Success of Organisations

As noted in the introduction to this literature review, the specific outcome of employee engagement is integral to the success of organisations. Scholars examining the importance of this concept have argued that over the course of the last decade, employee engagement has emerged as a foundation for bolstering competitive advantage and providing a strategic platform for organisational success (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Also, engagement within the organisation is viewed as a source of innovation to foster the ability of the organisation to

achieve its desired goals (Saks and Gruman, 2014; Saks, 2017). On the other hand, Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) maintained that many of the most pressing challenges facing modern organisations stem from human resource management issues. In addition to retaining high quality talent, the authors pointed out that organisations must work to keep employees motivated and productive while on the job to ensure that strategic outcomes are achieved. Given these challenges, it is not surprising to find that employee engagement has become an important topic for organisations and leaders seeking to evaluate the efficacy of leadership practices in the context of their operations.

In efforts to identify the factors that promote employee engagement, Mani's (2011) findings cited employee welfare, empowerment, personal growth, and positive interpersonal relationships as key contributors while Anitha (2014) cited leadership, training and development, compensation, organisational policies, communication, work-life balance, wellbeing in the workplace, and teamwork. Adding to the list of possible drivers of engagement, Sundaray (2011) identifies recruitment practices, empowerment, fair treatment, and performance management interventions as factors to be considered.

MacLeod and Clarke (2009) do not precisely define employee engagement by stating that it is a multifaceted concept; nevertheless, they assert that employee engagement strategies include enabling individuals to excel at work by promoting respect, involvement, communication, effective leadership, and a sense of value. An engaged employee is one who has a personal attachment to their work, remains motivated and in turn contributes to the organisational success. Similarly, an engaged organisation is one which exhibits strong values, trust, fairness and mutual commitments between employers and employees. However, in order to fetch the positive outcome of improved performance and higher productivity, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) argue that there must be genuine engagement, not merely manipulative approaches. Employee engagement is more than a management fad, it is a distinct concept.

According to MacLeod and Clarke (2009) in their synthesis of research into employee engagement, knowing that senior management leaders care about the wellbeing of their subordinates is the foremost enabler of engagement. The authors noted that according to surveys, most employees did not feel that this was the case. The second most important driver of engagement identified was perceived improvement in skills and capabilities during the

previous 12 months of employment. In the context of the research referenced in the work, 62 percent of employees felt that they had gained skills during this period.

Of particular interest, the role of tangible rewards was seen primarily as a means of attracting talent. However, when perceptions of inequity in the allocation of tangible rewards were present, this factor could contribute to disengagement.

The authors observed that organisational leadership provides strategic direction and should be both nurturing in terms of transparency, support and trustworthiness and "tough" in their application of discipline while managers have a strong role in facilitating work and empowering employees. These operational leaders form the lens through which employees view the organisation and vice versa.

At lower organisational levels, it was observed that having a "strong voice" which enables subordinates to voice their opinions with the expectation of responsiveness on the part of the organisation was recognized as having importance. Finally, integrity in the form of consistent application of the organisation's stated values was identified as a driver of engagement.

Hence, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) identify Leadership, engaging management, employee voice, and the maintenance of integrity as the primary categories under which engagement should be considered.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in the context of UK organisations, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) found significant differences between the highest and lowest-scoring companies, with the highest-scoring companies having 23.8% highly engaged employees compared to only 2.9% in the lowest scoring ones. The authors also found that engagement varies across age groups, types of organisations and job roles. Overall, the studies have shown that the engagement levels in the UK are relatively low, with only three in ten employees actively engaged, and one in five workers potentially disengaged. The impact of such an engagement deficit is notable. It not only adversely impacts the productivity of the employees but also adds to the economic costs. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) estimate the economic cost of disengagement to be ranging from £59.4 billion to £64.7 billion, about fifteen years ago.

One of the contributory factors to the poor employee engagement has been a decline in reported managerial support for new ideas and initiatives, with a large number of employees

unwilling to recommend their organisation for employment. Moreover, employees' lack of autonomy in decision-making and task organisation is a contributing factor to disengagement, and there is evidence that their abilities remain underutilised. It is for this reason that the CEOs and senior HR experts stress the significance of engagement levels. However, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) argue that even if leaders try to emphasise employee engagement, managers may not share the same view or may not have adequate strategies in place to enhance engagement. Consequently, the organisations fail to deliver the requisite employee engagement. Accordingly, the scholars have made some suggestions to improve engagement, including 'visible' leadership (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Similarly, to engage managers, the authors have recommended improving their soft skills; for instance, Mace Group provides an opportunity to its employees for two-way communication and encourages them to move around the company to vary their work, which in turn fosters their development (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009).

Despite the importance and prominence of employee engagement as a means to address current challenges facing most organisations, scholars such as Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) are still very optimistic. They do not deny the lack of consensus regarding what employee engagement means. Consequently, when looking to quantify the concept, many scholars were left with no other choice but to measure a plethora of outcomes. These outcomes include commitment, organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), and productivity (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Engagement was earlier portrayed by some scholars (Saks and Gruman, 2014) as an assessment tool, used in evaluating how employees feel about their relationship with the organisation. Despite the absence of precise and commonly agreed definitions of the term (employee engagement), scholars have often utilised similar terms and language when describing and/or measuring the phenomenon. Breevaart *et al.* (2014) demonstrated this point by asserting that, in general, employee engagement is viewed as the result of a transaction that occurs between the leader and follower. Ideally, the leader is expected to provide tangible support like salary, reward, job security and safe working atmosphere, while followers are expected to reciprocate by engaging in work and achieving goals set by the leader (Anitha, 2014).

This definition of employee engagement appears to be aligned with a transactional approach to leadership practice in which material rewards are the focal point of the employee's engagement with work. The authors illustrated this point by asserting that leaders provide a

foundation for motivating employees such that they are willing and able to engage in their work. In considering engagement, Breevaart et al. (2013) also observed the positive effects of transformational leadership in which the leader works to "transform" team members with the aims of fostering support for one another and for the organisation. While this linear view on employee engagement provides a simplistic foundation upon which correlational and causal outcomes of leader behaviour on employee engagement are assessed, the authors note that employee engagement can wax and wane. In addition, the fact that engagement must typically be supported and strengthened over the long-term is highlighted. Breevaart et al. (2013) argued that engagement is a dynamic concept that requires ongoing dedication, absorption, and focus. What this suggests is that engagement requires consistent efforts on the part of the leader to sustain and motivate employees in the long-term.

The relationship between motivation and engagement has been long studied. Motivation refers to the external and internal factors that drive individuals to either undertake or maintain certain behaviour. When motivation comes from within such as personal satisfaction, it is intrinsic motivation; when it is driven by external factors like rewards, it refers to extrinsic motivation Golay et al. (2006). Motivation is an important component to engagement; however, it fails to fully capture the depth of engagement. Not only are engaged people highly motivated, but they also have a strong emotional investment in and dedication to their jobs or objectives. Motivation can encourage people to begin an activity, but engagement is more than just motivation; it is a longer-lasting, more meaningful relationship (Bailey et al., 2015). In this regard, Meyer et al., (2019) proposed that satisfaction of employee's basic psychological needs (motivational aspect) is the key to developing their full engagement. In doing so, engagement can create environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and want to do a good job (Truss, 2009).

Taris (2023) argues that the motivation of engaged workers is controlled by a combination of internal and autonomous mechanisms, with little involvement of external or non-autonomous factors. While illustrating the association between motivation and engaged individuals, Taris (2023) asserts that employees who are fully invested in their jobs have a sense of belonging and are able to express their abilities without interference. The author further contends that work engagement is correlated with personality qualities, particularly extroversion, positive affect, and conscientiousness among other factors such as opportunities for recovery, job resources, and manageable job demands. Therefore, when the employees have autonomy or self-determination, they consider their jobs to have greater meaning and more enjoyable.

Autonomy as a source of motivation is in line with MacLeod and Clarke (2009)'s argument who have also summarised 'employee voice' as the key enabler of employee engagement. Hence, it is essential to ensure that HR systems and people management have the capability of positively driving employee engagement. Even Engidaw (2021) studied the impact of motivation on employee engagement in public sector to arrive at similar results. Engidaw (2021) also found that extrinsic motivation plays a more significant role than intrinsic motivation in influencing employee engagement. Accordingly, the author recommends managers communicate organisational goals to the employees while emphasising a shared vision to improve engagement.

Interestingly, current conceptualisations and understanding of employee engagement are not commensurate with the definition of work engagement that was first proposed by Kahn (1990). His seminal work on the definition of personal engagement at work suggests that the concept is notably complex and multifaceted. He argued specifically that personal engagement at work is defined as "*the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances*"(Kahn, 1990: 694)**.** He further argued that the concept of personal engagement implies that individuals should be able to freely voice their opinions about their job roles and the organisation they work for, without fear of reprisals (Maslow, 1981; Kahn, 1990).

Although research on the topic of employee engagement in organisations operating in the Middle East is scant, it is helpful to review the limited research on this topic to better understand how the concept of engagement has been explored in practice. Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) illustrated this point by reviewing the topic of engagement among employees working in the banking sector of Jordan. According to these authors, engagement represents the degree to which employees are attentive to and absorbed in their roles. Engagement, according to the authors, results in specific outcomes such as productivity and better customer satisfaction. Juxtaposing this against Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement, it becomes evident that the most prominent element of engagement as described by Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) is the quantifiable, physical aspect of work performance. Consequently, efforts to study engagement in Middle Eastern culture have resulted in the deconstruction of the concept to a one-dimensional concept that can be quantified.

Not surprisingly, this view on engagement has also been supported elsewhere in the literature. For example, a group of authors considered the issue of engagement among employees working in the banking sector in Pakistan. They described employee engagement as "all supportive efforts and acts" that employees used when working in their jobs (Rasheed *et al.*, 2013:185). While Rasheed and co-authors acknowledge that underlying engagement is the need to use all personal resources and power to perform a job—suggesting that emotional and cognitive elements are present in this definition—when it comes to measuring engagement, the authors focus on the specific physical actions taken by the employee to demonstrate engagement. Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2014) make similar observations when reviewing the concept of engagement among government workers in the UAE. In particular, these authors note that engagement represents a work-related state that is characterised by the presence of vigour and dedication. Here again, these authors attempt to measure engagement through an analysis of the behaviours displayed by the employee which indicate that he or she is engaged.

Further exploration of the concept of engagement in the context of the public sector of the UAE is provided by Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016). While examining the concept of engagement, the authors considered the actions that must be taken by managers and leaders to foster an environment in which engagement occurs. As noted by these authors, leaders must work to resolve any difficulties that employees may have in performing their jobs. This includes actions such as providing clear guidance and direction and ensuring that employees feel confident that their contributions to the organisation are recognized. What this description of engagement demonstrates is that there is a focus on the physical elements of the term without a consideration of the full scope of engagement as defined by Kahn (1990). In this definition, the emotional and cognitive aspects of engagement are not fully developed and outcomes for engagement are again measured in terms of the behaviour of the employee: retention, productivity, and satisfaction.

Despite the lack of research on engagement among workers in GCC countries, the scant research that is available does provide remarkable insight into how this concept is developed and put into practice. When reviewing the literature, it is possible to see that there are notable parallels between how Western scholars interpret and research the concept of engagement and how it is developed and evaluated in Middle Eastern culture. What becomes clear is that a Western perspective on both leadership and engagement prevails when seeking to

understand engagement in GCC countries. This creates notable limitations. Correcting these deficits, thus, becomes a recurrent theme; one that requires a broader framework for understanding how leadership occurs in GCC organisations and further how engagement can be constructed.

What this suggests is that Kahn's (1990) view of engagement as a multifaceted construct that requires the collaboration of different dimensions of an individual to achieve his/her target objectives is often diluted during the process of measuring engagement. Based on the original description of employee engagement, it is possible to argue that leaders cannot simply focus on transactions with the worker when attempting to foster true engagement.

Understanding of Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement is important as traditional leadership theory has, to some extent, deconstructed this concept in an effort to quantify and measure it in practice, an argument put forward by Anthony-McMann *et al.* (2017). While examining the issue, the authors argued that engagement has been evaluated so extensively in the literature that its ubiquity has led to obfuscation regarding its true meaning. While it is possible to understand why this has occurred, the reality is that in examining engagement as a unidimensional concept, the cognitive and emotional aspects of engagement that are quintessential to understanding the term should not be overlooked. What seems to emerge from this assessment is a pattern in which multidimensional constructs may lose important elements of meaning in the context of leadership and its role in promoting employee engagement; an issue that should prompt concern regarding the need to expand understanding of leadership practice so that a more complete understanding of practice can be acquired.

Based on this assessment, it becomes evident that by attempting to fit the concept of engagement into the empirical framework of mainstream leadership practice, important elements of the concept may be inadvertently excluded from consideration. Consequently, when organisational leaders consult the literature to acquire evidence-based support for practice, they are faced with multiple, confusing paradigms for building employee engagement. On the most simplistic level of interpretation, leaders consulting the literature are encouraged to offer incentives and rewards as these resources have been shown to enhance outcomes such as productivity or job satisfaction (Breevaart *et al.,* 2014; Humborstad *et al.,* 2014; Singh, 2015). Also, leaders can work to build relationships with employees such that they are able to assert influence over worker behaviour and, subsequently, the outcomes that result from such behavioural patterns. This accounts for

elements of the cognitive and emotional components of engagement as proposed by Kahn (1990) as instrumental in achieving engagement, but may not represent a comprehensive approach. In this context, the concern that arises is whether leaders using purely academic approaches to leadership are ever fully engaging their followers should they fail to examine the realities existing within the organisation.

When examining the issue of engagement and its conceptualisation in modern leadership practice, it is important to note that some scholars have recognised the problem with how engagement is being operationalized and reviewed in practice. Lemon and Palenchar (2018), for instance, argued that understanding engagement requires an assessment of the lived experience of employees. These authors assert that this type of assessment is required to build an understanding of engagement as it occurs within the context of the organisation. In addition, (Saks, 2017) recognized that engagement should be examined in relation to the context in which it develops.

Engagement is therefore highlighted as more than just a singular element of the individual; rather, engagement manifests as a result of what occurs in the organisation and in the context of leadership practice. Breevaart *et al.* (2014) further highlighted the current challenges associated with examining employee engagement through a purely transactional lens. Specifically, these authors contend that transactional approaches to understanding employee engagement ignore the day-to-day dynamics of leadership that can change and have a differential impact on followers. Based on this assessment, the authors argued that a "within-person approach" to examining leadership is needed to truly capture the dynamics of how leadership influences employee engagement.

The issues noted here regarding the concept of engagement provide important insight into the weaknesses that exist in attempts to apply broadly accepted leadership practices as a panacea without considering the context in which they occur. Leadership, according to Tourish (2014) is viewed as a panacea for all of the problems that face the modern organisation, yet definitions of leadership do not address many of the critical issues that shape its existence. Analysis of the concept of engagement clearly exemplifies this point as it becomes evident that context-specific efforts are needed to build a more holistic understanding of leadership practice; one in which the concept of engagement can be applied and understood in specific organisations and cultures in such a way that leaders are able to engage their followers. With these issues in mind, it is pertinent to consider the criticisms of traditional leadership theory

that have been provided in the literature so that a solution to ameliorate current gaps in practice can be identified.

## 2.5 Leadership in Context

The quantification of leadership theory and practice has created a paradigm in which leadership is viewed as a set of actions that are perpetuated by one person (the leader) who is capable of influencing many (followers). While this approach to leadership continues to inform comprehension of the discipline, scholars reviewing traditional frameworks for leadership practice assert that there is some question regarding the role and importance of the leader in the process of leadership practice. In support of this position, findings from a recent study revealed that, "it is unclear whether leaders matter very much" (Newark, 2018: 198). This author goes on to argue that there is a plethora of research demonstrating that the role and impact of the leader is often restrained within the organisation as a result of circumstances that are outside of the leader's control. Organisational factors, identified by Newark (2018) which impact organisational success but are outside of the control of the leader are diverse. They range from high rate of failure for new ventures, unforeseeable shifts in technology or environmental conditions, changing social preferences, changes in regulation, the complexity of decision making, to failure of employees to consistently do what is asked of them. The author argued that this view has given rise to the belief that leadership is more contextual in nature and not solely the product of one individual's influence, behaviour, and actions.

The concept of leadership as being contextual would seem to have notable implications for understanding the role of the leader as well as the outcomes that result from leadership practice. While addressing these issues, Newark (2018) further stated that under the mainstream view of leadership practice, the leader is viewed as having complete control over the success or failure of an organisation and that when an organisation succeeds, the leader is given the credit. When an organisation fails, the opposite occurs, and the leader is often ousted from his or her position. Another group of researchers paved the way to understanding the contextual nature of leadership by posing the following question: "under what conditions are leaders most able to affect their organisations?" (Clark *et al.*, 2014: 358). These researchers went on to argue that while scholars have attempted to answer this question through the development of contingency-based leadership theories, these paradigms fail to take into account the dynamic interaction of internal and external factors that may be difficult

to quantify when assessing leadership failure or success. Consequently, Clark and colleagues maintain that even when placed in a contingency framework, problems arise when it comes to fully elucidating the context in which leadership occurs.

The problem that emerges when leadership is viewed in context is that it significantly challenges the traditional shibboleths that continue to permeate leadership theory. This prompts the need for other scholars to delve into the debate though most of them support the need for framing leadership in context. Particularly, Oc and Bashshur (2013) affirmed that traditional approaches to leadership practice suggest the existence of a linear relationship between the actions taken by the leader and the outcomes that result for followers and for the organisation. While this approach provides the basis for quantifying what would otherwise be intangible, what is evident when looking at arguments regarding the contextual nature of leadership is that linearity may not provide the most useful or transparent method for explaining, implementing, or studying leadership practice. Consequently, what appears to be needed is a paradigm shift in the way that leadership is studied and understood.

Oc and Bashshur (2013) argued that emerging theories of leadership acknowledge the construction of relationships between the leader and follower, taking into account the circumstances or context in which these relationships develop. This view of leadership utilises a social constructivist lens to understand what occurs in leadership practice. The social constructionist perspective on leadership posits that the outcomes of leadership practice are contextually and culturally influenced, resulting in the development of a unique reality that emerges as a result of interactions between leaders and followers (Endres and Weibler, 2017). It thus challenges traditional leadership theory by recognizing that regional culture plays a significant role in shaping how leadership develops and is practised (Endres and Weibler, 2017). Not surprisingly, traditional views of leadership practice are currently being challenged as scholars recognize the limitations that exist when it comes to viewing leadership from a linear and monocultural lens (King and Wei, 2014; Baltaci and Balcı, 2017).

Furthermore, the use of a constructivist approach to understanding leadership was supported by Dinh *et al.* (2014) who argue that the current dearth of knowledge on leadership effectiveness stems from a current focus on leaders and their qualities rather than how leaders change or construct the environments in which they work. These authors pointed out clearly that while modern scholars recognize the complexity of leadership practice, they often do

little to change the status quo when it comes to making sense of what occurs in the context of leadership practice. Arguably, this is rather a challenging undertaking, a situation that was equally acknowledged by the authors in their research study. However, without efforts to change the way in which leadership is studied, it will not be possible to acquire a more complete picture of the discipline. Use of a constructivist paradigm for understanding leadership therefore appears to represent a pathway forward that may provide a useful foundation for changing the way that leadership is understood, researched and implemented in practice.

## 2.6 Implications of Local Values and Context on Traditional Leadership

Traditional leadership theories have also been challenged in light of globalisation and the need to understand leadership from diverse cultural perspectives (King and Wei, 2014). Baltaci and Balcı (2017) reinforced this point by asserting that leadership models based on traditional theories are static and do little to provide a flexible framework for fostering the ability of employees to navigate the complex and chaotic nature of the modern business environment. For this reason, the authors argued that there is a need to revolutionise the current paradigm of leadership so that leaders can be more responsive to changes in the external environment including the advancement of technology and the expansion of globalisation.

A consideration of the criticisms that have been levied against traditional Western leadership theory demonstrates that there is a definitive realisation that, in practice, traditional theories of leadership are either ineffective, or must be adjusted to the local context for meeting the needs of non-Western employees. (Chuang, 2013) considers this issue in the context of globalisation, noting that the expansion of business internationally has created challenges for many leaders and managers to provide effective support for followers in environments with differing cultures. While this issue has, to some extent, been addressed through efforts to understand cultural dimensions of the workplace—i.e., the seminal work of Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1984) which will be discussed in the next pages - in reality, there has been a dearth of effort on the part of modern scholars and practitioners to expand the pragmatic foundations of leadership in a global, culturally diverse environment (Chuang, 2013).

Consequently, many leaders and managers struggle to exercise leadership efficiently in specific cultural contexts as warned by Chuang (2013).

The current status quo as it relates to organisational behaviour and leadership is reviewed by Wang *et al.* (2014) who confirmed that Western thought on business and management has long dominated discourse on these topics. As a result, when developing leadership practice, many companies, both in the U.S. and abroad, have approached leadership development through the lens of Western theory and practice. The authors believe that this approach to building leadership practice continues despite the fact that culture and context have consistently been highlighted as essential to successful leadership. Hence, they came to the conclusion that "*Western assumptions become part of leadership rhetoric and reinforce 'this is how leadership is*" (Wang *et al.,* 2014: 473). What is demonstrated through this assessment is that there is a foundational way of conceptualising and understanding leadership that influences how most organisations and professionals view the practice. This has a direct impact on the ability of leaders to change perspective in practice and to build new theoretical approaches to practise that recognize elements of context and culture as foundations for leadership action.

Furthermore, the authors argued that when it comes to expanding traditional Western theories of leadership to a global environment, scholars have consistently struggled to define the practice of global leadership. According to Wang et al (2014), there is considerable controversy over whether global leadership includes Western-style leadership with additional qualities or if global leadership requires a different set of leadership capabilities altogether. In the absence of a definitive framework for defining global leadership, challenges arise for leaders to establish effective practice. Gagnon and Collinson (2014) illustrated this point in the context of leadership development. As argued by these authors, leadership development occurs as a result of building identity in context. Consequently, leaders develop their identities and practices based on existing theories and paradigms of leadership with the idea that these approaches will be effective regardless of the context in which they are applied. When this occurs, leaders become constrained by the theoretical foundations of practice that limit their ability to understand how issues such as context and culture may influence practice.

Not surprisingly, the problems noted by Gagnon and Collinson (2014) have been addressed by other scholars examining the same phenomenon in the context of leadership research,

theory, and practice. Retrospectively, this implies a "disciplinary disconnect" (Rast, 2015:133) in which the history of leadership theory and practice continues to obstruct the ability of scholars and practitioners in looking beyond current leadership approaches to integrating context and culture as pathways for building practice. According to Rast (2015), this continues to have a profound impact on the ability of scholars to advance the discipline of leadership and to fully comprehend how leadership practice is developed and maintained outside of traditional Western paradigms. This problem is one that is quite pervasive and one that can be frequently encountered when examining current literature on the topic of leadership in non-Western cultures and contexts.

This information would initially seem to create a novel foundation for exploring the paradox created as a result of culture's influence on leadership practice. However, attempts to address it have been made. As mentioned earlier, among the notable researchers who critically examined the role of culture in shaping leadership practices was Geert Hofstede. He conducted several studies in an attempt to elucidate cultural differences among individuals across the globe. His cross-cultural studies focused on building better organisational discourse by highlighting similarities and dissimilarities in the leadership styles of people from different cultural backgrounds. A key aspect of Hofstede's study was the construction of (initially) four cultural dimensions, which he described as: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity (Hofstede, 1984). The fifth was long-term orientation which was later added to further expand Hofstede's framework in 2001 (Venaik *et al.*, 2013). Venaik and colleagues opined that under Hofstede's framework, practitioners could identify critical aspects of culture and be able to either adapt or adjust business practices accordingly to effectively meet the needs of others from diverse cultures.

Although Hofstede's cultural dimensions were initially heralded as a panacea for understanding the scope of cultures outside of the United States, scholars argue that the model has been widely criticised (Schmitz and Weber, 2014). In particular, Dartey-Baah (2013) asserted that Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been widely employed to understand employees in diverse cultures with the idea that leadership and human resource management practice can both be tailored to address cultural differences. An example provided by this author involves the issue of cultures with high power distance, suggesting that a leader's focus within these cultures is on maintaining a hierarchy of authority to ensure that the norms of obedience and loyalty are maintained. By building practice in this manner,

leaders believe that they will be able to enhance their leadership capabilities to suit the cultural needs of employees.

In addition, cultural frameworks such as the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) may add depth to the context and discussion of leadership across different cultural settings. With the help of the GLOBE framework, leaders can use an extra lens to understand how they can perform well in an international environment. It strengthens a better understanding of leadership because it was developed in the 1990s as opposed to Hofstede's 1960s model; thus, it offers a more contemporary attempt to understand different cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory continues to serve as a foundation for GLOBE. By connecting cultural factors to particular leadership behaviours, GLOBE expands Hofstede's emphasis on cultural values. A more complex comprehension of the ways in which cultural elements influence leadership preferences and expectations may be achieved through this combination. Moreover, cultural influences on leadership preferences and expectations may be better understood with this integration.

By including extra cultural characteristics like humane orientation and performance orientation, GLOBE goes beyond conventional models and theories by providing insight into cultural factors that may have been disregarded before. Using six distinct leadership profiles, the GLOBE researchers compared the ratings given by each cluster. These profiles were charismatic type, team-oriented, participative type, humane-oriented type, autonomous and self-protective. The results varied across different countries. In cultures with low levels of masculinity and low power-distance index such as Nordic nations, the followers prefer leaders with charismatic and participative styles. Contrarily, in the Middle East, the preference for charismatic leaders was low; instead, they preferred leadership styles that were self-protective. Therefore, it can be said that the GLOBE framework holds a certain value. Even later studies by Vecchi and Brennan (2011) used the framework to fetch invaluable insight into management and leadership qualities expected across countries.

Nevertheless, it is essential to note the limitations/drawbacks of the GLOBE framework. One of the notable issues with this framework is that it oversimplifies the complex cultural dynamics (Venaik and Bewer, 2013). Since culture is a multidimensional concept, its complexity cannot be fully captured by limiting it to a number of dimensions. Furthermore, because GLOBE is based on cross-cultural data gathered at a single moment in time, it could not be applicable to cultural landscapes that are changing quickly. For instance, GLOBE's data was collected more than three decades ago; since then, the landscape of businesses and

leadership has changed. Thus, the framework may not be very relevant in the contemporary business world. Another limitation relates to generalisability. The complexity of any cultural setting may be beyond the scope of GLOBE, despite its efforts to be comprehensive. The world is always changing, and the framework can have difficulties keeping up with new cultural trends and intricacies. However, despite these limitations, the GLOBE framework is a useful resource to understand leadership in a multicultural setting. It is a substantial contribution to leadership studies because of the critical analysis, new ideas offered by it and information it expands upon. The users must be cautious of its limitations, so they are able to make informed decisions based on the current environment.

Despite efforts to operationalise Hofstede's theory in non-Western contexts, findings from Dartey-Baah's (2013) study reveal that, in many instances, Hofstede's model has failed to adequately impact leadership practice. More precisely, few practitioners have been capable of integrating culture into practice in a manner that is meaningful for improving leadership practice and the ability of leaders to meet employee needs so that desired outcomes such as productivity and engagement can be achieved (Dartey-Baah, 2013). This suggests that, even though some effort has been made to reconcile local context and values with the development of leadership practice, there are still significant gaps in understanding which hinder the ability for leaders to operationalise leadership practice in non-Western cultural settings.

## 2.7 Illustrating the Challenge

Although traditional theories for understanding leadership have provided remarkable insight into the topic and how it can be operationalised for education and practice, the traditional approach to leadership has been extensively challenged. While an examination of the concept of engagement in the context of traditional leadership theory provides some insight into the problems associated with this approach to practise, to fully understand the applicability or lack of applicability of traditional approaches to leadership practice it is necessary to examine the general criticisms of leadership theory and the challenges that traditional leadership theory faces in specific cultural contexts. A closer review of these issues further supports a possible need for a paradigm shift in how leadership is understood and implemented to support employees working in organisations around the world, particularly in public service.

The current challenges for leadership practice are predicated on both the dominance of Western thought in leadership practice and the paucity of relevant theories or frameworks to

provide leadership in a non-Western environment (Wang et al., 2014). The persistence of this situation is one that currently has notable implications for the ability of Western leaders working in global corporations to provide effective leadership (Chuang, 2013; Gagnon and Collinson, 2014). Even though leaders may be equipped with an understanding of differences in cultural values that may impact workforce motivation and productivity, oftentimes they lack pragmatic tools and advice for engaging in leadership practice that is effective for meeting worker needs (Gagnon and Collinson, 2014). The true implications of the criticisms that have been levied against Western dominance of leadership theory and practice are well illustrated when examining literature regarding leadership practice in non-Western cultures. The case of leadership in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries illustrates this point quite effectively. Although research regarding leadership in this cultural environment is scant, the studies that have been published exploring leadership in this cultural context highlight the challenges of fully explicating the practice of leadership in Middle Eastern culture. For instance, AlMazrouei and Zacca (2015) conducted a qualitative study of expatriate managers to determine if leadership competencies needed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were similar to those in their home countries (Western contexts). The results of this investigation indicated that universal management practices based on Western values, traditions, and norms were noted by managers to be largely ineffective in supporting employees in the UAE.

Insights from their study demonstrated significant problems when attempting to apply a rudimentary comprehension of leadership practice in unique cultural contexts. The authors further stated that efforts to articulate the specific differences in practice proved challenging, as managers typically relied on Western concepts of leadership practice to describe how Arab and Western leadership culture differs. Unique terms such as "quasi-consultative decision making" (AlMazrouei and Zacca, 2015: 410) were developed to describe leadership practice in Arab culture. While these terms are somewhat descriptive and aid in building knowledge regarding leadership in this cultural context, it becomes evident that current leadership vernacular is limited when it comes to describing novel leadership settings.

Additional research provided by Al Shamsi *et al.* (2015) further highlighted the challenges that have been noted regarding efforts to apply Western approaches to leadership practice in the Middle East and GCC countries. The authors opined that the application of Western leadership practice in this environment ignores the fact that the foundation of culture in this

region is fundamentally different. They noted that the region is heavily influenced by tribal values and beliefs, shaping the way that all individuals in society interact - an outcome that is translated into workplace dynamics. In this environment, tribal leaders often centralise authority and assume all responsibility; a process that is translated into the modern role of the leader in many Middle Eastern companies according to the authors.

Although this basic review of leadership in GCC countries provides a starting point for understanding how the practice of leadership in the Middle-East differs from traditional Western approaches, the authors believe this insight is extremely rudimentary. For example, it was suggested that there is a tendency for Western scholars to classify leadership practice in Arab countries as being authoritarian in nature. This classification, according to Al Shamsi *et al.* (2015), is ineffective and inappropriate in gaining a full understanding of the true nature of what occurs in practice as a consultative and collaborative approach to practice is often sought by leaders in this culture. Indeed, in the cultural context, Islam calls for consultation between leaders and followers. The Holy Qur'an exhorts leaders to "*consult with them upon the conduct of matters*" (Qur'an: 3:159). Such an argument can be strengthened using the example of countries like Saudi Arabia which has a predominantly hierarchical structure, with decision-making attitudes favouring a top-down approach. According to Altheeb (2020), the authoritarian leadership style in Saudi Arabia does not work; such a leadership style does nothing to enhance the motivation leaves of employees. Instead, the author found that in Saudi Arabian organisations, the majority of the decisions are made by the formation of committees. Thus, paternalistic and transformational leadership styles appear to be more suitable for such cultures. Similarly, another piece of evidence from Alyami et al. (2018), shows that transformational leadership style is the most preferred and dominant leadership style in Saudi Arabia. Such preference appears to be arising from Islamic influence. The Islamic faith and culture of Saudi Arabia instil a healthy respect for those in positions of power. The decision-making process is only one area where the Islamic idea of submission to authority is felt in society. The decision-making process in Saudi Arabian organisations is said to be marked by the flow of information from the top down. However**,** efforts to define leadership in the Arab world using Western terminology can be problematic owing to contextual differences, not only between Arab and Western culture, but also in regional differences within the Arab world. Barakat (2008) and Attiyeh (1993) are among the scholars to define management approaches in the Arab world as having their roots in language, religion, history, and traditional values that are not shared in the West. For example, the

concept of hierarchy in the West could be said to indicate that leaders occupy a high position, but Aldulaimi (2019) argues that instead, they are required to take the "front seat." The author argues that the concept of "total submission" to leaders is frequently taken out of context in the West owing to a lack of shared cultural reference points.

For example, it may be said that there is a high level of top-down decision making in Arab cultures, but this is only partially true if the full Western paradigm underlying this terminology is investigated more closely. Gong et al. (2019) notes that in China, for example, there is an implied ethical dimension that can act as a modifier to "power distance", resulting in feelings of psychological safety. As previously discussed, consultation is seen as an ethical requirement for leaders under Islam and this significantly modifies the stereotype of autocratic leadership (Aldulaimi, 2019). Whilst a strong hierarchy is indeed in place, and its upper echelon is responsible for decision-making, this process does not occur in isolation and ethics demand that consultation should have occurred with its results to be weighted against the broader societal good.

On the other hand, a number of studies have compared Arabs to western nations and found that Arabs are more authoritarianism (Berger 1964;Prothro and Melikian 1953; Sauna 1974-1975), while recent researches on the Arab organisations did not support this result, as earlier researches with weaker methodology have shaped stereotyped perceptions of the Arab world (Makhdom & Ghazali, 2013). This perception characterizes a Middle Eastern organization as a very bureaucratic with the unclear and unpredictable environment, unofficial close management, authoritarian and inflexible leadership style (Badawy, 1980). Such stereotypes might be derived from personal experiences or from social, psychological studies and not from a study of leaders behaviour in cultural context, however, the result of the study on leaders from both Malaysia and Saudi Arabia revealed that they practice a mix of leadership styles depending on the context they are leading, but it is noticed that the adoption of transformative leadership style was common among the leaders (Makhdom & Ghazali, 2013).This demonstrates that the leadership provided in GCC countries is not easily elucidated by Western nomenclature to describe or classify practice. Rather, leadership practice in this region may defy a simple definition in Western terminology, impacting the ability of scholars and researchers to effectively utilise traditional approaches to understanding and investigating leadership in this culture. The issues noted by Al Shamsi et

al. (2015) have been further highlighted in research on preferred leadership styles in GCC countries undertaken by Nickerson and Goby (2017). These authors demonstrated that there has been a consistent effort in the literature to classify leadership practices in this region as paternalistic and authoritarian. This has been supported by El Mouallem and Analoui (2014) and Aycan et al. (2013), who argue that leadership in Middle Eastern countries is often authoritarian in nature. El Mouallem and Analoui, in particular, argue that the authoritarian leadership displayed in Middle Eastern organisations serves as the basis of interaction and prevents knowledge sharing at all levels of the organisation.

While these classifications often work on a cursory level, Nickerson and Goby (2017) argued that when Hofstede's cultural dimensions are considered and the nature of Arab culture is emphasised, paternalistic leadership labels become impractical and ineffective for fully explaining leadership practice in GCC countries. This assessment was later expounded by Thoroughgood et al. (2018) who argued that when standardised tools are used to assess culture in Middle Eastern countries, the results often indicate that authoritarian leadership styles may be preferable for leadership success. The authors maintained that authoritarian leadership is perceived as "bad" from a Western perspective, leading to the belief that leadership styles in Middle Eastern countries are primarily negative. They believe this connotation has served as the basis for scholars to simply classify and judge leadership behaviour rather than attempt to understand it and how it shapes outcomes for followers in this specific culture. Thus, carefulness should prevail when attempting to acquire a deeper understanding of how culture truly impacts leadership in GCC countries.

The insight provided by the authors further complicates the understanding of leadership in GCC countries. Nickerson and Goby (2017) highlighted this point, noting that there is recognition that Western thought on leadership has given rise to negative stereotypes and views of leadership practice elsewhere in the world. They opined that this attitude persists despite the fact that there appear to be different models of leadership practice being used across different companies currently operating in the region. Laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership styles, according to Nickerson and Goby (2017), have been identified when reviewing current leadership practices used in GCC countries. Despite this however, what is reported in the literature focuses on authoritarian classifications of leadership. This would suggest that Western models may not fully conceptualise or explain leadership practice as it currently exists in this culture.

Additional challenges associated with applying Western leadership paradigms to Middle Eastern organisations can be seen when reviewing research conducted by Sheikh *et al.* (2013). In their investigation, the authors examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement in 10 different organisations operating in the UAE. The results of this study demonstrated that while transformational leadership was found to have a positive impact on employee involvement, individual values were found to moderate outcomes in this relationship. Sheikh et al. (2013) noted that collectivism and uncertainty avoidance played a role in shaping employee response to transformational leadership, suggesting that the context of leadership practice must be considered when applying Western leadership theories in culturally diverse environments. Here again, the challenges of succinctly describing and defining leadership practice in culturally diverse organisations becomes evident. What is needed to fully understand leadership in this environment is an approach that integrates the context and culture of leadership in practice. The new concept of Leadership as Practice (LAP) as elucidated by Raelin (2016) may bridge this knowledge gap.

## 2.8 Leadership As Practice (LAP)

As noted in the introduction to this literature review, a potential framework for addressing current gaps in knowledge regarding employee engagement in culturally diverse settings may be found in the concept of Leadership-As-Practice (LAP). To understand the leadership-as-practice movement and hence its implications for the current work, it is necessary to provide a thorough review of the paradigm and to explore the potential for its application to understanding leadership and engagement in GCC countries. Although the paradigm presents a relatively new movement in the discipline of leadership theory, the approach is rooted in practice-based theory. Consequently, it is helpful to review practice theory first to acquire a foundational understanding of leadership as practice.

A review of what has been noted regarding practice theory indicates that this body of knowledge does not refer to a succinct research tradition (Schatzki, 2001a; Nicolini, 2012). Rather, practice theory is often referred to as an arbitrary construct which has been informed by the work of various scholars including Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Charles Taylor, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Martin Heidegger (Schatzki, 2001a; Reckwitz, 2002). Nicolini (2012: 8) codifies this assertion by noting that the approach of practice theory "*does not stem from a single unified theory of practice*" but rather emerges as a result of the synthesis of several different and distinct

scholarly traditions. Despite the diversity of scholars that have contributed to the field of practice theory, researchers argue that it is possible to distil a similar architecture to the arguments made by those identified as contributing to the field(Schatzki, 2001a; Nicolini, 2012). Practice theory fundamentally embraces the desire to move social sciences "beyond currently problematic dualisms and ways of thinking" (Schatzki, 2001a: 10).

Furthermore, the application of practice theory provides an understanding of how social beings shape the world in which they live (Ortner, 1984). Scholars reviewing practice theory assert that it is imperative to understand how people in a given situation practice ideas (Ortner 1984). Hence they view practices as "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understanding" (Schatzki, 2001a:11). This basic understanding of practice theory emphasises the concept of embodiment which acknowledges "*the dependence of activity on shared skills or understandings*" (Schatzki, 2001a: 12). Consequently, the development and maintenance of practice is a manifestation of the transformation of social life and is embodied in the activities that occur in the interactions between individuals (Schatzki, 2001a).

Schatzki (2001a) believes what is important to understand when reviewing practice theory is that the practices identified through investigation are not just the objects of analysis. They model how social entities interact with each other in a particular setting and provide the platform by which the dynamics of such interactions can best be explained. He further argued that practices are the central focus of understanding social phenomena and serve as the foundation for comprehending all other social entities including institutions. Thus, this school of thought emphasises the role and prominence of "*practices as social structures worth studying for purposes of understanding their functionality*" (Schatzki, 2001b: 50). Although various scholars identified as contributing to the concept of practice theory proposed competing ontologies regarding how practice transpires, it is evident that each posited that central to the development of the social universe was the presence of a common practice or set of practices (Nicolini, 2012).

Practice theory was demonstrated by Raelin (2016a) as being foundational to the development of leadership-as practice. In particular, he argued that LAP challenges the traditional views of leadership that have relied on a linear perspective where leaders are supposed to have influence over subordinates. According to him, historically, any conversation regarding leadership practice focused on the proposition that some combination

of leader traits and behaviours contribute to the success or failure of those being led (followers) and the organisation. More specifically, leadership as practice addresses many of the current criticisms of traditional leadership theory including those that focus solely on the "leader-follower ontological assumption" (Raelin *et al.,* 2018: 373) that appears to underlie most conceptualisations of leadership practice. A critical review of the literature on leadership as practice suggests that leadership is a collective action emerging from evolving and recurrent patterns that can only be evaluated through an understanding of practice. This idea reflects what Ortner (1984) proposed regarding the importance of observing how people in given situations practice ideas.

Although the insight provided above facilitates a broader understanding of the role of practice theory in the development of LAP, in order to fully understand leadership as practice, the antecedents of this shift in thinking demand further investigation as suggested by MacGillivray (2018). He viewed leadership primarily as a Western concept which emerged during World War II, arguing that the identification of individuals who "stand out in front" (MacGillivray, 2018:2) became a prominent topic for discussion during this period. According to MacGillivray, the Anglo-Saxon concept of lédan served as the basis for this definition and for the evolution of the term leadership. He strongly believes the concept of lédan is rooted in noun-based language, resulting in the inevitable association of leadership with the individual and that the vernacular of leadership became comfortable to many with the idea that leaders stood out as those who made courageous and challenging decisions.

According to this school of thought regarding the leader-follower relationship, followers do not acquire the recognition bestowed upon leaders, but they typically enjoy lower risk and are often the benefactors of the decisions made by the leader. When reviewing this definition of leadership, two important issues become clear. First, leadership is embedded in the context of the individual. Decision-making and outcomes are the direct result of the actions taken by the leader. In this environment, the leader is often viewed as acting alone but also as being a visionary capable of achieving desired goals (Dansereau et al*.,* 2013; MacGillivray, 2018). Second, leadership is highlighted as a truly Western concept; one that was developed based on Western vernacular. Leadership has been studied and reviewed in this context since its inception without consideration of how other cultures may view the term or its practice (King and Wei, 2014; MacGillivray, 2018).

Following MacGillivray's line of observation, Shaked and Schechter (2013) believe what is interesting about the concept of leadership is that, even when broader changes in social thinking were encouraged through new paradigms such as systems thinking, few scholars applied these ideas to the basic concept of leadership. MacGillivray (2018) further maintained that the development of systems thinking, and complexity theory created, to some extent, a milieu of uncertainty that many simply found difficult to reconcile in the context of leadership theory. The suggestion that the evolution of the modern workplace and the collection of extensive data on leadership and employee behaviour has prompted a re-examination of the need for different paradigms such as systems thinking and complexity theory to be applied in understanding leadership practice. This, along with criticisms of traditional leadership theory, has resulted in efforts to move beyond existing paradigms of understanding leadership to expand knowledge of how leadership transpires in practice (MacGillivray, 2018).

In contrast to the Anglo-Saxon approach, the non-Anglo Saxon and non-liberal approaches slightly differ. In a study conducted by Fukushige and Spicer (2007), the authors investigated the unique leadership perspective that exists in the socio-cultural fabric of Japan. They explored the preference of Japanese followers in relationship to leadership and examined the suitability of Bass and Avalio's full-range leadership model in Japan. The authors found that, unlike the Western culture, Bass and Avolio's full-range leadership model is not suitable for Japan, thereby indicating some effect of cultural changes in Japan. Previously Bass and Avolio's model was applied in the USA and other Anglo-Saxon countries. However, other cultures, particularly that of Japan indicates that it is not suitable for it. This is primarily because culture plays an important role in understanding leadership in Japan (Fukushige and Spicer, 2007).

Even when examined from Hoftsede's indices, Japan's and the US's cultures are significantly different with Japan being ranked high on masculinity and uncertainty avoidance indices. Hence, Japanese followers prefer only certain aspects of transformational leadership such as intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration and contingent awards. It is possibly for this reason that Fukushige and Spicer (2007) have highlighted the culture-specific conceptualisation of Japanese leadership beyond Bass and Avalio Model. This entails a network and protective leadership style.

However, the findings of Fukushige and Spicer (2007) slightly differ from the recent study of Caza et al., (2021). According to Caza et al., (2021), transformational leadership style is universally acceptable across different cultures. They argue that it is universality of the transformational leadership that leads to cultural convergence. Nevertheless, it must be noted that even Fukushige and Spicer (2007) highlighted some of the preferred aspects of transformational leadership style in Japan. Moreover, in line with Fukushige and Spicer's (2007) contentions, Ly (2020) argues that the preferred leadership style in non-Western cultures remains support and relationship-oriented, thereby emphasising the role played in culture. This indicates that the leaders working in non-Anglo-Saxon cultures need to demonstrate a higher degree of care, affection and commitment towards their subordinates.

A more succinct definition of leadership as practice defines this paradigm as the "conception of leadership as occurring as practice rather than residing in the traits or behaviours of particular individuals" (Raelin, 2016a: 2). And that the concept of practice is developed during the leadership process. Practice generally involves coordinated actions among participants to achieve specific outcomes. Consequently, leadership as practice focuses on the collective actions that occur in a group to produce desired results rather than just the influence of the leader as being the causative agent leading to success or failure (Raelin, 2016a). According to Raelin, what is unique about this perspective is that it does not assign a descriptor to the leader either as an authoritarian, transformational or transactional leader. Instead, an effort is made to evaluate leadership in terms of the day-to-day experiences that contribute to the achievement of goals.

While these may sound plausible, he believes the juxtaposition of leadership as practice against traditional views of leadership indicates that this new paradigm requires an ecumenical approach to understanding practice. He illustrated this point by stating that leadership as practice does not rely on single descriptors of leadership practice or a consideration of the dyadic relationship that develops between leaders and followers. Rather, the approach requires an understanding of "immanent collective action emerging from mutual, discursive, sometimes recurring and sometimes evolving patterns in the movement and over time among those engaged in practice" (Raelin, 2016a: 5). Consequently, leadership as practice requires those studying leadership to immerse themselves in leadership environments to fully understand what is occurring in practice.

Additional insight provided regarding leadership as practice further illustrates the potential of this paradigm to change the way that leadership is both conceptualised and implemented in practice. Youngs (2017) stated that the central tenant of this approach decentralises leadership, prompting the need to change the view of leadership as being integrally tied to the individual. Youngs (2017) goes on to argue that by decentralising leadership, a shift in how leadership is evaluated is needed. Rather than attributing leadership to a single individual, he describes leadership as an outcome of practice; a reality that is socially constructed by what occurs in a specific setting.

He extended his analysis of leadership as practice further by challenging the vernacular that underlies the concept of leadership, specifically, that leadership is often connoted as a noun. Youngs's (2017) claim is that under the umbrella of leadership as practice, the focus is not on the leader; rather the focus of practice is on leading, adding that this shifts how leadership is framed by utilising a verb (leading) to promote a new conceptualisation of leadership. By shifting the foundations of how leadership is framed, it may be possible to spark an ontological change in the way that leadership is understood, operationalised, and researched.

Essential to the development of leadership as practice are the ideas of context and construction. When building an understanding of leadership as practice, it is therefore possible to see that there is some relationship between this approach and information provided earlier in this literature review on the topic of leadership in context as well as the constructivist approach to understanding leadership practice. In particular, when looking at leadership in context, scholars argued that the construction of relationships in leadership practice was often discounted when evaluating the outcomes of this process (Oc and Bashshur, 2013). Consequently, a social constructivist lens was proposed as the most effective means for understanding leadership and further for expanding understanding of leadership practice in a global context (Endres and Weibler, 2017). Leadership as practice appears to encapsulate a contextual and constructionist view of how leadership is operationalised. Being specific to context means taking into account the values, the shared understanding and the social norms (Raelin, 2020). For this reason, it would seem that leadership as practice would provide inspiration for supporting research into how leadership transpires in non-Western organisations including those currently operating in GCC countries.

While the importance of context and constructivist understanding of leadership are important to building leadership as practice, what also becomes evident from reviewing this paradigm is the fact that leadership, as it is currently researched and practised, is integrally tied to Western culture. Modern leadership theory is integrally intertwined with Anglo-Saxon fascination with individualism; an issue that has obfuscated the ability of scholars to fully explore the concept of leadership as a collaborative and constructive event (Raelin, 2016b). What this suggests is that leadership as practice challenges the status quo when it comes to understanding and building leadership within organisations. Given this outcome, it would seem that there is some support for applying leadership as practice to diverse cultures to better understand situation and context in order to construct a clear meaning of leadership practice within these settings.

Research regarding the application of leadership as practice in a globalised society is scant. However, Davis (2015) does provide a framework for linking this paradigm to the study of global organisations. According to Davis, the progression of globalisation has given rise to a reality in which the complex nature of organisational discourse can no longer be ignored. His arguments attracted support from recent studies examining the concept of leadership including that of MacGillivray (2018), who felt that systems thinking and complexity theory had largely been ignored for far too long, especially among researchers in modern investigations of leadership practice. Davis (2015) goes on to argue that globalisation has fostered a new level of complexity, making it imperative to rethink how concepts such as leadership are applied in practice. What this indicates is that there is an impetus to consider the complex environment in which leadership transpires. Leadership as practice, according to Davis (2015), appears to provide a useful foundation for achieving this goal.

## 2.9 The Relationship Between Top Management, Line Managers, and Employees In Qatar

When the relationships between people at different organisational levels is considered in Qatar with reference to current practice, a strong hierarchy emerges. Top management makes strategic decisions, line managers oversee their execution in practice, and employees follow the instructions provided by line managers. Respect for authority is noted as being one of the defining characteristics of the practice of management in the Middle East (Bhudwar and Mellahi, 2006). The authors argue that “collectivism” in this context relates more to loyalties

between cultural groups, family and friends, than it does to loyalty to the organisation or its components itself.

In practice, this frequently means that there is a greater degree of collaboration between top management and line managers (most of whom share Qatari citizenship) than there is between line managers and their (primarily expat) subordinates, with what may be seen as a great degree of distance between top management, line management and operational staff. It should be noted that collaboration between line and strategic management is tempered by respect for authority which is ingrained from childhood in the context of the family (Sidani and Thornberry, 2009).

The resulting potential for reticence among line managers in their relationships with their seniors is, however, counteracted by the concept of "Shura" which requires a consultative approach to decision-making:Allah says: "*And those who have answered the call of their lord and establish prayer and who conduct their affairs by consultation and spend out what we bestow on them for sustenance...*" (Surah Al shura, Verse 38). Hence, consultation between strategic or top management and line managers, and consultation between line managers and their subordinates form the "ideal" for management practice when based on Islamic values. The degree to which this occurs in practice is of interest and may be further clarified in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police during the course of this study. If "Shura" is indeed practised by most managers throughout the organisational structure, realising Raelin's concept of a "leaderful" organisation, at least in the formulation of its guiding principles and practices, is not an unrealistic or alien possibility.

However, the concept of "Wasta" (influence or connections comparable to Western "social networking") may have a role to play, particularly in relationships between Qatari line managers and their expat staff. Weir (2000) observed that the lack of personal and family networks disadvantages expatriate workers with the latter lacking sufficient influence to make themselves heard. However, this contrasts with the strongly inculcated principle of Shura in which those with power are required to consult with their subordinates. While the reality is indeed that expats experience limitations in their career mobility, which could be seen as a form of Wasta, the principle of consultation still holds true, even if it is not always practised. Indeed, in a study of expat Arab managers in the US, Bhaktari (1995) found that a consultative management style was preferred.

Hence, it may be said that in their relationships with subordinates, top managers consult with line managers who in turn consult with their subordinates - at least in the ideal Islamic cultural scenario. However, it should be noted that decision making still rests with those in authority and in Islamic cultures, the ethical basis for decision-making requires weighing a variety of factors including societal good. Nevertheless, participation in decision making affecting the rights and welfare of individuals remains a key concept. As Shikh (1998) notes: "*A Godfearing individual, realising that he is answerable to Allah for any improper act, will not dare undertake such a decision without consultation. Such an undertaking can be pursued only by an individual who does not have fear of Allah.*"

Efforts to define leadership in the Arab world using Western terminology can be problematic owing to contextual differences, not only between Arab and Western culture, but also in regional differences within the Arab world. Barakat (2008) and Attiyeh (1993) are among the scholars to define management approaches in the Arab world as having their roots in language, religion, history, and traditional values that are not shared in the West. For example, the concept of hierarchy in the West could be said to indicate that leaders occupy a high position, but Aldulaimi (2019) argues that instead, they are required to take the "front seat." The author argues that the concept of "total submission" to leaders is frequently taken out of context in the West owing to a lack of shared cultural reference points.

For example, it may be said that there is a high level of power distance and top-down decision making in Arab cultures, but this is only partially true if the full Western paradigm underlying this terminology is investigated more closely. Gong et al. (2019) notes that in China, for example, there is an implied ethical dimension that can act as a modifier to "power distance", resulting in feelings of psychological safety. As previously discussed, consultation is seen as an ethical requirement for leaders under Islam and this significantly modifies the stereotype of autocratic leadership (Aldulaimi, 2019). Whilst a strong hierarchy is indeed in place, and its upper echelon is responsible for decision-making, this process does not occur in isolation and ethics demand that consultation should have occurred with its results to be weighted against the broader societal good.

## 2.10 Chapter Summary

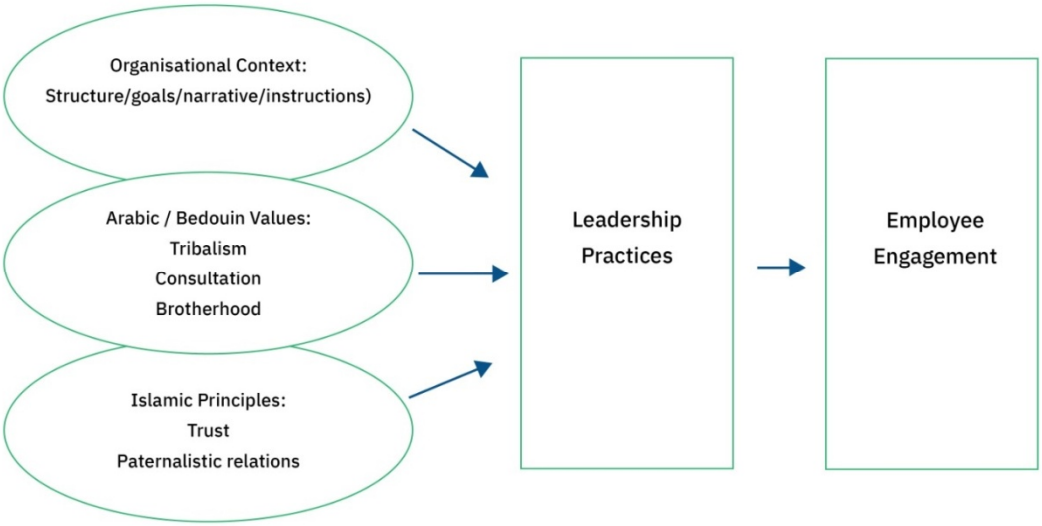
Synthesis of the literature provided in this investigation offers a useful foundation for tying together the current study. What becomes evident from reviewing the literature is that there are numerous weaknesses in traditional paradigms of leadership practice. Of particular concern is the failure of traditional approaches to practise to explain what occurs in the context of practice (Oc and Bashshur, 2013; Clark, Murphy and Singer, 2014; Endres and Weibler, 2017; Newark, 2018). Leadership is primarily viewed as an individual process which can lead to the success or failure of followers and the organisation (Endres and Weibler, 2017; Newark, 2018). While this understanding of leadership may work well when attempting to understand how leadership transpires in Western companies, when these approaches to practise are applied to global entities including those in GCC countries, the end result appears to be a misinterpretation of leadership practice (Chuang, 2013; Gagnon and Collinson, 2014; Wang et al., 2014). Consequently, it is not possible to acquire a complete picture of how leadership unfolds in a global context and, more germane to the current study, how leadership unfolds in GCC countries and organisations.

While the problems of investigating leadership in GCC countries is clearly elucidated through this literature review, what is also highlighted are the challenges associated with evaluating employee engagement. Employee engagement has become a prominent topic in research on organisational discourse, especially for global companies. Some scholars (Anitha, 2014; Breevaart *et al.,* 2014; Anthony-McMann *et al.,* 2017) believe this is partly due to the belief that engagement will lead to a plethora of benefits for the organisation: reduced attrition, increased productivity, and higher levels of worker satisfaction. These scholars are of the opinion that engagement is typically conceptualised as being related to leadership practice—i.e., leaders are primarily responsible for engaging followers—the literature on engagement has focused on the role of the leader in achieving this outcome. Unfortunately, the above literature review suggests the concept of engagement, initially developed by Kahn (1990), has become somewhat deconstructed, focusing primarily on a unidimensional aspect of the employee's physical engagement at work. Kahn's original model advocated for inclusion of the physical, cognitive, and emotional domains that shaped engagement.

In summary, what is demonstrated from this literature review is a significant gap in understanding both leadership practice and engagement in multinational or non-Western contexts; one that is perpetuated by the overarching presence of Western thought in the

development of both concepts. In an effort to address this gap, elements of the leadership as practice approach have been used with particular reference to the importance of the embeddedness to the specific context. Although research on leadership as practice is still in its infancy, it is possible to see the important features of this paradigm which may make it applicable to the need for filling current gaps in understanding both leadership practice and engagement. Leadership as practice takes a contextual or constructivist approach to understanding leadership practice; one in which leadership is not a product of an individual's actions but rather the outcome of the collective work of all employees in a given work setting (Raelin, 2016b, 2016a; Youngs, 2017; MacGillivray, 2018). Through the use of this theoretical framework it is possible to integrate physical, cognitive, and emotional domains for understanding both what occurs in practice and how engagement is constructed in the context of leadership practice. The following diagram serves as a conceptual framework that addresses the gap by highlighting the need to link the elements emphasised by leadership as practice paradigm. Placing high value on the local contexts of organisation, staff and society means that the leadership practices can be better informed and deemed effective as they are focussed on the organisation's objectives, taking into consideration the local values and local expectations from followers and leaders. Furthermore, it targets the leadership practices on initiatives that foster employee engagement (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Context Specific Leadership Practices link to Employee Engagement**




The use of leadership as practice also has implications for truly understanding leadership in a global context and, specifically, in GCC countries. Even though literature on this topic is scant, Davis (2015) believes globalisation has increased the complexity of leadership and what occurs in organisational discourse indicating a need for broader frameworks for evaluating leadership in practice. Leadership as practice is uniquely positioned as a useful inspiration for eliminating cultural boundaries that shape and direct thinking on the subject. Rather than approaching the study of leadership in GCC countries with predetermined classifications and notions of practice, it is possible to evaluate leadership as it unfolds to truly appreciate and understand what is occurring in practice.

# Chapter 3

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to explore leadership practices within the Rescue Police Department of Qatar. More specifically, it seeks to examine the perceptions of leadership from the viewpoint of both leaders and followers to understand the meaning people attach to leadership practices, and to observe those practices in context and environment to identify relevant leadership practices for enhancing employee engagement. The literature provided to support this research indicates that traditional or Western views of leadership practice which attribute leadership success to the specific attributes of an individual may have limited applicability for understanding how leadership is practised in Qatar. Consequently, Leadership-As-Practice (LAP) inspired the methods that will be applied for exploring the subject matter of this research. Under this theoretical approach to examining leadership practice, an effort is needed to understand the process of leadership as it emerges from a collection of practices (Raelin et al., 2018). Application of this framework requires an examination of the unfolding of leading in the specific context of Qatar Rescue Police rather than an exploration of individual leader behaviours or traits.

By examining leadership practices and the effects of these practices on employee engagement in the Rescue Police Department in Qatar it should be possible to acquire a greater understanding of the context of leadership and how it serves to foster follower engagement within the organisation. This particular chapter provides an overview of methodologies that could be utilised to support this research along with a justification for the selected methodology and research design. Further, this chapter reviews pertinent elements of the methodology that were needed to conduct this research including: sample and setting, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and reliability/validity, and ethical issues involved in the research.

## 3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to specific paradigmatic shifts in researchers' ability to think through the ideas influencing a study. These include their preconceived sets of ideologies, assumptions or worldviews that enable them to interpret and make sense of objects of an inquiry (Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). It questions and critically exposes the fundamental belief systems of researchers, particularly as they tend to define and interpret objects of a research investigation (Lincoln *et al.,* 2011). Research philosophy may not be the sole avenue for determining the quality of a research study, but it demonstrates the credibility or authenticity of the study (Bunniss and Kelly, 2010). Each research approach leans towards one or more philosophies that researchers can adopt. Some of the commonly referenced paradigms among researchers include objectivism, positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, subjectivism, transformative and pragmatism philosophical paradigms (Creswell, 2012, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

From a research approach point of view the first three – objectivism, positivism and post-positivism, are mostly used in quantitative research studies. Interpretivism, constructivism and subjectivism lean towards qualitative research; hence these are usually adopted by qualitative researchers. Creswell and Creswell (2018) believe that a transformative paradigm can also be applied in qualitative studies, but that transformativists highlight the political facet of research studies, by emphasising the use of politics as a tool for investigating issues concerning social injustices in a given society. By contrast, pragmatism is not mutually exclusive to either quantitative or qualitative studies. This paradigm considers the contextual differences between objects of a research activity. It acknowledges that the context under which researches are being conducted differs from society to society. Thus, researchers can adopt any research paradigm that works best for them given the situation at hand.

Due to this, pragmatism is commonly used in mixed methods studies since it does not imply any preferences. Based on the identified criteria for utilising research paradigms, this study adopts the interpretivism philosophical paradigm. This paradigm

is closely related to the constructivism paradigm, and both were often used to understand the concept of leadership in previous studies. It is crucial to point out that interpretivism allows researchers to conveniently elucidate and interpret the opinions and expressions of research participants who volunteer to take part in the study.

### 3.1.1 The Interpretivism Philosophical Paradigm

The researcher believes in existence of multiple realities, rather than a single one. In this meaning, the researcher and participants co-create knowledge gathered from this study, following the Subjectivist view. The aim of this research is to study the practices of both leaders and subordinates within the organisational settings, and it requires a sort of embeddedness of researcher to reach that deep understanding. In Raelin's words "Rather than limiting the inquiry, this approach, in which both parties co-construct the story of the embedded practices, allows a far more in-depth aesthetic insight into the researched world" (Raelin, 2020: 8).

In this regard, the researcher is following the interpretivism research paradigm, and will be inclined to use qualitative methodology associated with it. The researcher's decision to adopt this paradigm is shaped by three reasons. First, as mentioned in the previous section, the choice of paradigm to be used is influenced by the researcher's belief and by approach adopted in a study (Henn *et al.*, 2005). Since the researcher believes in the interpretivism research paradigm as matching his knowledge belief system, qualitative methodology is deemed suitable for this study as they are associated. Interpretivism refers to a situation in which researchers attempt to meaningfully interpret events and situations within the confines of a research study (Bunniss and Kelly, 2010). It requires listening attentively to respondents, and close observations of the actions of participants as they recount their experiences at work. As an interpretivist, the researcher has the opportunity to observe first-hand, and fully engage with participants throughout the knowledge creation and co-creation process.

The second reason for choosing this approach is due to the type of research design used in this study, namely, the phenomenology research design. Phenomenology research design relies heavily on fundamental philosophical assumptions guiding a

research study (Giorgi, 2009). It enables researchers to create knowledge based on a combination of experiences they must have acquired from their background, profession, job roles, and worldviews (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Leadership and employee engagements are the objects of this research study, and these are equally considered in this study as social phenomena. Drawing upon the works of scholars who have examined the ontology and epistemology of leadership, this researcher is also of the opinion that leadership is a function of certain key interdependent variables. Thus, leadership emanates from a tripartite interaction between the leader, his/her followers and the specific context in which leadership is being practised (Alvesson and Spicer, 2014).

Furthermore, the researcher believes that the interpretivism paradigm provides the best platform for understanding the intricacies surrounding the concept of leadership. It recognises the existence of multiple worldviews among individuals and in this case, between the researcher and participants of the study. This might, at times, lead to differences in opinions and interpretations as the researcher's own interpretations of events may present contradictory views to those offered by the participants. Mainstream research (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002; Mason, 2017) suggests that every individual, regardless of his/her status and position, has fundamental beliefs and assumptions that shape the way they relate and interpret happenings around them. Hence, the role of the researcher would be to identify differing frames of reference and bring these differing perspectives and views into unison.

Lastly, research has established the use of the constructivism research paradigm to examine the concept of leadership. It is believed that using this approach improves the legitimacy of such studies if researchers are willing to maintain and observe certain ontological and epistemological boundaries associated with using the constructivism paradigm (Crevani *et al.*, 2010; Crevani, 2018). On the strength of these arguments, the researcher is leveraging the possibility of adopting the interpretivism paradigm to examine leadership in this study. As earlier stated, constructivism and interpretivism share a lot of commonalities, to the extent that both are used interchangeably in

research studies. An important aspect of this debate is the main focus of this research study and its underlying theoretical perspectives – Leadership As Practice (LAP).

This emphasises that the concept of leadership should be studied from the dimension of how it is being practised, an idea that supports Carroll, Levy and Richmond's (2008) findings. They advised researchers to seek evidential and practice-based approaches towards examining the concept of leadership, recommending that they should desist from making leaders' skills and traits the focal point of a leadership study, as advocated by the fundamental assumptions of LAP. While this recommendation has potential benefits, it may be difficult to evaluate leadership practices without examining leaders' skills and competences. Thus, it has become a norm for researchers to rely on leadership characteristics, styles and skills to provide insights and understanding of the concept (Gronn, 2002; Bolden and Gosling, 2006). The next section examines dominant views of the researcher, in relation to the ontology and epistemology of leadership research.

### 3.1.2 Researcher's Ontological Perspective

Ontology describes how researchers utilise their knowledge and experiences to assess concepts and phenomena of a research study (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). It largely determines the particular research design, approach and method adopted by researchers (Pratten, 2007). As will be seen, research can be conducted broadly from either quantitative or qualitative point of view, suggesting that every quantitative dimension to the research has a corresponding qualitative aspect to it (Searle, 1995). Research phenomena, or objects, broadly fall into three categories, namely physical objects, mental abstractions and social objects as suggested by Blumer (1969). While physical objects refer to things that researchers can relate with using their sense of sight, touch, smell, taste and smell; mental abstractions are the shared beliefs and traditions of a group of individuals living in a society. They exist within an individual's subconsciousness and shape the psychological state of a person. Social objects exist within a social context. They are by-products of socially interactive processes among the individuals in a setting.

Guided by the above categorizations, this research examines both mental abstractions and social interactive processes between leaders and followers. Mental abstractions represent the

meanings that participants ascribed to things and events such as job security and safety concerns for followers. Kahn (1990) believes these factors enhance employees' engagement at work, which he named as "meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Together, the three conditions shaped how people inhabited their roles" (Kahn, 1990: 703). The researcher's ontological position is that leadership is a social and interactive concept (Berger and Luckmann, 1990), existing only within the confines or context as provided by actors within the social system (Drath et al., 2008).

In investigating the thoughts of, and interactions between, leaders and their subordinates in the Qatar Rescue Police, this research closely matches Raelin's recommended approach to the study of LAP that it "is concerned with how leadership emerges and unfolds through day-to-day experience" (Raelin, 2020: 2). By examining the interactions between leaders, subordinates, and their working environment, the researcher hopes to elucidate the cultural context of leadership in Qatar in general, and more specifically in the context of the department under study.

### 3.1.3 Researcher's Epistemological Perspective

Epistemology refers to the entire body of latent knowledge that awaits further exploration by researchers (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). The epistemology of leadership addresses the nuances of the concept by challenging researchers to identify ways of exploring the concept so as to provide fresh insights about what is known already and what remains to be known (Crevaniet al., 2010). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) argued that in attempting to explore the concept, researchers often face certain constraints, one of which is the need to successfully develop a knowledge base by observing both physical objects and mental abstractions. This study will depend on a key unifying assumption, which states that leadership in practice paves the way for various ideas and interpretations to be made by researchers.

Unfortunately, these ideas may not necessarily address pertinent and contemporary discussions about leadership research in the sense that while some are in favour of such discussions, others tend to contradict the ideas posited (Hosking, 2007). All of

these could be seen as potential factors contributing to the complex nature of leadership research, and possibly explain why researchers are unable to understand it comprehensively even with the abundant amount of work that has already been completed on the subject of leadership(Prilipkoet al., 2011). Hence, the underlying epistemological assumptions of this researcher largely depend on his ability to meaningfully interpret objects of the research study, and to do so without any prejudices.

By focussing research on the day-to-day experiences of leaders and their subordinates, it is hoped that this work may transcend a purely theoretical analysis and provide a practical basis, both for reaching conclusions on leadership in Qatar's public service organisations and as a basis for future discussion on the nature of leadership and its influence on employee engagement within organisational contexts.

## 3.2 Research Design

This is an outline describing the research journey and details every aspect of the research process from beginning to the end (Saunders et al., 2016). While describing his/her research activities, the researcher can adopt several approaches, including quantitative, qualitative and/or mixed methods approaches. Oftentimes, deciding on the particular approach to adopt is a key challenge facing researchers due to conflicting views regarding what constitutes an appropriate research approach.

A broad overview of the general research approaches available for researchers to use when conducting research studies reveals three main approaches (Creswell, 2014). These are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research approaches (Creswell, 2014). There tend to be disagreements concerning which is more superior towards offering credible explanations and results from a study. While some scholars favour using a quantitative approach, others prefer adopting qualitative methods. In addition, many scholars also support the use of mixed methods. There are also those who strongly advocate that research should be free from issues of categorisations, by trying to fit a particular study into the quantitative–qualitative dimension (Allwood, 2012).

Supporters of this view believe that all research possesses both qualitative and quantitative aspects (Sandelowski et al., 2009). Therefore, it may be counterproductive to believe that a phenomenon being studied can be examined exclusively from a quantitative or qualitative dimension. Even if differences exist between the approaches, they are the resultant effects of how researchers understand and choose to interpret events in their studies. Depending on the underlying philosophical assumptions of a researcher, every research can be conducted from either a quantitative, qualitative or mixed method perspective (Creswell &Tashakkori, 2007; Worrell et al., 2013).

For purposes of clarity and drawing distinctions between them, a review of each of these approaches is provided in the next section along with a justification for the selected approach for this study.

### 3.2.1 Preferred Research Approach

Among other elements, the suitable approach to adopt depends mainly on the researcher's philosophical positioning, methods for collecting and analysing research data, and the particular research questions to be addressed, and/or objectives to be achieved (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

A qualitative methodology could be considered for use in the current study. Research by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), who adopted this approach, suggests that qualitative research requires the use of naturalistic procedures that foster the ability of researchers to understand a phenomenon as it occurs in a real-world context. According to the authors, this approach is substantially different from the quantitative approach to research in that it employs narrative rather than numerical data collection and analysis techniques. Furthermore, the qualitative paradigm employs an inductive approach to research in which data that is obtained is used to build, rather than test a theory (Creswell 2012, 2014; Merriam and Tisdell, 2015; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). They believe that the qualitative approach to research is needed to acquire a deeper understanding of a research phenomenon as it occurs in practice. Use of this approach enables the researcher to preserve the complexity of a phenomenon being studied

rather than simply reducing it to quantifiable variables (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). However, qualitative research has its pitfalls and criticism of being only exploratory or subjective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is therefore essential that qualitative researchers strive to eliminate personal bias in their analysis of qualitative research results.

The research methodology used in this study is a qualitative approach. As previously stated, the focus of this research was to examine leadership practices within the Qatar Rescue Police to better understand the leadership practices that contribute to employee engagement. Based on this assessment of the purpose of the research, it can be argued that while leadership is practised within the selected group, it is not possible to quantify what occurs in this setting to acquire numerical data. The problem being investigated is one that cannot be easily quantified such that variables and their surrounding nuances can be comprehensively identified and measured. Consequently, a quantitative approach to research will fail to meet the objectives of the study. If data for this study cannot be quantified, a mixed methods approach would also be unsuitable for conducting this research. They are both not compatible for a number of reasons. They don't align with the researcher's ontological and epistemological considerations.

The qualitative approach not only provided a suitable foundation for exploring the practice of leadership as it occurs in the Rescue Police Department but also an opportunity to maintain the integrity of the phenomenon as it occurs in practice. This is aligned with the concept of leadership-as-practice which provided inspiration for this research. LAP requires an understanding of the collective processes that occur in the context of leadership as it occurs in practice (Raelin et al., 2018). Consequently, it is not possible to identify all of the variables that will be involved in leadership activities that foster employee engagement. Through the use of a qualitative methodology there is a greater possibility of acquiring an understanding of what occurs in the department to facilitate employee engagement.

## 3.3 Qualitative Research Designs

Although the identification of a qualitative paradigm for research provides important insight into the specific approach that will be used to conduct this study, it is equally important to consider the specific qualitative research design that will be employed. Qualitative research can include: case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenological designs among others (Flick, 2018). A brief overview of each of the major qualitative research designs is thus warranted to determine which specific design will be applied to the current study.

Taylor, Dossick and Garvin (2011) who reviewed information regarding case studies suggested that this design is one of the most popular approaches towards conducting a qualitative inquiry. They view case studies as having the potential to investigate contemporary phenomena within their real life contexts, and that this approach is helpful when it is difficult to separate out the boundaries and context of a phenomenon. Furthermore, conducting case study research typically requires collecting data from multiple data points so that the data can be coordinated through the process of triangulation to provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation. Hence, they believe that while quantitative methods can be used in undertaking case studies, the approach is typically grounded in the qualitative tradition as researchers emphasise on human meaning and understanding in a particular setting.

Grounded theory has also been used extensively in the development of qualitative approaches to research. A review of what has been noted about grounded theory suggests that this approach is both a theory of qualitative research as well as a process (Flick, 2018). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) added that the development of grounded theory was rooted in an effort to introduce a higher level of pragmatism in the context of qualitative research. As a result, the authors treated grounded theory as having the ability to combine a social constructionist view of reality with a positivist epistemology. The essence is to create a platform by which qualitative research could be used for articulating theory as well as describing it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Ethnography is also a frequently implemented qualitative method that is notably unique from other approaches to qualitative inquiry. Merriam and Tisdell (2015), in their review of this approach to qualitative study, argue that ethnography is both a research process and final product; researchers that conduct an ethnography typically present their final research as an ethnographic manuscript. Although ethnography originated in anthropology its utility has markedly expanded, prompting researchers in numerous fields to adopt the approach to garner a deeper understanding of human society and culture (Merriam &Tisdell, 2015). While there are various types of ethnographies that can be conducted, "ethnography emphasises observation in natural settings and focuses on providing detailed, accurate descriptions of the way people in a particular culture live and the way they interpret the meaning of things" (Rubin & Babbie, 2009: 218).

Much like grounded theory, phenomenological inquiry has been noted to be both a philosophy and an approach (Lichtman, 2012). The approach has gained popularity in recent years because of the desire of researchers to understand the lived experiences of individuals in specific groups, organisations or contexts (Lichtman, 2012). What is unique about phenomenology is that it focuses on understanding the integration of the individual in his or her external world rather than attempting to separate the two (Klenke, 2016). As a result of this focus, phenomenology enables the researcher to access a critical component of human experience that is often missed through the application of empiricist or logical epistemologies (Klenke, 2016).

## 3.4 Phenomenology Research Approach

Exploration of each of the qualitative research designs reviewed above prompted consideration of the use of either an ethnographic or phenomenological approach to the current study. Ethnography was considered due to the depth of understanding that can be garnered from this approach. Myers (2019) argued that ethnographic research requires the immersion of the researcher in the culture under investigation to extract in-depth understanding of a culture or phenomenon. In addition to this, ethnographic research creates a foundation for the investigator to question what many take for

granted. The author is of the opinion that ethnographic research often challenges assumptions that underlie many of the theories that are used in everyday practice, which can have a revolutionary impact on a discipline or a theory, resulting in a paradigm shift or revolutionary improvements in systems or processes.

This approach can be difficult to undertake, however, because it requires the researcher to completely engross him or herself in the culture being investigated. For the purposes of this research, it was believed that this was not possible given that the researcher could not consistently observe the Rescue Police Department to collect the data needed for this type of study. Phenomenological study was subsequently selected as the research design to guide the current study. A closer review of the literature on phenomenological approach suggests that:

> *Broadly defined, phenomenology is defined as the study of phenomena: appearances of things, as they appear in our experience, or the way we experience things and thus the meanings things have in our experiences. In essence, phenomenology studies various types of experiences derived from our perceptions, thoughts, memories, imagination, emotions, volition, embodied action and social activity* (Klenke, 2014: 222).

Creswell (2012) opined that insights garnered from the use of a phenomenological study provide deep understanding into what was experienced and how it was experienced. He believes phenomenological studies provide deep insight on the data gathered from real life experiences. In addition, researchers can acquire a deeper critical analysis of specific phenomena to create a more accurate and succinct understanding of these issues through this process. Phenomenological inquiry also provides a foundation for understanding how individuals view their world and construct meaning. This can be helpful for acquiring a practical, real world understanding of social reality and culture (Creswell 2012, 2014).

This approach is pragmatic, focusing on data provided by those experiencing a specific phenomenon. The current study provided an opportunity to examine the lived experiences of leaders and followers employed in the Qatar Rescue Police. Phenomenology also appears to be aligned with the leadership-as-practice framework

as an effort will be made to understand the lived experiences of leaders and followers in the context of how leadership practice shapes employee engagement

Whilst the literature on Leadership as Practice is underpinned by the shared assumption of leadership as the outcome of the collective work of all employees in a given work setting (Raelin, 2016b, 2016a) not a product of an individual's actions, empirical studies do not offer a unifying methodological approach. In highlighting the critical role of discursive practices for the constitution of leadership phenomena, studies on leadership as practice typically deploy social constructionists approach that focuses on interactions between leaders and followers as they join together to create realities or, less frequently, constructivism. Both approaches endorse a subjective view of knowledge (Guterman, 2006), however they differ in terms of the key focus; whilst social constructionism advocates a social focus, constructivism proposes an individual focus. Constructivism foregrounds the importance of discursive practice, since it is predicated on the view that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes (Young & Colin, 2004). This view appears to be aligned with the leadership as practice concern with language (Raelin 2016), however constructivist approach has been criticised for a deterministic view of language (Kitching, 2000) thus making it less suitable for exploration of leadership practices underpinned by practice theory. In focussing on cognitive processes of individuals, constructivists approach goes beyond the view of language as means of constructing the minds of individuals, to emphasise how minds and cognition are determined by language.

Whilst, given the multiplicity of perspectives in leadership-as-practice there is some merit in diverse approaches to studying leadership via the social practice lens, it is also imperative to identify an alternate approach fully compatible with practice theory. For Schatzki (2017) it is phenomenological approach to action which offers an important and rich account of human life in general and a theory of action in particular. It is the latter which pays attention to experience, consciousness and emotions of everyday experiences in the contexts in which they occur. Phenomenological approach thus provides the understanding of all activities (including leadership) not as transpiring

from an inner realm (as in the constructivist / cognitivist view), or from interpretations and discourses which shape our reality (as per social constructionism). Instead, phenomenology endorses the importance of specific settings in which actions take place, challenging the assumption of a meaningful interpretations and representation of actions and experiences. (Schatzki, 2017) This implies the need to pay attention to unreflective actions understood as realisations of situationally-appropriate practices guided by dispositions and tacit knowledge acquired via participation in the flow of activities of everydayness in the world in which individuals proceed.

Through the use of phenomenological approach, it becomes possible to account for individuals' experience and actions to complement focus on sociality as advocated by practice theory, in other words to advance understanding of what constitutes leadership and engagement in the specific social context without neglecting individuals' non-representational sense of experience.

## 3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

As noted, the setting for this study was the Qatar Rescue Police. Employees currently working in the department were utilised as the population for the study. At the present time, the department employs 100 commissioned officers ranked at the level of lieutenant or above. Additionally, there are 1,000 non-commissioned field officers that work in the department. The former were identified as "leaders" for the purposes of the study while the latter were identified as "followers" in the data collection process. The sample was drawn from current leaders and followers within the organisation and included: two-unit heads, two middle rank officers, two junior rank officers, and six operational non-commissioned frontline staff members.

### 3.5.1 Sample Technique

Since this is a qualitative study, it was expected that the researcher would adopt a non-probability sampling technique. Though these sampling techniques are difficult to

apply systematically (Rapley, 2014), they nevertheless offer researchers the opportunity to use their discretion to decide who should take part in a study and select these individuals accordingly. Based on certain criteria such as accessibility of participants, financial and ethical considerations, this study relied on one out of the numerous qualitative sampling techniques available for researchers to adopt. These include convenience (purposive), judgmental, chain referral (snowballing) and quota sampling techniques (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Any of these techniques could have been used, but due to the administrative arrangement of access to participants, the researcher adopted the purposive or convenience sampling technique.

Effort was made to acquire data across various levels of the department; however, the research participants were chosen based on ability and preparedness to take part in the study. The convenience sampling technique is a non-probability approach to sampling that is based on the selection of participants who are easily accessible to the researcher (Dong and Maynard, 2013). This approach to sampling was seen as a more pragmatic method for defining the sample and acquiring data for the current research.

### 3.5.2 Sample Size

Due to inability to generalise research findings from qualitative studies, the issue of what represents an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies remains questionable. However, Dworkin (2012) defines a credible sample size for a qualitative study as one that is not more than fifty, yet not less than five participants. Thus, the sample size selected to generate the information on which the conclusions of this thesis are based is premised on this proposition because, generally, the intent of qualitative studies is to provide a robust amount of information, wherewith a subject of inquiry can deeply be understood from different perspectives. Thus, the researcher relied on data saturation to determine when to stop collecting additional information from additional participants where additional information obtained from them no longer captures new perspectives to those already obtained and coded by the researcher (Guest et al., 2006). It thus defines the sample size for this study.

For the purpose of this study, six leaders and respectively six followers were interviewed to ensure the diversity of perceptions. Leaders were selected from different level of organisational hierarchy (two-unit heads, two middle rank officers, two junior rank officers), and followers (operational non-commissioned frontline staff members) with sufficient length of service to ensure respondents familiarity with the leadership practices unfolding in the Qatar Rescue Police. Due to the structure of the Qatar Rescue Police, which mirrors structures of all public sector organisations in Qatar, all leaders and senior managers interviewed were native Qataris, since in line with governmental policy of Qatarization all organisations in the government sector are required to adhere to a 100% nationalization quota target for all nonspecialist jobs. This requirement has been operationalised by the introduction of 2009 Human Resource Administration Law No. 8, which targets the public sector and pension and more specifically Article 14 which highlights that Qataris are the first priority to receive any civil service job (Elbanna & Tahniyath, 2023). Consequently, the segmentation of employees in the Qatar Rescue Police represents Qatar's labour market scale of division between the native population and expatriates (Al Horr, 2011)

Respondent information together with identifying codes that will be used when referring to individual participants follows (see tables 1 and 2). Years in service has relevance in confirming the respondents' knowledge of the Department and the level of experience informing their responses

**Leaders (Qatari nationals)**

| **Table (1) Leaders Interviews** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Identifier** | **Rank** | **Years in Service** | **Duration of interview (in minutes)** |
| **L1** | **Head of Section (Major)** | **11 years** | **45** |
| **L2** | **Warrant officer** | **23 years** | **42** |
| **L3** | **Warrant officer** | **15 years** | **40** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **L4** | **1st Lieutenant** | **21 years** | **50** |
| **L5** | **Head of Section (Major)** | **15 years** | **46** |
| **L6** | **1st Lieutenant** | **8 years** | **40** |

**Followers (Expats – Non-Qataris)**

| **Table (2) Followers Interviews** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Identifier** | **Rank** | **Years in Service** | **Duration of Interviews (in minutes)** |
| **F1** | **Constable** | **11 years** | **45** |
| **F2** | **Constable** | **10 years** | **44** |
| **F3** | **Constable** | **5 years** | **52** |
| **F4** | **Constable** | **4 years** | **42** |
| **F5** | **Constable** | **11 years** | **45** |
| **F6** | **Constable** | **5 years** | **47** |

In addition to the interviews conducted, the researcher recorded personal observations of interactions between designated leaders and followers within the selected organisation. Field notes of observations included a description of the setting in which interactions between leaders and followers occurred. The context of the interaction was described along with observations regarding how leaders and followers responded during the interaction. Observations were made for average of three hours each day, two to three days per month for a total of five months, accounting to a total of 42

hours of observed data, interactions and practices, which resulted in 160 pages of field notes collected. Observations were made during group activities such as meetings (formal and informal), briefings, and debriefings, as well as one to one meetings. These interactions provided an opportunity to observe the actions of leaders interacting with followers and the perceived effects of these interactions and practices. For this sake, a simple code of FIELDNOTE-OBS# will be used to refer to the field notes gathered from observing the leader-follower interactions and practices (see table 3).

**Field Notes - Observations**

| **Table (3) Observations of Leader-Follower Interactions** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Identifier** | **Time** | **Details** | **Total Duration** |
| **OBS1** | **10:00 am** | **Casual meeting between officers and deputy director of the department** | **3 hours** |
| **OBS2** | **11:00 am** | **Briefing meeting Captain and 35 frontline constables** | **3 hours** |
| **OBS3** | **9:00 am** | **Briefing meeting Captain and 45 frontline constables** | **3 hours** |
| **OBS4** | **11:00 am** | **Casual meeting in the Director's secretary office** | **4 hours** |
| **OBS5** | **9:00 am** | **Briefing meeting 1st Lieutenant and 25 frontline constables** | **3 hours** |
| **OBS6** | **11:00 am** | **Briefing meeting 1st Lieutenant and warrant officer and 2 junior staff** | **4 hours** |
| **OBS7** | **10:00 am** | **Interview between a leader and a constable who had a complaint** | **4 hours** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OBS8** | **10:00 am** | **Meeting between head of unit and 2 constables** | **4 hours** |
| **OBS9** | **8:00 am** | **Briefing meeting lieutenant and 40 constables, with 3 of them arriving late** | **3 hours** |
| **OBS10** | **11:00 am** | **Briefing meeting captain and 30 frontline constables** | **4 hours** |
| **OBS11** | **10:00 am** | **Consultation meeting 2 constables and their shift manager captain** | **4 hours** |

Doing this successfully, required the researcher to collect and analyse the research data concurrently. This is achieved by making sure that data items (interview and observations transcripts) are thoroughly coded, categorised and relevant themes identified before moving from one participant to the next.

### 3.6 Data Collection Method

Methods utilised for this study included observations of interactions between members of the Rescue Police Department as well as interviews with leaders and followers within the organisation. Data collection involved the use of observations and semi structured interviews to acquire data from interviewees from the department. A detailed review of these methods is outlined in the sections below.

Interviews typically adhere to an interview protocol or guide, which is often developed and used by researchers who conduct qualitative studies (Klenke, 2014). Under this approach, general themes relevant to the topic were addressed by asking open-ended questions that foster an open, two-way conversation. Using an interview protocol, in the current research, ensured that themes identified through the literature review regarding employee engagement were directly addressed through questions asked of interviewees. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio tape

recorder. Prior to data collection, the researcher sent out an informed consent letter (see Appendix) to each participant which was signed to formally express their willingness to take part in the study.

### 3.6.1 Interview Protocol

The interview protocol developed for this study is attached at the end of this work (see Appendix). It was developed based on the literature review and the research gaps regarding leadership and employee engagement that the study intends to address. It was designed with respect to the three elements of employee engagement initially identified by Kahn (1990), namely physical, cognitive, and psychological/emotional engagement. In considering what constituents physical, cognitive and emotional elements, the researcher relied on widely-accepted and referenced research (Mumford, 1972; Kahn, 1992; O'Neill, Hodgson and Mazrouei, 2015) on the description of employee engagement in different organisational settings. Individual questions contained in the interview protocol were directed towards addressing the four main objectives of this study. But, for purposes of capturing and understanding the different views of leaders and followers, the interview protocol was slightly modified and adapted to serve the needs of each unit of analysis – leaders and followers respectively.

In general terms, the interview protocol was separated into two sections. The first section contains an outline of participant ranks and includes a brief introduction by the researcher, where the researcher informs participants about the purpose of the research. This section further highlights the ground rules guiding the interview process, where the researcher formally seeks permission from participants for the interview to be recorded. The second section of the interview protocol contains all relevant questions required to enable the researcher to address the four objectives of the study. Using a semi-structured data collection tool made it possible for the questions to be loosely structured. This allowed participants to freely express themselves on the connotation and operationalisation of the leadership concept,

without attempting to guide responses in a particular direction by using leading questions.

To avoid bias, the use of leading questions was completely avoided. Instead, the researcher sometimes used follow-up questions to prompt participants towards providing detailed explanations concerning specific ideas or situations. The use of open-ended questions to initiate a "conversation" reduces the level of bias the researcher would have possibly though unintentionally brought into the research, especially during the data collection process. For the purpose of ensuring that participants attempted answering questions directed at all the objectives, the second section of the interview protocol was further divided into three parts – A, B, and C. Questions contained in part A were designed exclusively to understand participants' perception of the concept of leadership. In addition, some of the questions address how traditional, power-driven leadership practices and contemporary (relational) approaches might possibly influence participants' views on leadership.

By introducing three key elements namely, autonomy, empowerment and self-determination, the researcher was able to capture how leaders and subordinates responded to certain statements, which demonstrate and exemplify the influences they exert. Part *A* questions helped to address the first research objective, which was '*to examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and subordinates in Qatar Rescue Police*. Thus, the questions were developed to capture the viewpoints of leaders and followers. Part *B* questions, on the other hand, were designed to identify practices likely to cause employee engagement or disengagement at work and explore possible ways of addressing these issues. These questions were directed towards addressing the second and third objectives of the thesis, which are '*to explain factors affecting subordinates' engagement towards work'* and '*to describe ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the police department'* respectively.

Questions that are contained in part *C* were designed to identify leadership practices likely to foster employee engagement and those considered suitable for managing bureaucratic institutions like the Rescue Police department. This set of questions

enabled the researcher to address the fourth objective of this thesis, which is 'to suggest leadership practices suitable for managing the police department and, hence develop a doctoral conceptual framework for the thesis'. Collation of participants' responses is expected to provide a basis for developing a framework that has the potential of becoming a bridge linking past studies, this thesis and further studies.

### 3.6.2 Observations

Studying leadership as a practice necessities researching leadership as a "lived" rather than exclusively reported experience (Realin, 2016)and this requires researcher's closeness to practices unfolding in the specific context. Non-participant observations have been recommended (Crevani, 2011) to capture the working dynamics and everyday activities that take place in organisations, as well as the lived experiences of their members (Nicolini, 2012). Observing participants in their 'natural' context allows paying attention to patterns of actions, socially shaped predispositions which typically remain non-representational and difficult (if not impossible) to be elicited via narrative interviews. The observational stage of data collection was focussed on understanding the way leadership parties unfold in the specific time and context. Each observation took several hours to record and collect, and it captured the reactions of subjects observed, which included a number of scenarios and occasions. The first type included leaders communicating with leaders, either between similar or senior to junior ranks. The second sets of observations included recording interactions between leaders and their subordinates during briefings, meetings and one to one interviews. It also captured some of those unofficial meetings where more information and understanding about the cultural settings was revealed. The third sets of observations captured the reflections of subordinates after they were in contact with their leaders, voicing out their concerns or happiness depending on the experience they had gone through.

### 3.6.3 Data Analysis

Analysis is the process of systematically scrutinising data to deduce meanings that are capable of addressing pertinent issues, objectives or questions of a research study

(Noble and Smith, 2014). Data analysis begins at different stages for qualitative and quantitative research activities but, for qualitative studies, this begins at the point of transcribing the audio recorded interviews and field notes of observations. Interviews were transcribed as outlined in this document and coding was performed alongside observational data recorded from field notes to assess similarities and differences in results. This process is designed to analyse qualitative data items. Each interview transcript was coded using open and axial coding mechanisms.

Mainstream research (Babbie and Rubin, 2010; Babbie, 2012) suggests that the use of these types of coding indicates that in the initial stages of the coding process, open coding typically provides a logical place for initiating the coding process. Moreover, it was found that as the coding process occurs, "analysis of the data will quickly advance to an iterative interplay of the three coding types" (Babbie, 2012: 397). Considering, first, the scope and definition of open coding, Babbie (2012) stated that this type of coding works to name discrete parts of the data so that comparison and evaluation of similarities and differences is possible. And that "events, happenings, objects, and actions/interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning are grouped under more abstract concepts termed categories" (Babbie, 2012: 397). Because open coding is the first approach to the analysis of qualitative data, all words, sentences, and phrases provided in the collected data contribute to the development of broader categories for further analysis.

Once identified, the open codes serve as the basis for further analysis to extract meaning from the data. For the purposes of this research, transcripts of interviews conducted during the data collection phase and field notes provided the basic source for open coding. Specifically, interview transcripts and field notes were reviewed by the principal investigator on a line-by-line basis and subjected to open coding to provide basic categories for further data analysis. It was possible to identify pertinent data related to employee engagement and leaders practices, and similarities were drawn. This suggests that the categories identified were relevant for fostering the identification of shared experiences for leaders and followers in relation to employee engagement within the workplace. Differences which provided in-depth understanding

regarding employee engagement influenced by the three interdependent factors – personal, cognitive and emotional/psychological factors were also noted.

Open codes were integrated and consolidated through axial coding. Axial coding, according to Jaccard and Jacoby (2010: 275) is analogous to "putting an axis through the data", suggesting that it involves "imposing a coding scheme onto the categories from open coding that identifies connections between the categories". In this process, the researcher essentially works to connect the dots and to find some congruence between the open codes identified in the initial round of coding. The authors further argued that there are several different methods for drawing connections between the data. These include conceptualising open codes as causally related, identifying open codes as different aspects of a common phenomenon, and/or identifying open codes as part of a process. While there are different approaches to use for creating axial codes, they contended that these are the most common. Based on this assessment, the development of axial codes for the current study included efforts to link open codes based on common phenomena associated with employee engagement.

This way, several codes and themes were repeated during interviews and observations, including respect for elderly, respect for hieratical structures of power, paternalistic relationship, brotherhood in God, the power of consultation, trust and wisdom as well as challenges and factors of concern to subordinates and leaders. These factors revealed organisational based issues like pay, fairness, contractual terms, communication with leaders and training requirements among others. In other occasions anomalies were detected including the role of tribal influence, autonomy for experienced followers and meetings with manager that seemed out for a number of years. More details were revealed and discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Data provided from the literature review in chapter two indicates that while employee engagement has been simplified to include incentives and rewards or physical components of engagement the concept has multiple dimensions that stem from cognitive and emotional aspects, which are currently overlooked in practice (Kahn, 1990). Consequently, it is imperative to incorporate these elements of employee

engagement in data analysis, linking open and axial codes based broadly on these themes. Once axial codes were identified for each field note data point and interview, evaluations were made to determine similarities and differences in leader and follower responses. Axial code evaluation provided additional insight into the depth of issues involved in the research as well as the similarities and differences between the responses and notes collected from participants. Prior to building themes and relevant categories from the coding process, member checking was done to ensure that data collected was accurate and that the themes identified are consistent with what the participants provided during the process. Themes were identified and grouped in accordance with thematic analysis. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) argue that thematic analysis involves the search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon under study. Braun & Clarke (2006) call it "a method, or process, for identifying and encoding patterns of meaning in primary qualitative research" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 80).

### 3.6.4 Credibility of the Research/ Observational Data

As noted by Ravitch and Carl (2016) trustworthiness in qualitative research is analogous to validity. These authors go on to argue that the choice and sequencing of methods in qualitative research is critical to the development of validity in a study. With these issues in mind, it seems reasonable to argue that when developing a qualitative study it is imperative to justify the choices made for the research method selected as well as the data collection methods. These concerns have been documented here and suggest that the methodology selected for use is both appropriate and trustworthy. Reliability in the data must be addressed through a consideration of the specific nature of qualitative designs and the use of both observational methods and interviews for data collection and analysis. Although observational studies provide deep insight into the phenomenon under investigation, researchers like Grimes and Schulz (2002) argued that this approach to research carries with it inherent bias that can complicate the ability of the researcher to demonstrate that the data collected is both valid and reliable.

To overcome these issues, the authors identified and proposed four areas of analysis that are to be considered when reviewing data collected from observation. These include assessment of selection bias to ensure that the groups are similar in important respects, the elimination of information bias which ensures that all data has been collected and analysed in the same manner. Accordingly, if data is not influenced by the pitfalls indicated in these four areas, the findings can be viewed as being real and worthy of inclusion into the wider body of knowledge regarding the subject matter it addresses (Grimes and Schulz, 2002). Based on this insight, observational data collected for this work was subjected to systematic evaluation utilising the four criteria noted above. They were applied to each observation and subsequent data analysis to ensure that selection bias, information bias, and chance were absent.

The absence of these factors fostered the inclusion of the observational data and its subsequent analysis.. Rigour and bias for qualitative interviews are concerns that must be addressed when constructing this type of methodology. Adding to the debate, Chenail (2011) opined that information provided in the literature suggests that instrumentation, rigour and bias management can be addressed through pilot exercises to test an interview protocol or observations' field notes. The author believes that pilot practice can provide advance understanding of when interview and observation protocols may fail. For the purposes of this research, two leaders and two followers that were not involved in the study were asked to complete pilot interviews and their interactions with group members were recorded.

Additional concerns for reliability and validity in qualitative studies involve the need for reflexivity. Sanjari et al. (2014) also claimed that qualitative studies require interaction between researchers and participants; a process that can raise ethical concerns for data collection and analysis. More specifically, results can be influenced by bias and subjectivity. To combat these issues, the authors re-emphasized the role and importance of reflexivity in a research study. Reflexivity requires investigators conducting this type of research to reflect on all aspects of data collection and interpretation to facilitate a broader understanding of how their views influence outcomes. They maintained that insights gained from this process should be directly

addressed through efforts to understand and interpret the results objectively. Hence, while designing the interview protocol, the researcher considered reflexivity and incorporated it during the design process. All aspects of the design process are discussed below, in the next section of this chapter.

### 3.6.5 Pilot Study

Advancements in research activities have paved the way for pilot studies to be used in all types of research. Over the years, pilot studies were commonly conducted by researchers doing quantitative research. The idea has since been extended to include qualitative and mixed method research activities. Researchers conduct pilot studies for a variety of reasons. These studies are done by quantitative researchers to establish the validity of a data collection instrument whereas qualitative researchers adopt them to determine whether a research study is feasible or not (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). Development of the interview and observation protocols was enhanced after the researcher conducted a pilot study to ensure the achievement of the research aim and objectives. In addition, the pilot study was used to ensure that protocols fully addressed the issues of the research. In view of this, the researcher sought participants who were not subjects of his research interest.

Four employees of the same police institution, but who are not from the Rescue Police department, hence they are not first responders, agreed to take part in the pilot study. They were mainly administrative staff and included two senior staff, who head their respective departments as well as two junior staff members. Questions that they responded to were those contained in the interview protocols for leaders – department and unit heads, and subordinates (frontline staff). Because they are administrative staff, the interviews were conducted at their offices and at their agreed time and date. The importance of interviewing employees in their work locations cannot be overemphasised. Since this is a phenomenology study, the need for the researcher to observe participants in their natural working settings is a crucial aspect of these types of studies. On average, each of the interviews lasted for about 40 minutes, and each observation lasted about 1 hour, a total of 4 observations were recorded.

## 3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in this study stem from two specific sources. This includes the need for reflexivity and ethical considerations. In the sections that follow, the steps that were taken to address these issues are reviewed.

### 3.7.1 Reflexivity

The process of phenomenological research requires three phases: epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Willig, 2013). Epoché involves efforts on the part of the researcher to identify bias and set it aside during the research process while phenomenological reduction requires an exploration of what makes the phenomenon unique. Imaginative variation requires an exploration of the phenomenon to interpret its meaning (Willig, 2013).

Essential to the achievement of reflexivity in this research is the process of epoché. Epoché is a process that transforms the researcher by recognizing the fact that individuals cannot live unquestioningly in the world (Larkin, Eatough and Osborn, 2011). Scholars utilising the phenomenological approach believe that most individuals take their culture, language, and mere existence for granted (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). Consequently, in order to acquire an understanding of the human experience, the researcher can no longer accept their present reality and must look to challenge themselves and how they currently view the world (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). To facilitate epoché, scholars have proposed the use of bracketing to help foster the researcher's ability to transcend this world view and to see things that most others simply accept (Larkin, Eatough and Osborn, 2011). Phenomenological reduction encompasses epoché and occurs when the researcher has accepted that what has been taken for granted can no longer be taken for granted (Larkin, Eatough and Osborn, 2011).

Bracketing will be integrated as part of this research to foster reflexivity. To this end, the interview protocol has been designed for open interpretation by respondents, and

the researcher will base conclusions on their responses without attempting to shape them to fit preferred theories and viewpoints.

In this effort, the researcher is aided by his role as a trainer and advisor to officers. In this context, he is not directly involved in operations and is therefore better able to adopt an impartial perspective rather than to support a specific status quo. Therefore, the researcher recognised the need to consider how his own positionality, subjectivities and biases guide and inform the research process. Influenced by Chavez (2008) a spectrum of insider/outsider positions, the researcher considered how his socialisation within communities (socialised outside the community but assimilated and endorsing the values of the indigenous community) and social identities (strong national and professional identity) affected the extent to which a researcher aligns themselves as inside or outside the participant experience. In reflecting on his position as partially, but not totally, an insider, led to the awareness of initial assumptions which underpinned formulating the research objectives and conducting a literature review.

The researcher's lived experience of the topic, Multicultural upbringing and Multilanguage educational experience, from both the Global South and Western institutions, prepared him to consider not only his own biases, but also to critically evaluate assumptions of the literature on leadership as practice. Whilst the former led to the consideration of the researcher's own unique positionality (socialisation within different communities) on the spectrum of the insider/outsider, it was the latter which led to a more thoughtful appreciation of the imbalance in the literature of the subject. This required paying more attention to the overrepresented voices, in this case predominantly Western, and the underrepresentation of voices from the Global South and specifically from the Middle East as Western societies represent major points of reference and repositories of preferred knowledge and development due to their perceived cultural dominance (Lo, 2011; Tikly, 2001, 2004). According to Barakat (2008) and Attiyeh (1993), the driving forces of the study of management in the Arab world are represented in key factors including language, history, religion and traditional values. The language issue is an important factor of the research process.

Though the research participants' language is Arabic, the researcher benefited from his Multilanguage skills in both Arabic and English. Phillips (1960:291) argues that the position of conceptual equivalence across languages is "an insolvable problem since almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values". Temple & Young (2008) also believe that the way researchers represent people who speak other languages is influenced by the way they see their social world. If the researcher is objective, it does not matter if they carry out the translation or if someone else does it, the result will be the same (Temple & Young, 2008). The researcher/translator role offered the researcher an invaluable opportunity for close attention to cross cultural meanings and interpretations which means staying closer to to the problems of meaning equivalence within the research process as emphasised by Temple and young (2008).

The researcher's awareness of his own subjectivity and cultural context that is developed via self-reflective practices required to accomplish stage one of the DBA programme, provided him with an understanding of the need to consider alternative explanations at every step of the research process, including data analysis where the researcher considered all data which 'did not fit; or was puzzling including looking for negative evidence, following up surprises' (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 275). The researcher asked himself what kind of alternative interpretations could be considered rather than the researcher's 'preferred' ones and then reviewed the data again to include any discounted evidence and avoiding focussing on data affirm his preconceptions. The researcher remained aware of his own positionality and embedded critical reflection in the whole process of research, paying attention to differentiating (Chavez, 2008) what the researcher *knows* from what he *heard* and *saw*.

Hence, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied in the process of data interpretation. The preliminary identification of themes was achieved and noted during transcription and interpretation to English of the recorded results. However, to ensure that preliminary impressions were not overly influenced by preconceptions which may lead to applying greater weight to some themes than others, or be

misinterpreted, the transcripts were revisited, read, and re-read throughout the data analysis process in a search for additional, contributing, or contradictory themes that may have been overlooked or discounted. Initial noting was compared to later reflections, repeatedly modifying initial perceptions during this search for connections and cross-emergent themes in cross case analysis. These reflections resulted in some findings that had not, at first, seemed evident based on the researcher's experience, achieving the aim of a more robust understanding of the phenomena of leadership and employee engagement within the contexts of the organisation being studied and the culture that shapes actions and perceptions within it. As noted by Hill and Knox (2021), IPA rests on the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. Thus, the evolving understanding of observed phenomena forms an essential part of the data analysis process.

During pre-interviews with subjects, the interview arrangements were discussed informally and it was agreed that the aim of this research was to achieve realistic, personalised viewpoints from which new perspectives could be deduced rather than to reflect any particular image or concept currently believed to exist. Participants were also led to understand that although interviews would be recorded, they would not be used for any purpose other than the research, and would not form part of any performance review or evaluation within the workplace.

### 3.7.2 Ethics

According to Kang and Hwang (2021), the ethical concerns inherent in qualitative research continue to be upholding informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, adhering to beneficence's principle, and the practices of honesty and integrity.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure voluntary participation in the study and was acquired by requiring each participant to sign a letter of informed consent (see Appendix), which details all information regarding the study and participant's rights. The informed consent form included a review of the participant's

right to withdraw from the study at any point in time for any reason. Each participant was asked to provide written consent.

Data confidentiality and privacy were maintained through several different steps. In order to ensure participant privacy, no personal identifying information was collected from participants during interviews or observations. All interview transcripts and field notes were coded based on the position of the participant within the organisation. Participant information, such as email addresses needed for member checking, was stored on a secure laptop to which only the researcher had access. All hard copy data obtained from the research including interview transcripts and field notes for coding and signed informed consent forms were stored in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher had access. All hard copy and electronic data from the study will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

In alignment with the beneficence principle, the aim of this study is to benefit leaders, subordinates, and the public by seeking a better understanding of how leadership practices and employee engagement can be enhanced to promote the efficient functioning of the Rescue Police in Qatar - an outcome that will be of benefit to both those seeking to perform this service and those whom it serves.

In dealing with participants and in the interpretation of research results, honesty and integrity provide the guiding principles under which all activities were undertaken. And, by obtaining informed consent and committing to confidentiality, the researcher was able to reassure participants that the information volunteered by them would in no way be prejudicial to their positions, thereby ensuring that they felt comfortable to provide their opinions without any form of inhibition or evasion.

## 3.8 Chapter Summary

The information provided here outlines the methodology proposed for use in the current study to examine employee engagement in the Qatar Rescue Police. A

qualitative phenomenological approach is proposed utilising both observations and semi-structured interviews to acquire insight regarding how employee engagement is fostered in the practice of leadership. The data obtained from this methodological approach will be evaluated in the following chapter and should provide a useful foundation upon which to fully understand how employee engagement is facilitated within the organisation.

# Chapter 4

# FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Introduction

The data gathered from members of the Qatar Rescue Police aims to address the four research questions posed in Chapter One from two perspectives: that of leaders and "followers" or subordinates. Reference will be made to the conceptual framework (figure 1) in chapter 2 to establish the link between the theoretical concepts and practical issues obtained from the research data. Analysis of the data with reference to literature will occur in Chapter 5.

The interviews conducted sought to uncover personal perspectives on leadership and employee engagement, and are therefore couched in informal language which nevertheless can be related to the terminology used in literature. Following the interview responses, observational data from the field notes will be integrated to add to the understanding of the practices and interactions that occur between leaders and followers.

In this chapter, data gathered will be collated, highlighting both areas in which respondents seemed to be in agreement as well as contrasting statements which demonstrate differences of opinion. The data will be organised relative to the research objectives to which it relates and according to the status of respondents as either leaders or followers. Analysis of the data with reference to literature will occur in Chapter 5.

The interview questions were designed to elicit perceptions of participants on leadership and its role in fostering employee engagement within the Qatar police department. Responses were recorded as they occurred within the conversation and certain themes were spontaneously raised when responding to related questions. As a result, responses must be viewed holistically and not only in context of the questions that prompted the responses given. In assessing the data, therefore, reference is made to the research objectives responses relate to rather than the specific interview

questions that prompted responses. Field notes recorded during observations will be brought in where relevant to accord or contrast the interview responses of both leaders and followers. References to the conceptual framework (figure 1) in chapter 2 will be made to establish the link between the theoretical concepts and practical issues obtained from the research data.

## 4.2 To examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and followers in the Qatar Rescue Police.

### 4.2.1 Leaders' Perspective: What is Leadership?

Since the Qatar Rescue Police is a strongly hierarchical organisation built on military-style approaches to rank and authority, it is not unsurprising that most respondents in leadership positions referred to command or the closely-related concepts of being a "decision maker" and "problem-solver" as equating leadership.

Only one respondent (L1) defined a leader as a person who has "*Responsibility, vision, ability to work with people and influence their feelings and actions for better outcomes*" This particular respondent spoke of leadership as a "quality" residing in the personality traits of the leader as well as touching on certain practices which he felt contribute to effective leadership as follows: "*The leader should be strong, but someone people can love and respect at the same time. The leader should be able to task people properly and follow up on their achievements with feedback on their performance to establish continuous improvement and a healthy work environment.*" This has a close resemblance to the traits theories advanced in literature and contains elements of performance management practice which, though falling outside the scope of this thesis may nevertheless form part of leadership practice. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

L2 reflected themes of command, decision-making, and saw workplace performance and engagement as a means of measuring leaders' effectiveness. This respondent also

identified the role of the organisation in leadership. *"Leadership means taking the right decisions; command is different from each field of work to another, even in personal life. It all depends on leadership, and the command of the officer in charge, productivity and engagement actually reflect command, because they are influenced by the way people lead and how the organisation treats its staff."*
L3 followed the theme of command and responsibility "*Leadership means that someone is in charge, for example, a manager or a commander responsible for a group of policemen or a certain work shift.*"

L4 highlighted control, as well as a thorough knowledge of administration and procedure. "*The terms leadership denotes that someone must be well-versed in their role and can be in control of the position they are in, fully administrating the workplace, to know how to act on leadership affairs alongside with the assignment at hand, if they are tasked with leading an assignment, then they must administer it in a correct way.*"

L5 respondent noted: "*Leadership is of many types; leadership is about leading a group of staff, making decisions and resolving problems and other matters related.*"

L6 defined leadership as a position of command, but added that interpersonal relationships come into play. "*Commanding is like a steering wheel; without command we cannot move forward. This is a universal code, even at home there must be a command structure. Absence of command will lead to loss. Command is the basis of everything. Without command, no progress is seen. If a commander is taking charge, he will then create success for his staff members as a whole. There must be a right commander to help manage the entire work group and know them one by one."*

Knowledge and practical experience were also raised by this respondent: "*A commander is not tied to his rank, service, or seniority…. A true commander must not only be experienced and senior but also well-versed in all details and know all the job requirements otherwise he would not qualify for a commander status."*

Other comments related to the nature of leadership arose during the course of interviews including: L6 remarked: "*Naturally, we must work collectively; we are talking even on the commander's level as opposed to his staff members. There is no use if the commander did not engage with his subordinates.*"
Leadership traits were also mentioned at other junctures, for example, L5 observed: "*The leader has many characteristics, being patient, working proactively on behalf of his subordinates when it comes to work performance on the basis of being a positive role model.*" Although this research will focus on leadership practices rather than leadership traits, certain practices could be seen as demonstrations of these traits and should be considered.

L6 also commented: "*There are some commanders who believe they possess the commanding qualities by using discipline and force, using military rules and as you know these military rules are rigid, you can refer to these rules in order to control as many staff members as possible, in my opinion this is not a true commander, command is an art.*" Hence, it appears that L6 feels that the use of coercive leadership practices should not be regarded as having relevance in leadership practice despite the militaristic nature of the organisation.

As noted by respondents in leadership positions, the commander is referred to capable leader who must have superior knowledge of procedures and precedents as dictated by the laws, procedures, and precedents of the department. However, it would appear that this is not always the case. L6 stated: "*We cannot confirm an officer to be a real commander just because he completed his studies at the military or police college,*" this respondent suggested that leaders must have exposure to the operational environment of their subordinates in order to lead effectively. This accords with the Podhorec et al. (2017:242) definition of a commander as the one who "has to solve problems regarding with planning, organising, coordination, leadership and control during daily activities and duties".

In synthesising leaders' perceptions regarding the nature of leadership, their responses can be summarised as follows:

1. Command, responsibility, control, providing direction and having the ability to influence and provide support for subordinates are elements that recurred in all leader interviews. This, as described in the conceptual framework, suggests the importance of organisational context. Here the leaders' understanding of leadership is shaped by the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure, typical for all police organisations. It is the very nature of policing work that requires a clear division of work and a strong sense of the lines of command in order to help organisations reduce uncertainty. Consequently, authority, command and control are considered as essential to standardise operating procedures.
2. Decision making and problem solving roles could be implied from most responses but were not always directly stated.
3. In-depth, practical knowledge of policing as a requirement for leadership was directly stated as an important characteristic of leaders by three of the respondents.
4. Certain personal traits (patience, consultation, being a positive role model, knowledge, etc) were regarded as having relevance to the discussion on the nature of leadership. Perceptions of these traits were shaped by cultural context and the way in which leadership was practised, suggesting a link with the conceptual framework.

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### 4.2.2 Followers' Perspective: What is Leadership?

Reflecting leader terminology, followers referred to leaders as "commanders" at one point or another during their interviews. However, it is notable that not all of them used the word "command" when defining what leadership is. The most commonly used term was "responsibility."

F1 represented an exception: "*respecting others whether senior or junior to you*" and "*being disciplined in achieving your work tasks*" thereby indicating qualities the respondent felt were essential to leadership.

F2 observed "*Leadership is managing others in the department*" and highlights "*being in charge*," while emphasising the leader's role as a teacher (mentor) and influencer in that they practice support to their new staff and guide them on how to do the job effectively to avoid falling in mistakes and be informed when responding to public calls."*When we came to work here we did not have experience, our managers taught us how to do the job effectively. We learned from them how to respond to emergency calls and how to act in different situations and how to best deal with the public. They influenced us to achieve the best service and response for the public.*"

F3 defined leadership as "*the officer in charge being responsible for his policemen, that person is holding responsibility for all matters, and he would be the main commander.*" thereby echoing the themes of responsibility and command.

F4 voiced the opinion that: "*Leadership means being responsible on the operational level, it is like overseeing something, you will be given a task and duty to carry out. You should be responsible for an assignment and exert dedication*."

F5 highlighted the management role of leaders as follows: "*If someone is our commander, that means this commander oversees a group of policemen and the commander would have a specific goal in leading those security personnel, the commander will choose specific staff members according to the job required so that the desired outcomes are met by the commander. The commander must put a plan in place before aiming to reach his goal; this plan must be followed step by step until reaching the desired goal. The commander must manage the group of security staff effectively whether the incidents are minor or major.*"

F6 focused on leadership's responsibility for outcomes, noting "*In my opinion, leadership means responsibility, this means that you should be the first and last person in charge and by that you try to minimise the margin of error.*"
The themes of command, management, oversight, and responsibility were echoed by respondents, with emphasis on typical management activities and qualities such as planning, ensuring that desirable outcomes are achieved, and demonstrating dedication. It was interesting to note that the leaders' role in human relationships and in providing support was more strongly emphasised by leadership respondents, with followers focussing primarily on leaders' role as operational managers.

However, it is notable that respondents agreed that not all leaders were the same, highlighting support for followers and communication style as being among the factors that differentiated leaders from one another. F3 noted that: "*not all commanders treat their policemen the same way,*" indicating that leaders interpret their roles differently and exercise leadership based on their perceptions of their roles.

Knowledge and experience were also seen as factors that affected the effectiveness of leadership. "*If he is experienced enough and knows the areas and procedures very well, his actions and way of management can differ from a junior shift manager who can be of little assistance to the staff in the field.*" (F1)

Awareness of the organisation's role as the determinant of the leadership environment was apparent. Placing leadership in the context of the organisation, one respondent noted: "*the organisation has the ultimate power*." (F1)

Follower responses on what constitutes leadership include:

1. Responsibility for operations and outcomes, management, and authority were recurring themes.
2. Experience was considered important.

3. Relationships were highlighted and one respondent noted that in their relationships with and support for subordinates, different practices were applied by different leaders.

Hence, it would appear that, although rank commands respect, the way leadership is practiced is important in leadership efficacy, and that engaging leadership, and a willingness to represent followers' concerns at a higher level, though not part of most respondents' immediate definition of leadership, may encourage followers to exert greater effort in their contribution to organisational goals. Since this is leadership's role, these "soft" aspects, often seen as being a matter of style, could indicate a formally recognized requirement for leadership practice.

In observing meetings and interactions between leaders and followers, various notes have been recorded; the following is relevant to leader's knowledge and decision making capability:

10:00 am - *Two expat policemen of constable rank who just finished their 8 hour duty, approached their shift manager - a captain rank leader - to discuss an issue that occurred towards the end of their shift where they encountered a problem - a senior officer from another department came to the accident scene and breached the cordon, when one of the constables challenged him, he refused to stop and went inside. They were seeking the Captain's guidance and decision on what to do in this situation. The Captain thanked them for sharing such significant issues, so solutions can be sought. The Captain reassured the constables that they have his support and trust to enforce the department procedures. He guided them that they need to submit a report about the incident in exact details, and next time they do the exact same action and prevent anyone who is not authorised to go in the police cordon, even if they were police officers. Constables said "thank you sir for your trust and support, we hope to be up to your expectations always". Both left with a smile and can be heard saying "great, Alhamdulillah or thanks to God for the outcome".*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS11***

The officer in charge was positive in his language with his two constables, his tone was calm and reassuring, and he listened well to their issue and offered them his support, even though within the police context it would be very hard to stop a senior officer and that can be risky for the constables career, but having a supportive leader can give them the confidence to do their job right without having to be affected by the hierarchy of ranks.

Another example observed revealed a different reaction from followers towards the interaction they had with their leader. It was the monthly meeting to distribute the rota:

9:00 am - *Some 45 constables were sitting in the main briefing room, waiting for their shift manager. When the leader -captain rank- entered the room all constables, including the warrant officer, stood up and saluted him. This appeared to be a standard practice that some leaders insist for it to be followed. The captain started talking in a loud voice and formal tone, telling the officers what needs to be done and providing details on how they must do it. No one in the room said anything and the captain did not invite questions or comments. He said: "Now you all know the details about next month's planning. I will not accept comments or debate. If you have any questions or change requests, go to the director of the department. I accept no discussion on this matter." Upon leaving the room, a few constables started buzzing with comments of disappointment, saying "What's his role as a leader? Why did he accept to be the leader of the shift? He should have some responsibility" some of the constables stood up pushing their chairs away in protest of the captain's attitude.*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS3***

This example reveals a gap in understanding what the leader role is and it contradicts in action what leaders' respondents said about what leadership is. Even Though multiple examples observed showed positive application of what leaders believed their role in shaping up followers engagement, this particular example, and some others, is an indication that some leaders practices could lead to feelings of disappointment and resentment among followers.

## 4.3 To explain factors causing subordinates' disengagement towards work, and how these can be addressed from local not Western perspectives

In responses relating to the causes of disengagement, common factors were identified by both leaders and followers. However, followers were more vociferous in this regard, while leaders were more inclined to mention these factors only in passing.

This could be attributed to the fact that the "leaders" themselves see certain factors as falling outside of their personal powers, being determined by the organisation and its current circumstances rather than the leader. Organisational context is identified in the conceptual framework as a key influence on leadership practice. Followers were also inclined to provide recognition for their direct leaders while noting the, primarily organisation-based, concerns that led to them experiencing feelings of disengagement.

At the same time, leaders' approach to organisational obstacles to engagement, as well as the manner in which leadership is practised, were referenced by both leaders and followers when discussing engagement or the lack thereof in context.

### 4.3.1 Leaders Perspective and Practices: What causes disengagement in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police?

#### 4.3.1.1 Personal Circumstances and Preferences

In general, leaders expressed the opinion that their followers were engaged in their work. The nature of police work itself was raised by one leader respondent who commented that it has a "Psychological impact," and remarked that when facing anomalous or previously unprecedented situations, critique of constables' actions is often received with the benefit of hindsight, failing to recognize the dilemmas facing a police constable confronted by an unusual or particularly unpleasant situation. A certain degree of disengagement was, he believed, inevitable under such

circumstances where followers do not receive support and understanding from their leaders or the organisation for the issues they encounter in the security field. Another leader respondent appeared to believe that personal resilience played a role rather that the situation but the person's capability to deal with security field pressures.

A respondent identified the need to understand employees' situation outside of the workplace since personal issues could lead to disengagement and loss of productivity. He felt that, as a leader and "spiritual father" seeking ways to mediate disputes occurring outside the workplace to reduce the impact of disengagement owing to home-life-related issues could be beneficial.

L1 observed: "*In my opinion, the environment of the employees where they live outside work settings is equally important to the work environment and it affects whether they will be more or less engaged.*" The respondent went on to detail an example in which he actively intervened in the situation. This contrasts with the commonly-accepted Western view that places a strict divide between personal and work life, and is therefore of interest in the cultural context. This is reflected in the conceptual framework suggested for this thesis whereby placing the right emphasis on context is key in informing leaders' practices and their link to engagement of employees.

L4 also felt that individual preferences might lead to disengagement: "*As I said before, there are some policemen who like their tasks and others don't.*"

L6 felt that leaders should strive to be aware of their followers' personal problems: "*There are some staff members who have some personal issues and private matters at home. Then you can't make that staff member engaged with you unless you know them.*"

Regarding a small number of followers, L6 also noted: "*I can say they are not comfortable with the nature of their job; we refer to them as employees for the salary only.*"

L2 and L3 did not mention personal circumstances or preferences as having a role in disengagement.

#### 4.3.1.2 Salary Cuts and Unequal Remuneration

Among leaders identifying work-related causes of disengagement, equity in remuneration, with similar rewards being given in exchange for similar levels of effort, were an obstacle. L4 observed: "*I start wondering why we are doing the same job but getting paid differently."*With regard to remuneration as an obstacle to engagement, there was some consensus. Leaders acknowledge that their followers are "disappointed" as a result of salary cuts implemented during Covid-19.

"*Other issues affecting engagement are the economic factors, for example how fair the pay is and whether they feel financially settled and secure. During covid-19 global crisis salaries have been reduced which affected staff feelings and consequently created disappointment. However, in my section I have worked hard to compensate my staff and to lift up their spirits in order to minimise the impact of this reduction.*" (L1)

L2 produced an anomalous response: "*I don't think organisation policies or habits have any effects on performance or engagement in militaristic organisations, the law is clear, 1+1 = 2.*"

L3, on the other hand, believed that salary cuts had reduced engagement: "*For expat resident staff, it is the issue of salary cuts, the staff had been complaining amongst themselves.*"

L4 reflected on the importance of material incentives, but did not specifically discuss the issue of salary cuts: "*Not to forget material and moral incentives, if no monetary rewards are given, then allowing reasonable rests and break times for maybe a week after they have achieved their duties.*"

L5 did not refer to remuneration, observing that he had not observed any signs of frustration at work.

The leaders' responses show a variation in understanding of issues of concern to followers including matters related to their personal circumstances and remuneration. Emotional intelligence is key in this regard to be able to support followers when they expect their leaders to step in and do something about their suffering, which in turn can influence better levels of engagement. These personal circumstances and Preferences can form potential organisational issues which inhibit leadership practices enhancing employee engagement. The dilemma Leaders have in this department is that some issues are outside the control of leaders, even though they see the importance and would like to fix those issues but it is outside their scope due to the unique nature of military organisations whose contexts hinder a broader implementation of leadership practices that can lead to engagement.

#### 4.3.1.3 Leave and time off

Leaders cited recent pressure, partly due to the 2022 World Cup, which caused additional limitations to time off and leave, in particular, as being de-motivating to subordinates, particularly those from other countries who have no access to their families when leave is not granted or is postponed.

This was corroborated by the leadership respondent who commented that he had not seen "*any signs of frustration*" (L5) at work, but who went on to remark: "*a human being needs rest times…there are administrative matters like providing the staff with leaves.*"

The themes of remuneration and the need for rest breaks and leave were noted in several leader interviews. As a respondent observed: "*If no monetary rewards are given, then allow reasonable rests and break times.*" (L4)

L6 observed that there were operational constraints causing issues "*...with vacations and the numbers of staff sometimes restricts you from providing them with enough leaves*."

L1 identified leave as being among the issues he felt should be addressed by the organisation: "*If I had more authority in the ministry or in the department I would start with frontline staff and improve their situation, feelings, resources, payments, leaves, treatment and their entire environment.*"

L2 was less specific, but noted: "T*here are challenges in the workplace but it is mainly due to ministry-wide issues rather than within our department*". In the conceptual framework (figure 1), the above mentioned concerns fall under the organisational context, not necessarily under the practices of the leaders, however, if left out unattended can inhibit leadership practices which in turn can hinder better employee engagement process.

#### 4.3.1.4 Poor communication

Interpersonal relationships between leaders and their subordinates were commented on. Although several respondents focused on the benefits of positive communication practices, it may be assumed that its opposite would contribute to disengagement and should be considered when examining this theme as well as factors promoting engagement.

One respondent noted that if a commander had negative bias towards a subordinate or follower, this would result in "*lack of communication and contact*" (L2) with consequent reduction in engagement. However, despite emphasising the importance of "kindness," L2 expressed impatience with constables wishing to make complaints or discuss work-related problems: "*The right approach in my opinion for that person is to finish his 8-hour shift and leave, as a commander I don't like seeing staff complaining at my office door all the time.*"

Interpersonal communication practices were raised by a leader who noted that there are those who: "*scream and shout on their subordinates which will lead to distancing of work relationship, this is a wrong approach, if practised, it would lead to unproductiveness at work.*"(L4)

He felt that positive communication was required both when followers perform well and when disciplinary matters were being addressed: "*If you criticise them and reprimand them by saying you have failed jobs, then they would be frustrated and feel under-appreciated. The correct approach is notifying them of their mistakes and showing them how to correct them. You should not allow for the same mistake to reoccur. Through a nice way of communication, you can correct their actions even if they committed a mistake.*"

L1 did not discuss communication directly, but observed the importance of encouragement and recognition: "*The leader must be close and supportive to his staff, encouraging creativity and high performance. In return, the leader should be the first to notice good practice and recognise it in different ways.*"

L3 commented: "*By talking to them, you will encourage them before they start their work, if there is any work-related information that needs to be communicated, a commander could communicate the message simply to the policemen without complications.*" He emphasised the need for open communication channels, noting that a leader: "*must hold meetings with his staff and meet with his subordinates and ask if his staff need anything*."

L5 remarked: "*In this line of work, all praise to God, we work as one team and we lift each others' spirits through direct guidance and one to one meeting with the staff, and the results are tangible when it comes to the work morale.*" He added: "… a*s long as the commander is available and present with his group and he is constantly following*

*up with them and attending to their problems and listening to their issues, rest assured that his staff members will have high work spirit.*"

The positive effects of listening to staff with attention and communicating well were seen in the following examples of observed interactions between leaders and followers when discussing about logistical requests

11:00 am - *The 1st lieutenant started the meeting by welcoming the other officers and started the discussion on logistical requirements for the shifts. He invited the junior officers to voice their requirements and concerns. Each of the participants in the meeting had a list of issues and requests and they discussed them openly with the 1st lieutenant. Requests were either resolved or referred to the concerned department for follow-up. When the officer was unable to resolve issues, he explained the reasons for this and committed to escalating them to the relevant decision-makers (head of unit, director of the department, HR and logistics departments were mentioned). Other officers of junior rank were comfortable and appeared to be pleased with the outcome of the meeting as was seen in their comments to the leader "that's absolutely fine we can wait ...that's good then let's liaise with HR on this matter...will be great if you raise it to the director and let us know his decision."*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS6***

However, in another meeting observed, the leader was less encouraged to listen to staff concerns when presenting to them the monthly plan of shifts and schedules.

9.00 am - *Captain speaking with pointing fingers and raining his voice loud, near to shouting at his staff, and was very firm. Then, he walked away without acknowledging his staff in any way; did not ask if they had any comments or questions. When the captain left the room, some constables did not show any reaction, others just left, with a statement of "Ce la vie" resulting in cynical smiles and shrugs. Others were complaining about the style of communication saying: "Why do we go to the big boss?*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS3***

The previous field note from observation provided an example of clearly stated unwillingness to listen and a lack of openness to two way communication. "*I will not accept comments or debate. I accept no discussion on this matter", d*eferring communication without a clearly stated reason.

Yet another leader was observed less welcoming of staff involvement in open communication with the group when talking to them about leave and holiday

11.00 am - *the constable - who is a Sudanese expat - raised his hand with a question "Sir, can I know if it is possible to take leave at the end of this month? Captain answered: "If you have any questions regarding the leaves, come to my office and let us have a chat privately."*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS2***

This reinforces the observation that leadership practices within the Qatar Rescue Police are variable.

#### 4.3.1.5 Reluctance when acting against members of the public based on cultural affiliations.

Reflecting on multiculturalism with reference to a potential reluctance to act, L6 observed "*Reflecting on the cultural challenges within the working environment of the state of Qatar, I would consider staff on their tribal basis, for example, I will not deploy a person from a tribe closer to their living places. By applying such a mechanism, I would guarantee those personnel work at places not tied to their tribal makeup so when they receive a radio dispatch, they will not be reluctant to act.*"

This refers to the practice of people from different nationalities congregating in specific areas of Qatar based on their cultural or tribal origins. The respondent felt that engagement may be affected if constables were required to practise law-enforcement duties involving punitive actions against their countrymen or tribespeople. This type of action would be regarded as a form of betrayal in a culture where tribal loyalties are extremely strong. This is a unique perspective and sensitive one. In the conceptual

framework, these issues stem from Arabic and local values of which leaders need to be aware of so they can produce informed practices that match the expectations of followers and in turn can influence their engagement. Leaders in Western environments might not face the same dilemma when their staff are responding to emergency calls. This suggests that the specific context crucial for the effectiveness of practices and actions and their link to employees engagement.

So, leaders' practices have a role in influencing employees' engagement in that they are seen as the supporting figures that they can resort to when they face issues or have some concerns. The knowledge of leaders in their followers expectations implies that they need to act towards addressing these issues or at least seen trying. The reactions seen in observing activities between leaders and followers show multiple reflections, some left followers engaged, and others left feelings of disappointment.

### 4.3.2 Followers Perspective: What causes disengagement in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police?

Certain "followers" were reluctant to share critique of the organisation or its officers. One respondent clearly stated that there were issues that he was not willing to discuss. However, among certain highly experienced, high-performing constables, who can be assumed to have comparatively high levels of engagement, there was a greater willingness to discuss disengagement from their own perspective and from that of their colleagues. It was notable that many Qataris raised concerns that were relevant to their expat colleagues, indicating that Qatari native followers felt co-responsible in ensuring that the needs of their non-Qatari colleagues received attention.

It can be assumed that in the light of an understandable reticence in making comments that could be construed as critical of the organisation and its leadership, those issues that were raised by followers were considered of particular importance to them and are therefore well worth consideration and analysis.

#### 4.3.2.1 Leave and remuneration, family access, status

As with leaders, followers identified the primary issues in the organisation context causing disengagement, for example salary cuts during Covid-19 that have not, as yet, been rectified, and difficulty with taking leave. Resident and local Qatari constables spoke out on behalf of their expat colleagues, noting that a lack of leave prevented these individuals from seeing their families and observing that it would be natural under the circumstances if these constables experienced feelings of disengagement.

Compounding the issue of leave and access to families, leave that has already been granted is sometimes cancelled at short notice. In addition, some constables reported that they are rarely able to take their full annual leave allocation owing to operational needs. Both expat and local constables commented that assistance with visas and accommodations that would allow the families of expat Rescue Police staff to visit Qatar instead, or provision of housing for expat families on a longer-term basis could help to resolve this cause of disengagement. Similarly, to the previously mentioned concerns, these aspects are categorised in the conceptual framework as 'an organisational context' and whilst they do not directly relate to or reflect leadership practices, they matter for constables' perceptions of leaders. When constables' express their lack of satisfaction with the issues outside leaders' influence they may attribute their disengagement to the leadership practices, therefore they expect their leaders to act or mediate.

A typical standpoint is reflected by the follower (F3) who remarked: "*I would be at work, but did not see my children for one year as they are in my home country! My thoughts would be focused on my children instead of the task at hand. If I need to see my children, I must wait for my turn to take time off, and my turn might be in a year or two*."

Reductions in remuneration linked to Covid-19 were still in force, and respondents linked this reduced remuneration to status. "*The job status is lower than it used to be,*" observed F3.

Incentives had also been reduced. As a respondent noted when referring to rewards for exceptional performance: *"...the officer in charge will in turn reward the policemen for their effectiveness with a day or two days leave. But nowadays we are lacking such encouraging gestures."* (F5)

Other comments confirming these issues as being among the primary sources of disengagement include:

F1: "*What is not going well with me and many of my colleagues is the leaves system. By law we have 45 calendar days annually, but we practically receive only 30 days of them each year. The rest are kept in the credit but we can't take them due to work staffing requirements.*"

F2: "*I think first of all is leaves, then reward*."

F3: "*When the deduction of salaries came across the organisation, it really affected us gravely, we were promised an increase of salary, but it was otherwise.*"

F5: "*Generally speaking, 60 % of our workforce, and I mean patrolling policemen, are concerned about their salaries, salaries really affect their level of performance. Some policemen entirely rely on their salaries to meet their ends and any deduction would gravely affect them, in addition to leaves, and I talk about policemen that don't get the chance to see their families only once in 2 years."*

F6: "*If I was made in charge of the shift, then I would give all policemen leaves…*"

#### 4.3.2.2 Long hours, lack of recognition, resourcing issues and "perks"

Several respondents cited the 12-hour shifts they have been required to work owing to Covid-19, 2022 football World Cup as well as emergency incidents' pressures on the police force as contributing to a lack of engagement and productivity. F1 remarked that arriving late resulted in deductions while overtime work was not always remunerated, leaving him feeling discouraged.

In one of the briefing meetings observed, a similar scene was recorded when the duty officer of Lieutenant rank was giving instructions to some 40 staff constables before they were deployed to the streets of Qatar:

8:00 am - *three constables arrived 6 minutes late to the briefing morning meeting, and they walked into the room, the officer in charge looked at them, paused his speech for a couple of seconds and told them to sit on the left side chairs. As he finished the briefing, he asked the three late arrivals to come forward and to write their names for the warrant officer to issue them with delay notice (which is a way of disciplinary procedure). As the Lieutenant walked outside the room, one of the late constables approached the warrant officer and said "Sir, how many times did I stay 30 minutes and more late after my shift is done? Should we have credit for such days when we fail to arrive on time for the start of our shift? Warrant officer responded with a low voice and a little smile "He is the leader and we must respect his decision".*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS9***

Many of the constables in the room were seen dissatisfied with the action of the Lieutenant even though his message was received that one must respect the time of the briefing meeting, however, feeling of disappointment was felt way beyond the affected ones by noting their reactions to such practice from the Lieutenant "in many occasions we accepted to stay late after end of our shift for work interest, when we are in a situation of being late few minutes we expect to be forgiven" a group of constables voiced out to the warrant officer. Others said "this is unfair". As a result,

such practices from leaders could make staff feel lack of fairness and could form a sort of disengagement as explained by F1.

In addition, while it had formerly been the norm for police constables to receive bonuses for extended shifts it was reported that: "*We all anticipated some bonuses for having worked 12-hour shifts for 4 consecutive months, yet the staff got surprised by something else, so instead of bonuses we got deducted* (salary cut). *This really left an impact on us.*" (F3)

In a related point that was frequently raised, patrolling constables working these shifts were required to provide their own meals while on patrol (F1, F5, F6). One respondent observed that this often resulted in constables being overly frugal in their eating, and with physical needs left unaddressed, performance declined. In this sense, constables felt under-resourced to perform their work effectively. However, apart from remuneration, "perks" and time off, additional concerns were raised by followers.

The organisation's policy with regard to the issuing of, and choice of uniforms was raised as a factor affecting motivation. Some felt that two uniforms per year were sufficient while others did not, but all agreed that "(we are) *not comfortable with the new uniform, because of the material,"* since this material is heavy and "*only suitable for winter*," (F1, F3, F6) followers remarked that they were spending personal funds on uniforms better suited to Qatar's hot summers.

A further source of dissatisfaction contributing to disengagement was the need for constables to use their own mobile phones at times (F1, F3), compounding a feeling that between salary cuts, purchasing costly ready-to-eat food on duty, a need to buy more comfortable uniforms, and the cost of personal airtime being used for work purposes, work-related expenses were consuming personal budgets while remuneration and rewards had simultaneously been reduced. All these issues have relevance to the conceptual framework developed in this thesis (figure 1) whereby both organisation and leaders have a direct or indirect role in shaping up employee

engagement levels based on their practices and interventions or the lack thereof. They also reflect on the role of operational leadership as advocates. For example, one of the leaders interviewed indicated that he had already taken steps to address the need for personal airtime use through consultation with organisational leadership - acting as a much-needed link between high-level decision-makers and operational staff. This relates to the unifying communication framework suggested in figure 4.

#### 4.3.2.3 The role of leadership and the organisation in disengagement

In general, there were few direct criticisms targeting immediate superiors and their leadership practices, although some noted that not all leaders were equally effective at achieving engagement. Speaking of the latter, one respondent commented: "*there are some of them we hoped we wouldn't work with them again.*" (F6) And F3: "*If I hear a bad word from my boss, surely when I take the patrol and drive I won't feel happy about it and that can be reflected in the field on my performance level.*"

When evaluating the efficacy of direct leadership (which can be equated to "middle management,") most followers expressed satisfaction. However, some raised issues with the quality of leadership practices that might lead to disengagement owing to poor leadership practices as cited by follower respondents included a confrontational style of communication, failure to prioritise follower needs and concerns, a lack of "humility" (common courtesy towards subordinates), delegation of tasks to junior leaders with insufficient experience, the division of tasks among followers, extended lines of communication across leadership tiers, real or perceived favouritism, a laissez-faire approach to discipline, lack of autonomy, and lack of contact with higher-tier leaders. A desire for further training was also identified. Supporting these points, the following quotes are relevant:

F1 expressed frustration stemming from a lack of autonomous decision-making: "*Some bosses would not give us the green light to take decisions in the field because*

*they feel they need to be aware of the situation and help in the decision making process. In such cases we might have missed certain opportunities or caused the problem to escalate."*

This appeared to be echoed by F2 who said "*I don't have a lot of freedom in what I do. I should report to my line manager...through the radio system if I'm in the field… everything should be approved by the line manager.. I should not make my mind up, I should include my boss in any calls to receive the approved action to be taken.*"

And F3: *"I have no powers (jurisdictions)… I can't do anything without referring to my officer in charge or supervisor. No power given to me at all. The officers in charge had imposed such procedures and this is the work system, a policeman can't carry out anything unless he notifies his superior."*

Regarding leaders and their interactions with followers, a respondent noted that some leaders "*...delay the requests of their staff; similarly, one officer might deal with one differently to the others."* (F3)

"*Commanders' treatment of their security staff is not equal from one commander to another, some have a pleasant treatment with his subordinates, others don't and that leads to unfruitful results by the staff and eventually on engagement levels of staff."* (F3)

Referring to a perceived lack of equity or favouritism: "*I would see another policeman whose career status is better than mine even though his job description is not different to mine, then my performance decreases, this would leave a negative impact on my work spirit because there is duality in treatment.*" (F3)

*"I would treat all staff equally, some policemen get to have 3 months leave, others only get one month off. This treatment is not based on work excellence."* (F3)

Regarding delegation along the chain of command, and extended channels of communication, most followers recognized some need for delegation, but felt frustrated. *"Some policemen cannot clearly communicate some matters to the deputy officer for the officer in charge to get the full picture. I would rather the shift officer in charge directly face the policemen at his office during work."* (F5)

Of particular interest were comments related to lack of access to more senior management, and a lack of information regarding staff-facing policy decisions.

*"The manager used to meet with us once every 3 months or 4 months nowadays, we are not having these meetings between the commanders and the policemen, we are not summoned to any meetings with the higher- ups and that in turn really affects us."* (F5)

*"The most important thing for me is that the high ranked commander must meet with policemen from time to time and explain to the policemen the future plans of the administration and what the future approach of the administration would be, and then should advise certain steps to be followed to reach the desired goal."* (F5)

In a related comment regarding salary cuts and organisational policy, a follower observed: *"I totally understand but at least we would really appreciate to know what time our salaries get paid back in full."* (F5)

Referencing a laissez-faire approach to discipline in certain instances, a follower observed that some constables:

*"...take unwarranted sick leaves, if it happens that we should work over the weekend (Thursday and Friday) some policemen will take a sick leave combining the weekend just to evade being on duty during the weekend. Such decisions are to be considered by the officer in charge because they know better."* The respondent reinforced this

later in the interview stating that leaders should: "*deal with insubordinate staff members, those who always be absent and take unnecessary sick leaves."* (F5)

Several comments were made regarding the division of tasks. A respondent (F2) suggested that constables should be deployed in accordance with the tasks they might find rewarding, while another suggested rotation of tasks (specifically patrols) and ensuring continuity of working relationships by pairing constables into more permanent partnerships.

Finally, some respondents felt that a need for further training was not being recognized or supported: "*we require periodical rules of engagement training courses*," said F4

A follower (F5) who was particularly proud of his work performance and proactive policing noted that some constables were willing to turn a blind eye to offences because: "*They don't want to attend to court or be part of the general prosecution, the court will send an attendance request for these officers for testimony and if they don't show up at court, they will be issued an arrest warrant. That is why some officers refrain from such commitment."* The respondent felt that this was a training-related issue, but it may also stem from disengagement related to a lack of incentives as previously discussed.

To sum up, there were indications that issues surrounding time off, leave, uniforms, and remuneration and compensation for the use of personal resources were the primary factors leading to disengagement, but disengaging leadership practices, lack of contact with higher ranks, limited information-sharing, resourcing, training, and related organisational issues were also raised.

There were implications that this branch of the Qatar police had suffered a real or perceived reduction in status: "*let me say that other departments enjoy extra privileges or benefits,*" noted a study participant. (F6)

Finally, individual suitability for police work, a factor also raised by leaders, was recognised by followers. "*If you don't enjoy what you do for a living you can't give your best,*" a constable (F6) remarked.

In observations of interactions between leaders and followers, difficulties with leave approval were raised in OBS 2 and OBS 3. In OBS 2, the leader appeared reluctant to discuss the matter publicly and openly which appeared to discourage the followers present since the matter appeared to be a shared concern with impact on more than one individual.

This could be seen as a simple attempt to keep the meeting on track without diverting from the operational issues typically discussed in briefings, but because the issue of leave broadly affects the group, and is seen as a rights issue, the leader's response was not welcomed as can be seen in followers' reactions:

"*After the captain left the briefing room, constables started talking and voicing their comments between themselves, one said: "I didn't like the way he evaded the question on leaves. As much as work is important, our rights are also important" another commented: "I'm not going to his office to ask about my leave. I will put it in writing and submit it to the administration office". A few other constables kept silent and stayed in the room for a while before leaving. Most of the constables left the room chatting with one another, but their body language and facial expressions appeared to show a lack of satisfaction with the interaction between themselves and their leader.*

***FIELDNOTE-OBS2***

This scene shows therefore that factors leading to disengagement are of general interest among followers, and that greater openness among leaders in discussing them and clear willingness to engage with followers and to liaise with the organisation regarding these issues may help to combat feelings of disengagement. More

importantly is being aware of the impact of actions in each way the officer chooses to go. In this example, issues raised by followers that relate to organisational constraints has left them with feelings of resentment since their leader was unable to offer a generalisable response and it appears that they have no faith in his ability to address or influence the issue at organisational level. Indeed, it seems that organisational issues like understaffing have disempowered the leader to the point where he no longer seems credible in the eyes of his followers - an issue that should be of concern in the broader organisational context and within the context of operational leadership engagement as well as follower engagement. This will be further developed in the following discussion and recommendations chapters.

## 4.4 To explore ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the Qatar police department

Up to this point, some duality in perceptions regarding leaders and leadership expressed by both leaders and followers has been observed. While recognition of rank and authority are inevitable in a strongly hierarchical organisation such as the Qatar Rescue Police, both leaders and followers indicated the importance of a united effort towards the achievement of organisational goals.

Disengagement was partially related to organisational factors outside of the control of both leaders at the organisational level interviewed and followers participating in the study. With this in mind, the next objective is to determine the ways in which "middle management" leaders can contribute to employee engagement within the Rescue Police Department.

### 4.4.1 How can leaders promote engagement? Leaders' perspectives

When discussing engagement among employees, and the ways in which engagement could be promoted by leaders, responses were inclined to differ substantially within this group. However, certain common themes emerged. In this section, commonalities

as well as differences will be highlighted. In assessing these responses, it is important to remember that respondents do not always have access to "leadership terminologies," outside of the militarist concepts of rank, and will relate their experiences in practice based on the paradigms they see as governing their roles.

#### 4.4.1.1 The leader's role as "head of the family"

In this regard, leadership respondents saw subordinates as "brothers" but more frequently as occupying a role similar to that of "sons." There was a common feeling that the leader's interpersonal skills had an important role to play.

Regarding engagement, respondent L1 states: "*Staff can feel part of a team and part of a working family… In our department I am very open and close to my staff, approachable and available for them during working hours and beyond if need be. I feel this approach encourages my staff to produce more ideas and support work more. Moreover, it makes people feel satisfied with their work and enjoy what they do. When the leader is close to people and knows their problems and concerns he can solve them or do something about them. Staff will see this as an empowering practice and will make them also committed to an environment where they feel appreciated and valued. The leader should be to his staff like a spiritual father who cares about them and what they do.*"

It is important to note that in this quotation, the leader specifically references participation in management, and feeling free to share ideas, as one of the outcomes of this type of "family-like" engagement. This accords with Islamic values and will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5 in reference to the conceptual framework suggested specific to a Paternalistic relationship between a leader and his followers modified by Islamic concepts of the fatherhood role in management practice. This differs somewhat from the Western concept of paternalism and shows the value of context in employee engagement. At the same time, it seems to refer to leadership qualities being identified from the ways in which leaders practise their roles rather than flowing from inherent qualities that leaders have or lack.

The same respondent (L1) concluded by saying: "*Some of the challenges the leadership of the department face are related to the different styles of some leaders and supervisors. Not all have the same approach or practices. Some are very strict and not so flexible. Others are open and caring for their staff and work. Leading field security work requires high attention to details and feelings of staff, knowing them and knowing what motivates them, what disappoints them, what makes them connected to their colleagues and supervisors and to the workplace in general. The leader must be close and supportive to his staff, encouraging creativity and high performance.*"

In the following observation activity, L1's statements could be seen in practice, the following might show unique practices valuing relationships at work and achieving work tasks in a special way, that makes it special to Arab/Islamic work environments and not Western ones:

10:00 am - *"The meeting starts with the coffee man pouring for the senior rank first who puts forward the junior rank officer to receive the first serving of coffee as a matter of respect and kindness. The meeting continues with a relaxed and informal atmosphere between officers and the deputy director. Social interactions showed relative informality and openness to discuss ideas about work and society. There appears to be an engaging and welcoming environment. Officers of different ranks were treated equally in giving the opportunity for the younger and junior officers to express their opinions and have their thoughts taken into consideration and used in decision making. The meeting begins with humour and informality before attending to the business at hand and making decisions based on input. Positive social interactions between officers, despite their rank difference (from lieutenant to the rank of lieutenant colonel), are observed. Deputy Director asks the lieutenant about his uncle's famous farm in suburbs of Doha "Al-Dossary farm", he answers with a laughing voice "now he has more tigers than he has birds" The meeting then becomes more serious with the junior officer presenting an issue for the attention of the deputy director. He responds positively to the input and decides to approve the suggested action. Overall, the Deputy Director was informal and very welcoming of lower rank staff, listening to their ideas and opinions on decisions to be taken, saying: "You are*

*in the field and you know more about your requirements". Some officers left and new ones joined, yet the atmosphere did not change. There was a clear expectation from officers that they are allowed to come in and voice their issues in the expectation of positive outcomes."*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS1***

Observations of the leader-follower interaction revealed the impact of varying leadership practices on engagement and morale, as was the case with statements voiced by both leaders and followers during interviews. For example:

In the example of OBS3: Hostile leader practice led to the reaction of followers: *"Why do we go to the big boss? What's his role as a leader?"* This appears to indicate active disengagement.

In the example of OBS2: Neutral leader practice led to the reaction of follower: *"I'm not going to his office to ask about my leave. I will put it in writing and submit it to the administration office."* Hence, the follower seems to feel that the leader's neutrality means that outcome will be the same no matter what channel is followed.

OBS5: Open, supportive leader. Reaction: *"When the senior officer left the office, other officers praised him for his kindness and openness to share ideas, sense of humour and advice."* In this meeting it was also noted that staff seemed eager to meet and even exceed the leader's expectations. A high level of engagement is therefore probable. Similar examples resulted in positive reactions from followers in OBS7 and OBS10.

#### 4.4.1.2 Engagement is not necessarily a desirable outcome: straightforward obedience is

In contrast to the first respondent, L2 seemed to have concerns that engagement could ultimately be a recipe for disaster. "*If a policeman has a high sense of drive and motivation for work, this might sometimes cause an issue. This happens in the military*

*hierarchy when referring to the grass root level starting with the policeman and building our way up to the top of the command chain….. I don't think that drive and motivation at work will lead to positive results because there must be respect given to the chain of command and following orders.*"

This perception seems to reflect that decisions in a police department rely on policy, and commanders have the final say in accepting or rejecting subordinates' suggestions and opinions. However, it assumes that a "policeman's" opinions will frequently be divergent from those of his commanding officer's and from overall precedent and that employee engagement will necessarily lead to a lack of respect for the "chain of command." Followers' responses may confirm or refute this point of view.

The same respondent opined: "*If I'm your commander and you come to me stressed and I do not correspond to you, how is your psychological state going to be like then? Definitely bad. But if we reflect this condition from a legal point of view, the subordinate has no right to complain and be in a stressful state of mind.*"

He justifies his standpoint on a philosophical basis: "*...leave all work-related matters aside and thank God for the position you are in right now because you have something better than others who don't have this opportunity as we speak.*"

At the same time, the respondent acknowledges that there are reasons for possible feelings of disengagement and shares his opinion on how this could be addressed: "*I would increase the number of staff and also make more flexibility for the staff so we can create better work environment and in this way I think the performance can be better and the engagement will improve, eventually the achievements levels will be reflected on the ground when dealing with the public*."

In a sense, this set of opinions contains contradictions. The respondent feels that engagement is not necessarily a desirable outcome when compared to simple

obedience, provides a moral basis for it, and then acknowledges that understaffing and flexibility issues exist and that addressing them could have positive outcomes. In summary, the respondent seems to conclude that organisational issues do result in disengagement, but that by addressing these factors, an acceptable level of engagement will be achieved. The fact that this level of engagement is not high is accepted and the respondent asserts that a high level of engagement can be excessive and, indeed, undesirable.

In OBS3, the "bad state of mind" referred to by L2 "*... you come to me stressed and I do not correspond to you, how your psychological state is going to be like then? Definitely bad...*" was observed following the officer's refusal to accept input or listen to complaints. While some of the followers, if not content, seemed to accept this with philosophical shrugs, others demonstrated outright disaffection. In either case, the constables did not seem energised or enthused and would presumably have taken this state of mind with them, carrying it through to their day's work. Obedience would surely follow, but it seems that this would not necessarily translate into the proactive pursuit of police work or a quest for excellence.

#### 4.4.1.3 Rewards, fair treatment, supportive leadership practices, and advocacy lead to better employee engagement

The final opinions on the factors leading to enhanced engagement can be summed up as transactional and having a strong correlation with the leader's practices in fostering positive communication. These opinions appear to relate more closely to a "lack of disengagement" rather than engagement itself. In this context, L3 and L4 respondents reinforce the need to develop constructive relationships with subordinates.

L3 states: "*A policeman that achieves his tasks at work will be rewarded, for example, our working policemen during their shifts, their commander could give them a day off*

*or some hours off as a reward for their good work or add bonus days to his credit and that in turn will lift the policemen spirits very much to deliver more at work.*"

With reference to the salary cuts and suspension of leave previously discussed and the need to reverse these, L2 observes: "(There is) *nothing else in my opinion that would affect the staff drive and enthusiasm to work. Maybe if someone is not treating them well enough or if they have an urgent matter then in that case, we must consider such circumstances*."

The fourth respondent in a middle-management leadership position (L4) believes that the leadership practices, and particularly the way in which leaders communicate with subordinates, could serve to enhance engagement.

He comments: "*The motive and drive for best performing your job is through spreading nice words, also being smooth – tongued, also being tactful while speaking in a way to lift up their morale. If others commit mistakes, they would feel that you are kind with them through an effective style of communication, meaning you can successfully communicate with them and discuss the mistakes in an orderly fashion or even if they did good as per their roles and when finishing their tasks. In other words, you encourage them and develop their self -esteem so they would appreciate your input all the time, and by that, they become motivated to do any task for you without waiting for rewards.*"

The respondent (L4) also notes that communication practices are important when providing critique and that the approach to discipline should focus on a knowledge based, corrective approach: "*Engagement is generated through two methods, the first by encouraging and giving advice to the policemen to conduct their jobs in a good manner and treating people nicely while dealing with radio dispatches or during an accident in a specific location like a fight. But if you criticise them and reprimand them by saying you have failed jobs, then they would be frustrated and feel under-*

*appreciated. The correct approach is notifying them of their mistakes and showing them how to correct them.*"

More interestingly, L4 comments on his role in allocating assignments as a factor in this context: "*I can't randomly assign tasks for personnel and distribute them across the sectors without their consent, (for example) some would not like to work at Doha sector but is it my job to make that person like working at Doha sector, there must be some sort of encouragement so I would aim to make them like the job at hand, if they don't feel satisfied or engaged, they won't perform well*".

In assessing the leader's role as a representative for his team at a higher level, the following statement was made: "*You as a commander must motivate personnel by instilling patience amongst them so they won't say that commander did not take the effort. It is the duty of the commander to communicate any issues or complaints by personnel to the superiors if it is out of their authority so that the superiors would take the decision or escalate issues further up in the organisation*." (L4)

L1 highlights the leader's role as an advocate for his followers: "*It is my responsibility to do so even though I could not solve them all by myself, it is very important that I take them higher to the senior management of the department and organisation. My staff need to see me trying.*"

An observed meeting appeared to corroborate the importance of leaders being seen as advocates for their followers while supporting elements raised in both leader and follower interviews:

10.00 am - "*The leader holds the rank of Major and is head of a Unit. The 2 staff are both constables. The Major started the meeting with an invitation to the constables to comment on issues that can develop the work procedures. The constables lists a number of issues including internet issues and phone calls credit for the operational staff so they can be in contact if they have no access to radios or when they need to*

*have specific locations of victims or accidents. The Major listened without interruption and was taking notes as the constable was speaking, and then asked specifically about how leadership practices from his junior officers impacted constables. They replied that his own style and openness would encourage staff to work with him and be committed to their tasks. However, they observed that not all officers they have worked with are as accessible or as caring about staff feelings, concerns and demands. The Major mentioned that he is meeting with the Director of the department to discuss these matters with him and to seek support. The meeting concluded with the major thanking the constables for their honesty. They acknowledged him with a smile and thanks."*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS8***

This interaction shows that the dissatisfaction of followers towards practices of some leaders are actually getting to the senior chain of command. The leader in OBS8 mentioned that he is going to meet the Boss and present these matters to him hoping to come up with a plan of action to address these issues.

On the other hand, respondents of interviews reveal some statements that positive practices will go both ways and eventually the organisation will benefit. L2 believes that a "do as you would be done by" approach will be fruitful: "*This means you reap what you saw, if you do good to others then others will do good to you. It is a two-way thing*."

#### 4.4.1.4 A collaborative environment under leadership guidance, recognition of individual merit, and representation of follower concerns foster engagement

Finally, the L5 respondent expressed collaboration as key to fostering engagement. This was expressed in the following statements: "*...the commander has a big role in sparking work motivation for his staff members by providing a suitable work environment and through encouragement of the policemen working with the commander .... Also, the constant presence of the commander alongside with his*

*policemen and that in turn will have a great impact for the policemen's work drive and encouraging the staff to do their best at work…we work as one team and we lift each others' spirits through direct guidance and one to one meeting with the staff, and the results are tangible when it comes to the work morale or the staff motivation to work.*"

On recognition L5 observed: "*...distinguished staff must be honoured and those who are not on an excellent work level would need to feel their importance so they can deliver, a commander must instil the ethos of recognizing the importance of all the staff members regardless of their different contribution or achievement, the commander should let the policemen know that he is aware of their effort, not just working without being recognized.*"

Linking recognition and a degree of collaboration with potential training-related implications L5 said: "*By simply having confidence in their abilities, you will encourage them to deliver more. I'm referring also to the officers in charge of their units or groups, if these commanders have confidence in their policemen, then these policemen will perform in an excellent manner.*"

However, the L5 respondent acknowledged higher-level organisational issues and the leader's role as a representative at higher management levels as having a role to play: "*.. in order to lift the level of engagement, it depends on many factors, this include administrative matters, moral matters. It is done through contacting them face to face and there are administrative matters like providing the staff with leaves and other related matters of interest and benefit to them.*"

Further emphasis on collaboration, connection and the provision of recognition as positive practices is reflected in the observation made by L1 that leaders should be observant regarding their subordinates: "*... knowing them and knowing what motivates them, what disappoints them, what makes them connected to their colleagues and supervisors and to the workplace in general. The leader must be close and supportive*

*to his staff, encouraging creativity and high performance. In return, the leader should be the first to notice good practice and recognise it in different ways, giving incentives, recognition letters, leaves, prizes etc. This shows the leader cares, by default the staff will care too*."

A sociable, informal meeting in which participants engage on a social level illustrates how feelings of connection can be used to promote engagement. The following is an example of observed meeting at the Director's secretary office:

11.00 am - *"The meeting starts with hosting the officers for hot drinks with the secretary of the Director who is a lieutenant. The officers present were a Lieutenant Colonel (Head of Unit), a 1st Lieutenant and a Warrant Officer. There is a friendly atmosphere and style of communication between the senior officer and his juniors, exchanging some stories from the service and personal life, giving the lower ranks a comfortable environment to speak and joke and smile. The senior officer joins in sharing stories, following them up with advice and lessons learned, and junior ranks listen and nod their heads in agreement with the moral of the stories. When the senior officer left the office, other officers praised him for his kindness and openness to share ideas, sense of humour and advice.*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS4***

In observing meetings, there appears to be a culture where the relationship is enhanced through socialising and sharing experiences - not necessarily talking about work issues first. Several observations reveal that officers would always start with social informal conversations before they go into business issues. Despite the fact that they are all leaders from different levels of management, and despite that it is a militaristic environment where junior ranks can hardly engage in social conversations, one can see that the practices of this senior leader in this observation fostered engagement and left positive impact among his followers and colleagues. Clearly, other occasions of observation did not convey similar atmospheres and therefore reflected different reactions from employees.

In interviews responses to value of attending to staff needs, L2, though unconvinced of the value of engagement, acknowledges: "*If there is a policeman that needs to be supported, I believe it would be a good gesture to assist as much as we can with our staff and I'm sure this will bounce back with great returns.*"

L3 remarks: "*A policeman that achieves his tasks at work will be rewarded, for example, our working policemen during their shifts, their commander could give them a day off or some hours off as a reward for their good work or add bonus days to his credit and that in turn will lift the policemen spirits very much to deliver more at work.*". This is seen in observation of OBS5, where followers indeed seemed to feel energised following recognition for their efforts: "*...a cheerful atmosphere prevailed. The group congratulated the constables who received rewards. They replied: "You are next week in sha Allah" (we wish that you get rewarded in the next week's meeting.)"*

L6 elaborates extensively on police work in practice, and takes pride in having risen through the ranks, beginning as a patrolman. In his opinion, practical experience of on-the-ground policing promotes better collaboration in practice because the leader has first-hand exposure to situations which constables face. By implication (and in practice) this reflects the fact that some leaders do not have this type of experience.

#### 4.4.1.5 Trust and a degree of autonomy as a form of recognition foster engagement

The theme of mutual trust and particularly the need for leaders to demonstrate trust in followers was raised by several followers. It was also recognized by certain leaders. One of them noted: "*Of course, the commander must always instil the feeling of trust and confidence in the minds of his policemen and also generally speaking on the basis of giving them space to work comfortably without confusion or nervousness."* (L5)

Trust and a degree of autonomy as empowering features in leader-follower relationships were highlighted by L1 who noted: "*With regards to tasking people, my way is to give them the details of the task and leave the method of achieving the task to them, I would not want to get involved in how they want to do it, otherwise they will always do it my way whilst I need them to always think creatively about how to do the best way."* However, he noted that some leaders were "less flexible" than others.

L2, on the other hand, partially contradicted this viewpoint stating: "*There are requirements that need to be adhered to by policemen when carrying out their duties, there is little area for creativity, we mostly apply the law and most of the time we have to be strict about enforcing the law. So there is little room for decision making based on situational evaluation in the field*."

L3 noted: "*I don't need to dictate on them their duties all the time, I would instruct them once and they would carry it on, if there are any other updates then we shall communicate them to the policemen, the policemen know their roles and responsibilities but sometimes it is just a matter of reminding them.*"

L4 agreed with the concept of close supervision of police work with some openness to interpretation in certain situations: "*Leadership is based on instructions, you might encounter strict instructions by 100 % but mainly you follow orders according to the instructions given, they might be sometimes strict and other times flexible.*"

L5 corroborated this statement: "*We always encounter difficulties during work, but the most important thing is to communicate your concerns to your superiors. Sometimes decision making is not up to you, but for the officer in charge to make.*"

L6 expressed the opinion that not all officers had the necessary operational experience, but regarding autonomy he pointed out that there were reasons for the constant checks and balances in operations: "*My front line police officers are entitled to act on their own but they need to give me prior notification for me (to check) if their*

*actions do not contradict with the laws of criminal procedures. And why should police officers notify me before taking action? Let us say God forbid there is a major incident and normally we have only two police officers inside the patrolling vehicle, in such a case I might provide them with more manpower.*"

### 4.4.2 How can leaders promote engagement? Followers' perspectives

In general, followers expressed satisfaction and increased engagement as a result of interactions with their direct superiors, suggesting the importance of the leadership process. However, without exception, the "disengaging" organisational issues of reductions in time off and leave and salary cuts were expressed. A typical statement related to these matters and recognising that direct leadership had little to no control over these factors is quoted: "*Certainly this is something not in the hands of our managers only but the organisation has the ultimate power.*" F1states.

In contrast to leader interviews, followers were all-but unanimous in indicating the ways in which their leaders could promote engagement.

#### 4.4.2.1 Respect and recognition, positive working relationships, advice and equitable treatment

The themes of mutual respect, equitable treatment, an advisory role, a positive working relationship, and recognition for followers' abilities and achievements recurred in followers' perspectives related to ways in which leaders might promote engagement. Examples include:

"*The more they give respect and recognition to their staff, the more their staff become engaged and productive.*" (F1)

"*One of my staff officers used to speak to us every morning at the start of the work shift giving us advice and asking us to look after ourselves. This might sound simple but it was very impactful on our feelings because it is out of care for us.*" (F1)

"*I remember one other boss walked through us in the morning gathering and he saw that I am well dressed and shaved. He gave me one day of casual leave. I felt so happy that day and that certainly gave me a positive push to give more to my work place. It is these little practices and initiatives that make the difference in how we feel we are engaged in our work.*" (F1)

"*Yes yes, my bosses have a role in my engagement no doubt…I will give you an example.. If I hear the word "thank you" after I have achieved something, or been rewarded by my boss, surely this will encourage me to produce more and achieve more…*" (F2)

"*I think other simple things can affect how I behave... reward for the excellent work, giving days in lieu* (of overtime)*... these things matter.*" (F2)

"*Some of the good characteristics our superiors have, for instance, if someone has an urgent matter, the superiors will support that person, if a policeman encounters an issue during his radio dispatch, then the officers in charge will support the policeman and not leave him alone*." (F3)

"*Honestly speaking, the officers don't save any effort to help us carry out our tasks, even if we commit a mistake, the officers will not warn or punish us but instead they will show us the correct method to achieve the desired results*." (F3)

A "father-son" type of relationship was once again highlighted, this time, from the followers' perspective and in the context of supportiveness: "*The relationship is like a father and son relationship. Our commanders fully support us.*" (F4)

The same respondent related to follower-leader relationships as a type of "brotherhood." "*As a policeman I don't feel that friction with the officer in charge, I'm not being treated like a subordinate but rather as a colleague. I don't feel the hierarchy of policing ranks when dealing with our superiors. There is a brotherly bond between policemen and the officers in charge and that will give us the incentive to give more because we feel we are part of the work family.*"

F4 also observed: "*Regarding our superiors, I will be speaking honestly; they are supporting us very well…If a policeman asks them for something, the officers will correspond to him immediately*". The statements made by L3 and L4 are seen in observing some of the interactions, where the relationship between the two are based on mutual understanding and care, however: not all leaders follow the same path of practice as was revealed in observing other leaders actions.

An additional respondent (F5) concurred with views previously cited: "*The commander's performance has a big impact on their security staff. If I feel that my commander fully supports me and follows up with me or with my colleagues then I would certainly give my best at work, so if a commander gives a 100% at work, then I as a policeman should give a 120% more.*"

F5 reinforced this statement by saying: "*The commander will treat us evenly, even If the commander would trust me, but he always makes sure that we all carry out our tasks without any flaws…he does not bias when treating all policemen. And this means that he does not take sides between an officer, policeman or warrant officer. All of us are treated equally, everyone will be held accountable if they make a mistake.*"

However, a dearth of interaction between followers and higher-echelon leaders was felt by F5: "*The high ranked commander must interact with the policemen… he must conduct regular meetings with those policemen.*"

Further reinforcement of the recurring themes occurred. For example, F5 observed: "*When it comes to staff, productivity stems from encouragement, if the factor of encouragement is present from officers in charge and those with superior ranks who let you feel how valuable and worthy you are as a policeman.*"

"*When someone receives attention, this person would aim to give his best not only at work but in any walk of life, you would see the person trying to give his best and try to be creative.*"

A family-like relationship between leaders and followers as a guiding principle was expressed. "*The more staff members feel they are part of one group the better feeling you will get as a policeman that you belong to the same family, it is like a bee hive.*" (F6)

"*The role of a good commander is to take care of his policemen and that in turn will pay off on the ground when policemen are going out on their duties filled with positive energy to deliver… a gentle approach and smooth style of leadership from the commander is capable of making his policemen work double shifts if needed.*" (F6)

"*We would seek in a commander the characteristic of being humble; some commanders make you feel this commander has everything the job needs. Our commander would gather us and invite us to play football with him together especially during our leaves, and during the police morning assembly (briefing), the commander will deal with us in a humble way and if any policeman has an issue, then the commander will follow – up with him, there are positive things.*" (F6)

The positive effects of supportive leadership interpersonal recognition, and recognition for workplace excellence on overall morale and engagement were seen to be marked in the following observation of a meeting the leader and his followers:

9:00 am - "*The1st lieutenant started the briefing by greeting staff asking "How are you and how are your families?" A number of officers responded: "Thank you, we are all fine." He then started talking about the duties and tasks of the day, deployments in patrols, and operational zones. The constables were attentive. His voice was clear, and he adopted a businesslike tone. Once he completed the briefing, he invited the staff for comments and a couple of officers raised their hands. One of them said "We will do our best Sir and keep you updated." Another (who seemed to be the elder constable among the group, said "I'd like to thank you for your support on behalf of my colleagues" The 1st lieutenant expressed thanks and recognition of the group's performance. He then announced 2 days of leave for 3 officers among the group, noting that this was recognition for their outstanding performance and commitment to proactively addressing security concerns and combating crimes. He said: "I congratulate the officers on their excellence and I hope to see more among you who are following the same path of excellence." He thanked the group and concluded the meeting. After he left the room, a cheerful atmosphere prevailed. The group congratulated the constables who received rewards. They replied: "You are next week in sha Allah" (we wish that you get rewarded in the next week's meeting.)*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS5***

In this instance, even the leader's approach to greeting his constables showed recognition for their welfare and demonstrated that the leader valued and respected his subordinates. The thanks expressed towards the constables as a group appeared to be highly valued, and the provision of a special reward for achievements in the presence of colleagues added to the morale-boosting tone of the meeting. It is noted that constables appeared to be eager to impress their leader through their work performance thanks to the knowledge that their efforts would be recognised and appreciated.

## 4.5 To suggest leadership practices suitable for managing the police department

Although the answers given by respondents relating to the preceding research objectives could be used to formulate a list of suggested leadership practices, respondents were asked what practices they would implement if they were in a position to do so. The responses shed some light on respondents' views and should be taken into account when synthesising the data and reaching meaningful conclusions regarding leadership practices.

### 4.5.1 Leaders' perspective: what practices are suggested to improve engagement within the Qatar Rescue Police?

Despite a seemingly traditionalistic approach to leadership roles, acknowledgement of leadership as a collaborative role is found in the statement: "*Even if I'm a police chief, I would always refer to other lower ranks if they are experienced in their job roles. I would seek their experience and follow their advice if needed*." (L4). This shows the appreciation of the leader to the experience of his followers.

L1 felt that addressing staff concerns would be a logical starting point and that mentoring and training middle-management leaders would be of importance: "*If I had more authority in the ministry or in the department i would start with frontline staff and improve their situation, feelings, resources, payments, leaves, treatment and all of their environment. Then I would start with the leaders and supervisors and start to guide them on the best way to get the best out of their teams. I would also assess and give feedback to the leaders so they know I am following up on their performance. If they do well I will thank them and reward them, if they don't, I will discuss openly and help them in their evolution to be effective leaders in their actions, treatment and practices.*"

Thus, attending to staff issues and concerns was not only raised by followers and leaders but also seen in observing one meeting where a policeman came to the office of the Captain complaining on an issue he faced, as detailed below:

10:00 am - *"The Leader, who is a captain, welcomed the policeman and asked him to present his issue. Policeman explained the problem and what exactly happened. Leader listened carefully without interrupting and took some notes. Then he asked some questions related to who was involved in the problem he faced and what was their interventions. Constable answered in details. Captain said "I got this on my priority list I reassurance that the matter would be dealt with and gave him a date for follow-up (next Tuesday). Before ending the meeting, the leader asked the policeman if he had any other issues or any other comments he would like to add. The policeman thanked the captain for his time and attention and left with a glowing face".*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS7***

On the other hand, the suggestion that the issues leading to disengagement should be addressed at organisational level was corroborated by the L2 respondent who noted: "*If I had extra authority I would increase the number of staff and also make more flexibility for the staff so we can create better work environment and in this way I think the performance can be better and the engagement will improve, eventually the achievements levels will be reflected on the ground when dealing with the public*."

While levels of collaboration seemed variable in the relationship between middle management officers and their followers depending on individual factors, a lack of collaboration between middle management officers as a group and top organisational management and middle management was further implied in the statement: "T*he manager himself must take that decision, or my superior…establishing communications with other commanders and these commanders must be in contact with each other, this will facilitate the workflow as well. The most important thing is communication. These commanders must maintain a good line of communication and*

*by such a mechanism; we would guarantee fast delivery of messages and information among these commanders*." (L3)

Finally, the preference for a consultative approach, albeit one in which "bottom-up" leadership is confined to an advisory role, was underlined in the statement: "*A policeman can benefit their police chief with some information in regards to training and development, if someone gave me an advice, I would consider it for the interest of the job so I would develop on such advice, it is key to consult with other experienced personnel who work on the field most of the time unlike myself who most of the time work from the office by receiving and sending instructions. Those who work on an operational level see the full picture of the work requirement, that is why consulting with them is key*." (L4)

### 4.5.2 Followers' perspective: what practices are suggested to improve engagement within Qatar Rescue Police?

Followers were unanimous in asserting that "negatives" should be addressed before "positives" could be implemented. This is exemplified in the statement of the follower who said: "*If I would be a commander, I would meet with all my security staff, If I will be the manager then I would meet with the assistant manager and heads of departments first of all and then meet with the officers in charge of the patrolling shifts and then I will be meeting with the policemen and listen to the pros- and cons that they have to say to me, I would consider dealing with the negatives before considering the positives. If I want to develop myself and develop my administration and reach a specific goal, then I should not only be concerned with the positives but first I must adjust any negatives and then attend to develop the positives*." (F5)

It would therefore seem that organisational issues such as understaffing, the lack of opportunities to take leave, and salary reductions are so important to followers, that they find it difficult to look beyond immediate concerns to the bigger picture of leadership and how it is practised.

Some respondents expressed a desire for greater acceptance of their leadership in their operational roles, and this is of interest. While some respondents said that they had no decision-making capacity since all procedures must be approved by duty officers (shift managers), others noted that their recommendations were frequently followed, or that they were trusted to determine the correct course of action, and seemed to find these affirmations as contributing to their engagement.

"*My authorities are on the field, I am the man in the situation and I should be able to evaluate and act accordingly. I use the spirit of the law sometimes. I use my experience, my good communication skills to solve problems,*" said one of the respondents. Adding: "*Depending on the level of experience comes the level of authority from our supervisors and leaders. When I think back to my early days I appreciated that I had not much authority, I could have made many mistakes in dealing with the public. Now I am more confident with my actions and decisions."* (F1)

He indicated a certain degree of frustration when not granted authority based on his experience: "*Some bosses would not give us the green light to take decisions in the field because they feel they need to be aware of the situation and help in the decision making process. In such cases we might have missed certain opportunities or caused the problem to escalate. Then the boss would back off and listen to our recommendations and let us take the necessary actions.*"

And, with an inferred level of satisfaction: "*On the other hand, I had a different experience with a captain who was our duty officer who would trust my actions and always listen to my advice. So I have to say that it is down to the boss and down to the level of experience of the staff in the field."*

Several respondents found the approvals system cumbersome, and sometimes slow. F3 reported: "*I have no powers (jurisdictions)… No power given to me at all*." It is therefore possible to conclude that certain leaders encourage autonomy to a greater degree than others, and that leaders prefer to err on the side of caution in assuming that constables will not be conversant with the correct procedures to be adopted.

However, when constables feel that their level of experience is recognized through evidence of leaders' trust, engagement is heightened and greater job satisfaction is experienced.

The same respondent confirmed this interpretation by adding: "*There are some duties where the officer in charge will instruct us how to conduct them at our discretion but other duties, we must refer to him directly. The officer in charge will emphasise on how to conduct the task but leaves us with the freedom to choose any method we like to reach the desired result. But there are other tasks where the officer in charge will dictate to us how to carry them out.*"

F2 confirmed an implied area for improvement by highlighting feelings of disempowerment noting: "*I cannot change people's personalities or practices. The boss normally is only influenced by his higher ups; I don't think he can listen to my advice*."

F4 appeared to be extremely hesitant in offering anything that may be construed as criticism or an area for improvement beyond the rectification of salaries and access to leave, noting that he was well-satisfied with the leadership he has experienced because: "If *a policeman asks them for something, the officers will correspond to him immediately*"

The observation of leaders and followers during meetings was of particular importance in noting the ways in which leaders promoted engagement or the lack thereof and these results will be incorporated into this section of the data analysis. Eleven meetings between leaders and subordinates were observed in total, and few of them seemed to leave followers feeling alienated or disengaged.

During observation of interactions between leaders and followers, different approaches to the practice of leadership were highlighted, ensuring a need for senior management attention. It was noted that while three of the officers observed applied leadership practices that followers appeared discouraged after these interactions,

others preferred to engage with their followers, encouraging two-way communication and inviting followers to "take the lead" in approaching senior officers with their concerns. A neutral communication was also observed, but instead of having neutral effects, it appeared to create an impression that the leader was uncaring and should not be approached. Meanwhile, firm or aggressive practices appeared to result in active disengagement.

Followers demonstrated respect at all times, but their sense of engagement was greater when encouraged to participate and give feedback and when leaders showed advocacy for their concerns and communicated with them regarding sources of disengagement. Respect, recognition, and appreciation appeared to be highly valued as was accessibility. However, meeting facilities appeared to be limited in space and the opportunity for private discussions was somewhat limited. Firmness and assertiveness were valued when coupled with a willingness to receive feedback.

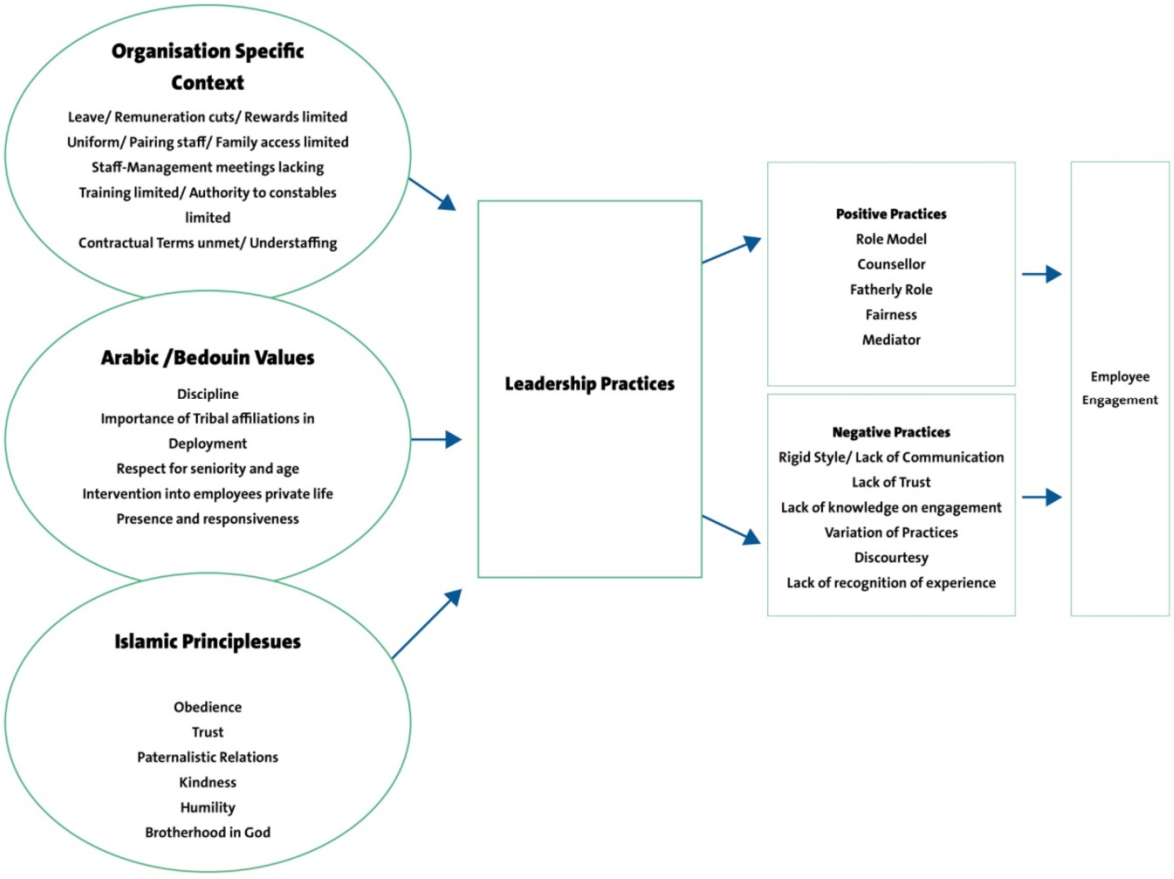
Observed practices and interactions of leaders and followers in meetings and briefings revealed that an informal or semi-formal, friendly approach and indications that individual concerns and feedback could be discussed in public or private meetings were welcomed by followers. On the other hand, it was noted that the prescriptive nature of the statements made by the leader and his clearly stated lack of openness to feedback and discussion were seen as unsatisfactory and appeared to leave the followers present feeling discouraged.

Since the topics being dealt with included the allocation of leave which, based on information from operational leaders and followers, falls short of contractual expectations, it was clear that followers were hoping for a more conciliatory approach and evidence of efforts being made to address this shortcoming in their basic working conditions.

The following figure (2) provides a summary of the most significant findings relevant to the context specific framework developed for this thesis that can serve as the

guiding tool for interpreting and cross referencing the data collected to achieve the link between organisational practices and leaders actions with followers, and the effects of these actions and practices on employees' engagement. In addition, the Islamic principles of leadership are outlined. It is of particular interest that these principles were frequently stated or implied in responses from both leaders and followers. Although it may be said that they in some way parallel Western theories related to employee engagement in some instances, it should be noted that, as elements flowing from the Islamic faith, their impact may be much greater than in the West, since they have a moral and spiritual underpinning. In addition, the fatherhood role of leaders, and the strength of hierarchies is unique in the Islamic context. This will be further developed and discussed in the following chapter.

**Figure 2: Summary of Data Revealed – Context Specific Findings**



# Chapter 5

# DISCUSSION

## 5.1 To examine how leadership is being viewed and enacted by leaders and subordinates in the Qatar Rescue Police

In this chapter, findings will be discussed in relation to the literature on the one hand and to the conceptual framework for this thesis on the other.

The Qatar Rescue Police is a hierarchical organisation working within a strict structure of ranks and procedures. In its militaristic context, a leader is a person who holds a Qatari nationality with a specific rank, has a strong knowledge of police procedures, holds authority associated with rank, and is responsible for outcomes regardless of the leadership practices adopted. However, simply following orders is not enough to promote full engagement in the tasks being carried out. Apart from basic needs-fulfilment, leaders must strive to create an environment that promotes positive psychological attitudes towards work (Green et al., 2017) if they hope to maximise efficiency and efficacy among their subordinates.

Furthermore, the social structure of Qatar means that rank, both in society and in the workplace, is also associated with Qatari citizenship. Thus, in any discussion of leadership in Qatari organisations, the assumption is that leadership implies citizenship (Abadi, 2022). Hence, this can be added to the contextual definition of leadership applicable in Qatar while simultaneously carrying the implication that it is much more difficult for expats to achieve high ranks within the police and security industry.

The variety of leadership practices implemented, leaders' and followers' attitudes towards them, and their links to employee engagement, are of interest, and clear preferences for a collectivist approach similar to that of a "family" or "brotherhood" were expressed. Since Raelin (2016) sees leadership as a collective, collaborative activity, this bodes well for developing a system of practices that would embed a

degree of collaboration between leaders and followers into leadership practice as a routine requirement, even if it is necessarily limited by the Qatar Rescue Police's system of ranks and the necessity of working within strict procedures and the law of the country. These practices may be of interest in the contexts of engagement and the formulation of desirable leadership practices that can be used in the training of Rescue Police leadership.

With engagement being seen as the key to unlocking benefits such as increased productivity and with leadership being crucial to its operationalisation (Anthony-McMann et al., 2017), these practices may in time be applicable to expanding the understanding of leadership in a law-enforcement context. By determining which leadership practices are most effective, they may be incorporated into procedures, becoming a consistent secondary factor in the ways in which leadership is defined - a consistency that currently appears to be lacking. Indeed, Anitha (2014) identified policies and procedures as factors influencing employee engagement. Hence, if leadership practices that foster employee engagement are instituted as procedures, the effects of personal interpretations of leadership that may have negative impacts on engagement can be mitigated. If this were to be instituted, "adherence to beneficial leadership practices" may become part of the definition of leadership which, in current practice, is consensually regarded as being: "A person of rank who holds authority and responsibility and is a Qatari citizen."

In interview responses, leaders and followers expressed acknowledgement of rank and its accompanying authority and responsibility as the primary indicators of leadership in the Qatar Rescue Police. Most respondents, both in leadership and follower positions, began by recognizing rank, and the authority, and responsibility that flow from rank as the primary hallmarks of leadership but then elaborated on the leadership "persona" as evidenced by the way individuals practise leadership. This recognition of authority is ingrained within Islamic culture. The Holy Qur'an itself states "*Oh Believers, obey Allah, and obey his messenger, and those of authority among you*"

(Qur'an: 4:59). Hence, it may be said that recognition and respect for those in authority forms part of the cultural environment, second only to obedience to Allah and the Prophet. This concept, not so common in Western Cultures, is very unique to local context, specific to Islamic principles, which affect how leaders expect their followers to perform on one hand, and how followers treat their men of authority, leaders, on the other. These principles accord with the conceptual framework developed in this thesis (figure 1) where it highlights the effects of Islamic principles, to which Rescue Police Department staff adhere, on leaders' practices which eventually influence employees' engagement, negatively or positively. Indeed, if the "high road" as indicated by Islamic principles is followed, it seems likely that enhanced employee engagement would flow from this (see figure 1) since it implies the care of a father figure who is accessible, supportive, and fair. As a father figure, the leader still has ultimate decision-making powers, but is open to input from followers and demonstrates concern for their wellbeing. This accords with the findings of studies such as that conducted by Hashim (2010). It is indeed, the fatherly like protection which differentiates the local context's societal expectation of leadership from, what can be labelled as, authoritarian leadership, in the Western literature. Here the importance of local context once again comes to the fore. Whilst from one side the strong sense of obedience is required from all employees similarly to the authoritarian practices, from the other side the paternalistic protective practices are very different from those expected from authoritarian leaders.

Followers observed leadership practices ranging from being alienated into being caring and they appeared to see the ideal leadership as being knowledgeable, supportive, collaborative, and "brotherly" or "fatherly" in their actions and practices. The concept of "brotherhood in God" provides guidance in the formation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships in Islamic societies (Chadley, 1998), and as part of Qatari culture, is frequently implemented in workplace relationships. The aim is to work jointly for the greater good - a concept that will resonate in an organisation such as the Qatar Rescue Police, perhaps more so than it would in Western

organisations whose members do not share this guiding philosophy and capitalist organisations which do not deal with public safety and order.

However, followers did not see leaders with more rigid practices as impacting their commitment to perform their duties except when this led to delays in obtaining the necessary authorisations to act. Some follower respondents seemed to be accepting these rigid practices, according with De Hoogh et al (2013) and their assertion that firm leadership practices could result in feelings of psychological safety. In an organisation like the Qatar Rescue Police which is largely defined by laws, procedures, and respect for rank, and a society that holds high-ranking individuals in high regard (Chadley, 1998), it seems likely that elements of authoritarianism will continue to have a role to play. However, as suggested by De Hoogh *et al.* (2013), its role will be beneficial in some contexts but not in others. Hence, in operations matching certain parameters, leaders may have a need to dictate courses of action while in certain other interactions, specifically interpersonal interactions between leaders and followers; a more "brotherly" practices will be welcomed by followers and result in improved employee engagement. Thus, the conceptual framework can be a guiding instrument to the effective leadership practices, whereby variable practices can be addressed by senior leaderships of the organisations in developing management methodologies and philosophies to unify approaches to leadership so that they accord with follower expectations within the framework of Islam and the ideals it puts forward. In this model, organisational leadership guides operational leadership through the formulation of policy and procedure which is, in turn, carried out by operational leadership and which serves to enhance employee engagement through consistency and adherence to Islamic principles.

To a large extent, leadership practices were primarily relevant as a factor in determining levels of employee engagement that exist outside of the wider environment of organisational factors that, in turn, govern leaders. Thus, commonly recognised "leadership traits" were generally considered irrelevant to the question of

what a leader is, although some leaders and followers attempted to define effective leadership by highlighting traits which they perceived as being positive. Although this seems to refer to trait theory, it could be argued that traits give rise to behaviours (Ching et al., 2014) and positive behaviours can, in turn, be incorporated into practices.

Reference to family-orientated values in the desired leadership approach accord with MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) finding that a nurturing yet disciplined approach to leadership, while managers engage their subordinates through a supportive and facilitatory role. In the cultural context, this could be equated to an "elder brother's" role within a family. Besides this, the role of line managers such as the leaders interviewed for the purposes of this study are expected to demonstrate the integrity highlighted by these authors as well as fulfilling their role as a link between followers and organisational leadership that allows their "voice" to be heard.

It is notable that MacLeod and Clarke (2009) identified "employee voice" as being among the primary drivers of engagement; hence, opportunities to be "heard" when using their line managers as a mouthpiece would appear to have a strong correlation with employee engagement in context. This however needs to be studied in connection with context. In OBS5, for example, followers were encouraged to voice their opinions and ideas about work, whilst in OBS3 followers were clearly told not to speak or complain. This might be attributed to the practices of the leaders on one hand, and on the other hand the context of the organisation which is of a policing/militaristic nature where the word of authority prevails, (UK College of Policing Website – Command Policy documents). Whilst employee voice is presented in the Western studies as the driver of engagement that employees wanting their voices to be heard (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009), Milliken et al. (2003) highlights that many employees still perceive their work environment is not safe for speaking up and that silence can be a better option when voicing their opinions may bring them harm. Mohammed et al. (2023) brings about the discussion on role of culture and context in employee voice by highlighting that in Saudi Arabia employees are willing to speak

up only when it is beneficial and safe. The authors go on to emphasize the role of context to showcase that "voice" is experienced differently owing to various reasons, including the link with their leadership in context, for example the Global south institutions adhere to their local values when speaking with elderly or people in authority "older people and people in authority are held in high esteem, and speaking against their words or actions may be perceived as rude and improper" (Mohammad et al., 2023:4). In other words, these values limit the extent to which employees want to have their voices heard.

Police/militaristic institutions have high levels of hierarchy, control and authority (Dandeker, 1992). These authoritarian practices of leadership are seen to be acting as antecedent of employee voice (Detert and Burris, 2007; Liu et al., 2010). An authoritarian leader normally imposes strict controls on resources, rules and hierarchy. This behaviour may discourage employee voice, as employees are required to obey leaders' instructions completely. This suggests that employees are concerned about voicing their thoughts under the authoritarian leaders, fearing to be labeled as culturally unaware or even trouble makers (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). Employees may fear sharing their thoughts and feel it is not safe to risk their personal interests (Detert and Burris, 2007). In other words, it implies that authoritarian leadership controls or suppresses employee voice attempts (Chan, 2014). Thus, the conceptual framework suggests leaders should allow their followers to speak out, acting as counsellors for them, and advocating for their welfare, putting in practice the Arabic/Bedouin values, as described in figure 1. This way, followers will have their voices heard and advice been offered to them by their leaders. This level of inclusion may result in enhanced employee engagement. This will be further expanded in chapter 6.

Similarly, field studies involving police officers and staff conducted in the UK revealed that authoritarian leadership has a negative relationship with ethical employee voice, however this negative relationship is mitigated by higher levels of benevolence. That is, when authoritarian leaders simultaneously exhibit benevolence,

they are less likely to cause feelings of uncertainty in their followers who are then more likely to speak up about unethical issues. Cheng et al. (2004) argue that although an authoritarian leader will punish disobedience, they will also provide fatherly-like protection to the follower and have concern for their well-being. This relates to the Fatherly role of leadership practices which are not only practiced in policing, but rather in this context of Qatar, as seen in observations of research candidates (OBS5,OBS1 and OBS8).

This may also correlate with the aforementioned authors' finding that the moral integrity of the organisation matters to employees. And, in their role as a link between organisational management and their subordinates, MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) "engaging management" drives employee engagement by representing employee concerns at higher levels within the organisation.

The responses gathered in the interviews seem to indicate that in the context of the organisation, the terms "command" and "leadership" are interchangeable and do not necessarily refer to purely authoritarian practices as may superficially seem to be the case. As seen in the previous chapter's analysis of results in the verbatim transcripts of leader interviews, this is elucidated in the respondents' commentary on the practices they believe are integral to effective leadership and the leader's responsibilities towards, and engagement with, their teams. These are broadly aligned with the Islamic moral principles which require those with power in organisations to apply justice and fairness and promote human welfare since all people are created by God (Abdullah and Ishak, 2012) and thus they need to respect each others' rights, needs and duties.

All but one of the leaders interviewed saw themselves as having a role in promoting employee engagement and recognised its importance. The sceptical respondent nevertheless referred to certain practices that he saw as being helpful in elevating engagement at follower level and appeared to recognise that feelings of active disengagement would have a deleterious impact on organisational outcomes.

Commonly recurring themes among respondents in leadership positions included the view of the leader as a commander, decision-maker, and the person responsible for outcomes. Knowledge, experience, interpersonal skills (since the practice of leadership leaves room for personal interpretation in its current practice format) and the role of the leader in supporting and representing followers were seen as important secondary components in the "art of command" in the opinions of followers and most leaders. This issue accords with findings in published literature, particularly the idea that authority and responsibility are frequently centred on leaders in the GCC region (Al Shamsi et al., 2015). However, with employee engagement recognized as an important outcome for leaders, and clear indications that organisational constraints (Newark, 2018) are activated, leaders' role in engagement is primarily effected through familiarity with the policies governing the Qatar Rescue Police's operations and their ability to leverage positive practices, particularly on an interpersonal level as postulated by Mani (2011) assisted by positive communication practices as highlighted by Anitha (2014).

The concept of leaders as role models who are responsible for employee engagement and acknowledgement of engagement as a measurement of leadership success were broadly recognised, lending support to the view that by standardising leadership practices that foster engagement, these practices may, to some degree be incorporated into the understanding of what a leader is, rather than "who" a leader is. In some respondents, this subject was only raised when asked questions specifically related to engagement. However, although "command" and "responsibility" were generally the first concepts raised in a discussion on the nature of leadership, there seems to be awareness that the effective practice of leadership encompasses more than these two elements.

It was interesting to note that, although responses superficially seemed to point towards the traditionalistic "Great Man" theory observed by Day et al (2014), many respondents specifically mentioned factors more commonly associated with a collaborative environment as suggested by Raelin (2016b, 2016a). Hence, there seems

to be cultural acceptance for seeing the leader as a coordinator who had been granted certain powers and responsibilities, but who should, nevertheless not rely too heavily on "discipline and force" and who should be open to receiving recommendations, feedback, and questions from subordinates. By doing so, the leader will be following Islamic values, which are an important consideration in the conceptual framework (figure 1), and going in line with cultural and social norms of the Qatari Arab society.

All respondents in follower positions felt that promoting engagement was among the duties of the leader, although most discussed this in response to questions targeting engagement, rather than in their definitions of leadership. This will be discussed further under the factors that followers see as promoting engagement and can be referenced when formulating conclusions on the nature of leadership practice within the Qatar Rescue Police and recommendations that may translate into elevated employee engagement.

With rank as the primary indicator of leadership in the Qatar Rescue Police, the assertion that "it is unclear whether leaders matter very much" and that, regardless of any traditionally accepted leadership skills they may possess, people in leadership positions are constrained by organisational factors beyond their control (Newark, 2018) may be applicable, particularly in a context such as the one examined in this study. Hence, the organisational context in which leadership occurs becomes more influential than the individual leader.

This understanding of leadership and the practice of leadership matches Raelin's (2016) observation that leadership does not consist of a set of personal traits and behaviours, but rather, exists as a practice. If this is indeed the case, such practices can be incorporated into procedures, ensuring greater uniformity in leadership, and an understanding of what leadership is that transcends mere rank, with the potential result of enhanced employee engagement among followers, as suggested by the conceptual framework.

On the practice side of leadership, leaders and followers were observed in multiple occasions in action as they were interacting, to reveal another valuable source of data that interprets, accords or gives further meanings to what occurs in practice of leadership, not just relying on what leaders and followers say, but rather seeing them in action.

## 5.2 To explain factors causing subordinates' engagement towards work, from local perspectives

Most "followers" interviewed were long-standing members of the Qatar Rescue Police and many are expats or long-term residents with limited prospects for career advancement. With the high cost of living in Qatar, and difficulties with visas limiting the potential to relocate their families or receive familial visits, they depend primarily on their annual leave allocation in order to maintain family relationships. Their primary reason for working in Qatar is the remuneration they are able to receive.

As a result, factors affecting either remuneration or access to leave would have a severe impact on engagement. While catering to employee expectations does not necessarily result in engagement (Harter, 2017), sources of disengagement must be removed or mitigated before engagement can be operationalised. According to research findings, organisational factors affecting rewards and benefits (particularly leave) provide the primary source of disengagement among members of the Qatar Rescue Police. This was confirmed by follower perspectives, and, to a less discursive extent, by their direct leaders and accords with MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) assertion that tangible rewards are hygiene factors rather than a source of engagement. With regard to native Qataris and several of the expats and residents interviewed, other factors such as reduced status, which appears to be seen as being closely linked to remuneration and rewards, and a lack of access to further training, were observed as potential factors in disengagement.

Cooper-Thomas et al (2018) examined the granting of status as one of several transactions that may contribute to engagement but concluded that opportunities for learning and advancement had a greater impact on employee engagement. With engagement implying emotional investment in the organisation, Cooper-Thomas and colleagues argued that leaders and organisations that demonstrated “warmth and caring” towards employees in leadership practice were most able to effect engagement. This aligns with the cultural context of a leader as “one who serves" as described by Abdallah *et al.* (2019). This notion of leadership is less common in Western Organisations, with responsibility being more on the shoulders of the field employees and authority is given to the staff in the supervisory roles. Prophet's speech also goes “*Believers are to each other as a brick of a wall, supporting and reinforcing each other*" (Albukhari: 1/6026). This emphasises the significance of context in understanding the leadership phenomena in this part of the world and in this organisation in specific, and how it leads to achievement of employee engagement.

A respondent's comment specifically related to the multicultural nature of the workforce may provide a novel perspective on a factor contributing to disengagement in certain contexts. It was felt that deploying people of a specific national or tribal background to work in geographical areas inhibited by their “tribes” may lead to disengagement as evidenced by reluctance to initiate police actions against their cultural peers. Since tribal loyalties are strong, social ostracisation may occur, even when police constables are simply enforcing the laws of the land. Again, this is very specific to the context of the organisation in this Arab country. It may not be the case in organisational settings in Western Countries.

This can be a complex area to navigate. According to the World Population Review (2023) only 15 percent of Qatar’s population consists of native Qataris and Qatar is a “country built by immigrants.” In the context of the Qatar Rescue Police, most followers are recruited from other Arab nations including Sudan and Yemen. Even among native Qataris, there is diversity, with Bedouin and Hadar, each consisting of several tribes or clans contributing to the tribal makeup of the country. The primary

unifying factor is Islam, a faith supported by approximately 68 percent of its overall population (including multinational, multi cultural expats living in Qatar).

Besides this, both leader and follower respondents expressed opinions indicating that the way in which leadership is practised by direct superiors could be identified as a contributor towards disengagement in certain contexts, particularly the use of an aggressive communication style or not being open to have conversation with lower ranks of followers.

This was observed in OBS 3 in which the leader actively discouraged comment and participation, leading to almost-rebellious comments from some of those present, and a contrasting approach was seen in OBS 6 where it was observed that: "Each of the participants in the meeting had a list of issues and requests and they discussed them openly with the 1st lieutenant." In OBS1 the officer fostered a collaborative atmosphere demonstrating: "...Openness to accepting the lower ranks' experiences and proposals, saying: 'You are in the field and you know more about your requirements." The leaders' approach in both OBS1 and 6 resulted in an encouraging environment as was observed in followers' comments right afterwards.

Determining how leaders effect engagement in the Qatari context allows for the development of a leadership process that can be implemented "as practice," as suggested by Raelin (2016a), rather than being a matter of individual "style" or preference. Training in positive communication practices and enforcement of a code of conduct specifying these could, in turn, go some way towards addressing or mitigating factors linked to disengagement. This is an important objective of this thesis, to develop a conceptual framework for leadership practices that can foster employee engagement. The framework suggests how to make leadership practices better informed by the local organisation's context as well as the local culture and religion principles that can play significant part in enforcing employee engagement. Thus, using the framework, organisations may identify any concerns and issues to address them in accordance with the conceptual framework. The uniqueness point

here is not just the culture but the religion as well, which may not be the case in Western settings.

It may also be inferred that the leaders themselves were, to a certain extent, experiencing some level of disengagement owing to a lack of direct give-and-take between the administration and their leadership level. It was notable that certain leadership respondents expressed a wish for more frequent opportunities to meet with their superiors regarding concerns related to their and their subordinates' operational challenges. Hence the organisation's role in factors leading to disengagement cannot be overlooked and this conclusion is supported by Newark (2018).

With tangible rewards carrying less potential to foster engagement among Qatari nationals as noted by Biygautane et al. (2017), many of who occupy leadership positions, the facilitation of their work to allow for improved role performance could be a means for the organisation to promote greater engagement at the leadership level studied while simultaneously allowing leaders to effect greater engagement among their subordinates. It was notable that most leadership respondents already appeared to subscribe to, or attempt to implement, a positive communication style. Qatari culture favours high standards of etiquette and a culture of mutual respect, so it seems likely that such measures would be supported by most leaders since the Muslim faith, to which most Qataris subscribe, exhorts all Muslims that they should "*Speak kindly to all people*" (Qur'an: 2:83).

In interviews, both leaders and followers highlighted salary cuts and difficulty in taking advantage of leave allocations as the primary factors leading to feelings of disengagement among employees representing the lower ranks of the Qatar Rescue Police. Although it could be said that these problems have their roots in non-routine events such as Covid-19 and the 2022 World Cup as well as budgetary limitations, there appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the timeline for the reinstatement of followers' salaries to their former levels. With the organisation being the ultimate leader in the employee-employer relationship at every level (Antony, 2018), communication regarding its intentions with reference to remuneration and benefits

such as leave will be of paramount importance in shaping employee perceptions of trust in the organisation.

In addition, it became clear from both leader and follower perspectives, that the need to man shifts with an adequate number of police constables was limiting the practicability for granting leave, with pre-approved leave applications often being declined at short notice for this reason.

References to newly employed constables as a support force for the department were found in both leader and follower interviews, with both seeing this as an experiment that is doomed to failure owing to language and cultural barriers primarily based on the culture of the expat new appointees and their unique traditions which fundamentally differ from the Qatari culture. It would therefore seem that higher-level organisational management has tried to address the shortage of manpower with this addition, but that this intervention has proved to be less than successful in relieving shortages of human resources for cultural reasons that may be difficult to overcome.

This places expat constables from elsewhere in the Arabic world at a disadvantage when seeking to benefit from their formal leave allocations since their leaders would be left with inadequate police staff if leave were to be granted. However, one of the leaders interviewed appeared to feel that the situation was already improving following reduced pressure on policing, observing that he was able to make recent improvements to the leaves-rota.

Saks (2006) noted that the characteristics of the job, procedural justice, and support on the part of the organisation are predictors of employee engagement. It would therefore seem imperative for the organisation to attend to issues such as staffing shortages should these affect employee rights such as leave when unusual circumstances such as the 2022 World Cup no longer affect operations within the Qatar Rescue Police. In addition, the formulation of effective contingency plans in consultation with operational leaders may be necessary in order to overcome additional pressures on existing staff during foreseen and unforeseen events that call for additional manpower.

Additional remarks from followers, such as the cost of food when working extended shifts, the absence of the merit bonuses to which they were formerly accustomed, lack of equity in remuneration between followers performing work at a similar level, though not necessarily of a similar nature, and the need to buy uniforms more suited to the climate also reflect on the primarily financial, resource and rewards-based nature of disengagement in the Qatar Rescue Police and the need for leaders to prompt the organisation to address at least some of the transactional factors leading to disengagement. With the transactions indicated by Breevaart et al. (2014) being aligned towards basic job satisfaction, other efforts to achieve higher levels of employee engagement may not be effective unless transactional factors are addressed.

While operational leaders, limited by budget allocations and their own set of organisationally imposed rank-based decision-making limitations, may not be in control of these organisational issues, and the scope of this study does not include higher-level decision-makers, it nevertheless appears that they still have a strong role to play. It was noted that certain practices on the part of leaders could contribute to disengagement. These could be summed up as a dearth of advocacy, professionalism, consideration, trust and courtesy in their dealings with subordinates among some leaders. These findings align with those of Aburub (2020). The author's Jordanian study found that leadership approach was highly influential, being second only to organisational factors in its influence on employee engagement.

The division of tasks between senior and junior leadership was noted by followers as an additional cause of dissatisfaction, particularly when this led to extended communication channels owing to a lack of skill or experience on the part of less experienced leadership personnel placed in direct command of their work. As noted by Goleman (2017), technical skill has some importance in effective leadership and it is reasonable to assume that the frustration expressed by those who found inexperienced leaders poorly qualified to make operational decisions impacts engagement.

In addition, it was felt that tasks and shifts could be more equitably divided. Whether this perception is purely subjective, stems from a lack of transparency, or is in fact less-than-equitable will be matter for further investigation. Sundaray (2011) is among

the many authors to acknowledge the importance of perceived fairness on the part of leaders as having importance in employee engagement, therefore this matter should not be overlooked. Fairness also relates to discipline and rewards. Based on respondents' reports, absenteeism is not always addressed and merit is not always considered in the allocation of privileges.

Finally, there were mentions of meetings between followers and more senior management which were no longer occurring, leading followers to feel disengaged owing to a lack of two-way communication between themselves and higher-level management. It is possible to infer that this has led to feelings of disengagement based on a perceived lack of concern regarding their wellbeing. Anitha (2014) emphasises the importance of organisation-wide communication, and it would seem that reinstating opportunities for communication between top management and lower ranks may have a significant role in combating disengagement. MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) finding that research supports the importance of employees' perception of top management caring about their welfare, and that most employees feel this is not the case, seems to indicate a similarity between Western and Qatari organisations in this context. This is confirmed in the CLG case study cited in their work which noted that senior management visibility and opportunities for collective discussion were lacking from an employee perspective - hence this obstacle to engagement is not a uniquely Qatari phenomenon. However, the need for caring behaviour on the part of those with authority is regarded as a moral duty in strongly Islamic cultures. Speaking of the Prophet, the Qur'an says "*It grieves him that you should receive any form of difficulty. He is caring over you; for the believers (he is) kind, and merciful*" (Qur'an: 9:128). In daily life, this passage is interpreted to mean that those in power should be "grieved" by any difficulty their followers may experience.

Summing up the responses presented by followers discussing employee disengagement, as well as observations recorded, several key themes can be identified. Firstly, reduced remuneration, perceived inequities in remuneration, and the lack of opportunities to earn financial incentives were considered questionable. Secondly, a lack of flexibility for workers in obtaining leave and time off - an issue in which some

leaders feel disempowered to act due to the available manpower resources in relation to operational needs was noted. Added to that, practical matters such as food when on patrol and the design and allocation of uniforms were raised. These constraints within the organisation's current context limit the degree to which operational leadership practices can foster employee engagement. Beyond the current context, the underpinning principles of consultation and feedback illustrated herein will have significance as suggested in Figure 1 and have been further elucidated by the model illustrated in Figure 4

With contractual benefits such as leave and remuneration representing a "promise" on the part of the organisation, a possible "trust deficit" such as that described by Von DerOhe *et al.* (2004) seems likely to be impacting engagement in the Qatar Rescue Police. The unusual circumstances (Covid 19, the 2022 Football World Cup) to which its origins can be attributed have run their course, and rebuilding employee trust in the organisation will be of importance. With lessons learned regarding its ability to fulfil contractual obligations during difficult times, it appears that the organisation's resilience should receive attention, with contingency plans and budgets offering a means to ensure continuity.

The notion of fairness and equity that was raised by followers' respondents accords with the work of Mohamed & Baig (2012) on treatment of migrant workers from Islamic perspectives. They summarized that the context of Islam brings about human rights to workers, in a brotherhood relationship between employer and employees. According to them, employers should be considerate, just and kind towards their workers. Further, they should look after the well being of employees (Mohamed & Baig, 2012). In the case of Qatar, the government has undertaken considerable steps of improvements to the working conditions of workers and employees, setting the maximum daily hours, specifying the minimum wage, forcing employers to provide accommodation, cancellation of exit permit condition, allowing workers to change employers and change sponsors, as well as getting paid end of service (Hukoomi, 2014-2020). In addition, the Qatari government established the Dispute Settlement

Committees in 2018, which aims to facilitate workers' access to their rights by resolving labour disputes within three weeks of the migrant worker's submission of a complaint, as mechanisms for resolution and justice. For Rescue Police department, a lot needs to be done to address the concerns of the followers, emphasizing the role of the leaders to act as mediators between their followers and the organisation to ensure their followers rights are attended to. As noted, discussing the human resources issues of the organisation was outside the scope of this thesis, however, it might be interesting for future research to look into the HR processes and arrangements to answer some of the demands raised in this research.

In a uniquely local point, equity in the allocation of shifts and the way in which shifts were allocated in the light of cultural barriers to engagement were questioned and the potential for disengagement when deployments may cause conflicts of interest owing to tribal affiliations was raised. The conceptual framework suggests a link between the organisation's specific issues and employees expectations through the leadership practices, which can influence the balance for employees' benefits. Next, the nature of police work itself may result in disengagement based on the personal orientations and preferences of employees. This may impact the ways in which employees are deployed, with some having greater aptitude and inclination for clerical tasks or support roles, rather than active duty. It may also impact hiring and training practices which fall outside the scope of this study.

In addition, the manner in which leadership and discipline are practised, what appears to be a disconnect between operations and organisational management can contribute to disengagement. There are indications that what certain leaders and followers are seeking is a supportive, collaborative environment in which the organisation, leaders and followers cooperate towards improved performance and in which the organisation plays an active role in support of their efforts. According to Shore and Shore (1995), perceived organisational support is used by employees to form beliefs regarding the degree to which they are valued for their contributions and the degree to which the organisation cares about their wellbeing.

An additional practice of disengagement, namely the private life of the employee, was also identified, with at least one leader asserting that intervention and dispute mediation on the part of the leader were desirable. This was somewhat unexpected, and differs from common leadership practices found in the West where leaders' intervention in personal lives is generally not considered to be desirable and may even be seen as inappropriate. In Qatar's context, such interventions may be welcomed by certain followers. It has been noted that in Islamic cultures, leaders are seen as role models (Abdullah and Ishak, 2012) and it is considered normal for leaders to intervene as advisors, counsellors or intermediaries in disputes, taking the role of a "spiritual father" as noted by one of the leaders participating in this study. Indeed, in the Prophet's speeches the quote, "*All of you have some people under your responsibility, and you are responsible for their matters too*" (Albukhari: 1/5200) reflects the leader's role in this context and hence, the leader's role may extend beyond the workplace in certain situations. It is also reflected in conceptual framework indicating that Islamic principles and perspectives may shape leaders practices towards their employees and followers.

During observation of leader-follower interactions, it was noted that while some leaders openly discussed factors leading to disengagement with the followers under their command, communicating feedback from the organisation and inviting comment and public or private discussion, there was an instance of a "take it or leave it" attitude in some of the meetings observed which was seen to "disappoint" followers and which could contribute to further disengagement in the workplace. Maslach et al (2001) identified a supportive workplace community as having a strong influence on engagement, and supportiveness requires two-way communication.

Breevaart *et al.* (2014) and their assertion that engagement is largely transactional and is operationalised through "tangible transactions" was reflected when disengagement was examined. However, it is notable that these tangible transactions, when beneficial to followers, seemed primarily linked to a lack of disengagement rather than engagement itself. It could be argued that interpersonal transactions or practices,

rather than tangible transactions, in leadership practice could have a substantial impact on either exacerbating disengagement or fostering engagement, even in the absence of access to increased tangible rewards. Despite the lack of a single, clear definition of engagement, it may be argued that a "lack of disengagement" does not have engagement as a logical consequence. In support of this, Afrahi *et al.* (2022) confirm that distinguishing between workers who are disengaged, those who are neutral, and those who are engaged is helpful. This underlines that, before a high level of engagement can be achieved, factors causing disengagement must be seen to be addressed, at least to the extent possible given reigning limitations to their practicability.

In the context of this study, it can be seen that in a government-led organisation such as the Qatar Rescue Police, addressing disengagement caused by organisational factors such as the provision of tangible rewards is not within the direct capacity of operational leadership. On the other hand, practices such as open discussion between leaders and followers, providing guidance for administrative leaders towards the equitable allocation of rewards, application of constructive performance management procedures, and the practice of advocacy as a link between followers and the organisation effected by leaders contribute towards alleviating disengagement as observed multiple times during leader-follower interactions. This is confirmed by Frank *et al.* (2004) in their work on communication satisfaction and its influence on employee engagement. These authors noted that first-line supervisors were of particular importance in promoting engagement through constructive communication and by acting as a communication channel between organisational leadership and their subordinates. In observed interactions (such as OBS 5, 6 and 7), it was apparent that in the absence of direct problem-solving authority on the part of leaders, commitment to advocacy and feedback was highly regarded by followers.

In summary, the local context seems to indicate that the basic rewards-based factors linked to disengagement are broadly similar to those observed in the West and, as in the Western context, can be resolved or mitigated through the organisation's intervention. However, there are primary differences including the role of tribal

affiliations and the role of the leader as a "spiritual father" who can even mediate in the private lives of subordinates. Finally, the organisation's reluctance to grant decision-making powers to experienced, primarily expat constables in routine matters, may reflect on the local context in which a mostly expat workforce is managed by a small number of Qatari citizens with a possible dearth of trust being present in the way this relationship is conducted.

## 5.3 To explore ways leaders can promote employee engagement in the Qatar police department

Among leaders, there was far less consensus in this area than in the preceding areas of interest. Opinions on the leader's role in fostering engagement ranged from a "family-oriented" approach to the unexpected assertion that follower engagement could be excessive and counterproductive. While most sources focus on the potential positive outcomes of engagement, a handful of studies, including that of Nerstad et al (2019) have indicated that there is potential for negative outcomes when employees become highly engaged in their work. This concept indicates an area for further study, and indicates a need to monitor the wellbeing of highly engaged employees for indicators of burnout and the development of cynicism towards their work as recommended by Nerstad and colleagues.

Most, but not all, leader participants were of the opinion that fair treatment and leadership practices that fostered two-way communication, as well as advocacy for follower concerns at higher organisational levels were of importance. Finally, the opinion that the leader is part of the team in the roles of provider of guidance, affirmation, and as a communication channel between followers and organisational leadership was expressed. This accords with Islamic leadership theory as elucidated by Abdallah (2019) as well as Western findings on the subject of employee engagement such as those described by Sundaray (2011). However, it is notable that not all participants shared the same views highlighting a need for greater consistency.

It is interesting to note that followers' and leaders' opinions on the role of leadership in promoting engagement differed in some respects and that followers from both

Qatari and expat backgrounds were more unanimous in their views regarding the importance of engagement and their direct leaders' role in its promotion. Recurring themes included respect and recognition, positive working relationships, access to advice, and equitable treatment. This is supported by Bedarkar and Pandita (2014), with their assertion that a positive connection between subordinates and leaders is key to fostering engagement. It is also reflected by Popli and Rizvi (2016) in their reference to "positive influence" as a means of promoting engagement. Views indicative of a family-like relationship between followers and between followers and leaders were apparent in the use of vocabulary relevant to family relationships when both followers and leaders referred to workplace relationships.

The absence of direct contact with more senior leadership was noted in the analysis of followers' interviews, with many of them reiterating sources of dissatisfaction related to remuneration, leave, and other benefits. Interestingly, although some respondents suggested addressing these issues as promoters of greater engagement, the emphasis on direct, collaborative working relationships and leadership practice methodologies was far greater in discussions relating to engagement, being less apparent in the context of disengagement. This seems to confirm that mitigating disengagement requires transactional influence while promoting engagement has a stronger association with leadership practice and supports findings such as Finnegan and Taylor's (2004) opinion that first line supervisors have a strong influence over employee engagement as well as MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) identification of "engaging management" as an important role for line managers.

The importance of engaging management was noted in observations. Meetings in which senior ranks strove to demonstrate their respect for the opinions of their juniors, encouraging open communication, and in which concern for their welfare was demonstrated, appeared to result in heightened engagement, even when the resolution of practical matters was not within the power of the senior officers present.

The concepts of self-determination, autonomy, and empowerment led to extensive discussion among followers interviewed. While being aware that police work is, by

nature, procedural, some followers appeared to be frustrated that despite their knowledge and experience of correct procedures, some leaders delegated supervision to junior officers with insufficient knowledge and experience resulting in extended communication channels and delays that could impact the efficacy of a police constable's work and along with that, the maintenance of public order and safety. Most constables seemed to accept limited autonomy as being a reality of police work but expressed satisfaction when reporting that leaders trusted their judgement in certain contexts. However, the general impression garnered from leaders was that some felt that autonomy could be ruled out; while most felt that there was some scope for interpretation, creativity, and autonomy in handling routine police actions. Besides the possibility that delayed responses in emergency situations may lead to negative outcomes for the public, frustration can lead to disengagement and even workplace deviance as noted by Bennett *et al.* (2018).

The concept that micromanagement is not always necessary was confirmed by certain followers who noted with pride that their leaders had confidence in their recommendations when seeking approval for certain types of actions, and empowered them to exercise autonomy in conducting certain routine matters and procedures. On the other hand, there were respondents who reported having "no power at all," a potential further indication that conflicting leadership interventions are in operation or that there is a need for further training for patrolling constables.

An interesting finding of the research interviews relates to the pairing of constables on patrol. A follower observed that seemingly-random pairings hindered communication and mutual understanding and collaboration between constables, making their work more difficult. He called for more permanent pairings, feeling that constables could be more productive in this context. In a similar vein, one leader remarked that he would not pair constables from tribes with significant political differences. However, without deeper investigation into deployments, it may be difficult to form any conclusion other than that these points should be considered in the deployment of staff with possible policies outlining best practices for deployments being formulated to guide leadership

practice. This is incorporated into the conceptual framework suggested in this thesis that can be influenced by both the organisation's context and Arabic/Bedouin values.

Finally, the fact that followers are from expat nationalities and that the local Leaders are Qatari nationals imply that there needs to be a careful study of the hierarchy imposed in this setting in order to come up with a locally fit structure that can provide effective treatment to the leadership practices and employee engagement outcomes. Raelin (2009) asserts the need for a practice informed approach to leadership that takes into account the importance of societal values and context rather than just looking simplistically into the general national cultures. This requires a particular level of sensitivity to the lack of universality of leadership practices and even more importantly necessitates avoiding privileging Western academic framing over the specificity of a local context. Predominantly Western concepts, (e.g employee voice) may not only be experienced differently, but may advocate approaches which oppose the context specific societal values. This is supported in this thesis as it provides the links between theory and practice. The conceptual framework also aims to provide a guide for improving employee engagement through leadership practices. Thus, the leadership practices and recommendations about how to address employee engagement will be discussed in the following chapter.

# Chapter 6

# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter attempts to synthesise the data collected to address the fourth objective of this thesis namely, "To construct a conceptual framework informing recommendations for leadership practices fostering employee engagement in the Qatar Rescue police department". Besides examining the contribution to leadership practice in Qatar, and its Rescue Police Department, an attempt will be made to illustrate primary findings and how they may contribute to academic theory.

## 6.1 Contribution to Practice and Theory

As noted in the literature review, utilising current theories on employee engagement without modification relative to the cultural context that prevails in non-western cultures may not meet with success. However, the results of this study show that these modifications often represent nuances in the application of theory rather than completely differing principles. Findings in this context are relevant to the MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) drivers of engagement, that indicates the ways in which local cultural context modifies employee engagement theories while simultaneously having potential links to its broader principles. These findings may also have applicability among other Islamic cultures that share similar values and may therefore contribute to the body of academic knowledge relating to leadership and employee engagement.

For example, although it is likely that there is a greater reverence for leadership, whether "good" or "bad" in Islamic cultures than in the West, employees value presence above distance and appear to demonstrate elevated engagement when leaders listen to their opinions and respond appropriately. Obedience to leadership is a cultural requirement based on local and religious values, but higher levels of initiative and performance were evident among the followers of engaging leaders. In the cultural context, fostering "brotherhood" or "fatherhood" roles (Farhet et al, 2000) and reinforcing the organisational mission as a vehicle for the greater good will be important in fostering engagement as noted by Chadley (1998).

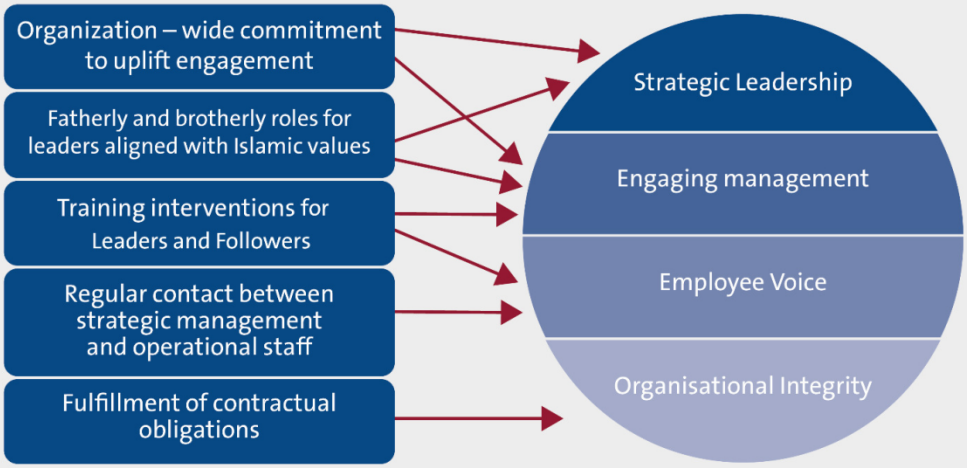
Although "role model" leaders attract admiration around the world, the concept of the leader as a father figure and counsellor may be less accepted in the West while being regarded as a highly desirable role in certain cultures shaping their values based on Islam (Khan and Zia-ur- Rehman, 2021). It also reflects on organisational leadership and the strategic narrative in context of the employer-employee relationship as well as the overall mission of the organisation, which must be seen to reflect Islamic ideals if engagement is to be fostered. Islamic values shape social expectations in Qatar and Islamic leadership must therefore be seen to practise management in accordance with these values and expectations. Meiani and Putra (2019) and Nasrah et al. (2021) observed the importance of Islamic codes of ethics in leadership with similar results, attributing them to personal traits. However, since the evidence of "traits" lies in practices, it could be argued that practices can be easily learned and implemented regardless of personal predispositions (Raelin, 2018).

Broad concepts related to engagement apply but are modified by cultural context. This accords with MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) view that enablers of engagement have proved to be useful lenses which can help organisations assess the effectiveness of their approaches, but underlines the importance of assessing these drivers with reference to cultural context. An important contribution of this study is to provide an Islamic perspective to the broader body of academic knowledge related to employee engagement.

With closer reference to the organisation-specific practical recommendations based on the study's findings, but also with potential for transferability to other organisations seeking to enhance engagement in Qatari organisations, figure 3 below illustrates the ways in which recommended practices relate to those in MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) synthesis of the drivers of engagement. Strategic leadership can become part of an engaging narrative and this requires interactive practices on the part of managers as part of an overall commitment to the upliftment of employee engagement. The nurturing roles of leaders seen in the role of fathers and elder brothers plays a role, and the provision of training and skill recognition strengthens and adds authority to the

employee voice as a contributing factor in both day-to-day and strategic decision-making. Underpinning this is the basic necessity, or hygiene factor, of ensuring that transactional contractual obligations are fulfilled by the organisation as evidence of its integrity.

**Figure 3: Fostering Engagement in Context: Primary Findings VS MacLeod & Clarke's (2009) Drivers of Engagement**




## 6.2 Recommendations

### 6.2.1 Organisational leadership is recommended to develop and follow an organisation-wide strategy for improved employee engagement

Although line managers can attempt to promote employee engagement, making it a matter of personal choice and "management approach" leaves room for variation as was seen in leader and follower interviews. Besides this, operational leaders implementing leadership practices to promote employee engagement will be constrained by organisational factors beyond their control. In the Qatar police department, such factors include insufficient communication, understaffing, and reduced monetary and non-monetary rewards and incentives as well as perceived

inequities in the allocation of rewards and application of corrective discipline. In addition, line managers cannot promote engagement if they are not, themselves, engaged. Although the leaders interviewed seemed to be enthused by the importance of the work of the Rescue Police, it appears that the organisation could improve communication and the support available to line managers. Although operationalisation of engagement at this level falls outside of the scope of this study, it is apparent that without an organisation-wide strategy targeting engagement at every level, little progress will be made.

As noted by Sahoo and Mishra (2012:93) "*Unless the people at the top believe in it, own it, pass it down to managers and employees, and enhance their leadership, employee engagement will never be more than just a corporate fad.*" Hence, to optimise employee engagement, an organisation-wide strategy targeting engagement, removing barriers to engagement, stipulating practices that promote it, measuring outcomes, and continually striving for improvement should be implemented.

### 6.2.2 Organisational leadership should periodically engage with operational leaders as well as their followers.

Despite the limitations of this study, which only dealt with leadership at operational level, some practices that could be implemented by higher management leaders were identified and should not be overlooked. First among these, contact and communication between organisational management and line management, and organisational management and employees would appear to be in need of enhancement. The proposed meetings, as suggested by respondents, should be held at regular intervals and should target clear, constructive communication regarding tangible, practical issues confronting operational leaders and their followers, what is being done about them, and if nothing is being done, why this is not possible. Feedback should be invited.

Oc and Bashshur (2013) argued that relationships between leaders and followers should be contextualised based on the environment in which leadership occurs. It is notable that followers in the Qatar Rescue Police experience a vacuum between

themselves and organisational leadership, and that several leaders corroborated this while recommending greater involvement between higher-tier leadership, operational leadership, and followers. Karanges *et al.* (2015) observed that internal organisational communication and communication between supervisors, their superiors, and subordinates supports relational meaning and worth and has a pivotal role in optimising employee engagement. Hence, when there is a dearth of two-way communication between top management, supervisors and followers, administrative leadership may fail to empower operational leadership in reducing the impact of factors leading to disengagement on the one hand, and practices implemented with the aim of enhancing engagement on the other.

Figure 4 below suggests ways in which the organisation, operational leaders, and subordinates interact with the aim of achieving heightened employee engagement through effective leadership. The key to unlocking heightened employee engagement relies on communication channels and feedback as well as a strong, organisation-wide commitment to strategies targeting employee engagement. Evaluating what matters to subordinates can be partially achieved through quantitative measurement, but the qualitative value of direct verbal feedback from operational leaders and their subordinates will be of value since it also allows an opportunity for further suggestions and opinions from the leaders and followers which engagement strategies will target rather than relying on measurement criteria which impose limitations in the factors to be considered, emphasizing the departmental leaders role to act as mediators between followers and organisational leaders.

## Figure 4: Communication Framework for Improved Employee Engagement


Lack of this type of communication may also have an affective impact. It may seem to followers and operational leaders that administrative leadership lacks interest in addressing the obstacles to engagement which they face, leading to a cycle of disengagement at both operational leadership and follower level that is further aggravated over the course of time. As Will Hutton, Executive Vice Chair of the Work Foundation observed in MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) investigation of public sector employee engagement, organisations are a form of social network in which employees' full contribution will be lost if they are treated as "*cogs in the machine.*"

Both leaders at the level studied and their followers expressed the hope that administrative leadership, as leaders of their "work family" should be seen to have an interest in addressing obstacles to engagement, even when budgetary constraints may mean that the actions they are able to take are necessarily limited. Hence, the simple practice of instituting regular opportunities for mutual discussion in which operational leaders and their followers can take leadership in expressing their concerns and suggestions "without fear of reprisals" as proposed by Kahn (1990), and interactivity on the part of the organisation in responding to them, may go some way towards furthering employee engagement at operational level in the context of the Qatar Rescue Police.

Although the current relationship between administrative and operational management and personnel seems to indicate "power distance," a frequently accepted characteristic of a hierarchical society such as that of Qatar, it is notable that neither nationals nor expats, though apparently accepting of the social hierarchy of the organisation, seemed to find "distancing" constructive or desirable. Indeed, in the cultural context, the leader is seen as being accountable to his followers as the people who he has been trusted to lead (Abdallah et al., 2019). Followers, in turn, respond with obedience, honesty and integrity, efficiency, and courage, (Ogunbado and Ahmed, 2016) a response not dissimilar to employee engagement but with culturally-based nuances.

Improving the interface between administrative leadership, operational leadership, and subordinates requires accountability on the part of administrative leaders towards their subordinates' calls for direct, two-way communication as a leadership practice across organisational ranks and operational levels. As stated by Abdallah (2019): "*The model of Islamic leadership has four dimensions: Consciousness of God, Competency, Consultation, and Consideration.*" Hence consultancy and consideration (shura) are already principles that are recognized as having applicability in the local context and genuine efforts to implement them will be noted by followers as laudable with heightened engagement as an expected result.

### 6.2.3 Instituting a clear framework for leadership practice with the aim of promoting follower engagement and improved performance.

Despite the guiding principles for leadership being determined by Islam in the Qatari culture, it was notable that leadership practices varied greatly from leader to leader in interviews and in observations. This was confirmed by one of the most senior interviewees who noted "*Some of the challenges the leadership of the department face are related to the different approaches adopted by some leaders and supervisors."* This was reinforced by the fact that there even seemed to be some differences on the importance of employee engagement. However, in the context of police work "*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption*" (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74) is likely to promote effective policing. The point that this level of engagement is not always present was evidenced by the constable who reported that some of his colleagues did not undertake proactive policing, simply responding to radio dispatches, for fear of "having to appear in court." High levels of absenteeism were also reported or implied by some respondents - an additional indicator of disengagement (Salome et al., 2014), on the part of followers, and a potential indicator of disengagement on the part of leaders when this issue is not addressed.

By contrast, some constables were proud of their dedication to their work, citing non-monetary forms of recognition such as awards and commendations as recognition for their achievements. According to many researchers, including Maslach *et al.* (2001), recognition has a strong influence on engagement. These authors also believed that it was among the factors that can help to prevent its opposite: burnout.

Certain differences in performance among constables seem to be attributable to the open interpretation of leadership practice currently seen in the organisation. Interviews indicate that while some leaders prefer staff to follow orders closely and do not require or reward initiative, others strive to create an environment in which followers can surpass what can be achieved by simply following orders and are willing to provide recognition even if this simply takes the form of commending the subordinate.

It would therefore appear that certain variations in performance may be attributed to direct leadership and specific leaders' ability to promote employee engagement. It could be argued that this is not a status quo that should be accepted when possible means to address these variations exist. The concept of leadership as a practice rather than a personal choice of "style" lies at the heart of Raelin's LAP philosophy outlined in his 2016 book "*Leadership as Practice.*" The consultative and collaborative methods proposed in this work for the development of leadership practice accord well with local morals and culture in Qatar, and allow for the evolution of a unique approach that matches the needs of individual organisations.

Leadership practices that promote follower engagement and that foster excellence can be formulated as standardised practices, codes of conduct, and procedures that can be followed in much the same way as any other police procedure, thereby mitigating the effect of personal interpretation as to the nature of leadership and leaders and promoting consistency within the organisation.

For example, in rewards-based practices such as recognising strong performance, a guide for promoting the use of monetary and non-monetary rewards based on defined deliverables could form the basis of a practice that assists in promoting engagement (Sundaray, 2011) and even-handedness. It would also align with Islamic values: "A human will not get anything unless he works hard." (Qur'an: 53:39) In addition, daily briefings could include agendas that allow for the discussion of work-based concerns and the celebration of specific achievements. Leaders could also be required to meet privately with followers on request and to respond constructively to their individual concerns. Policies such as these would reinforce a positive two-way relationship between employee and employer which is required in order to foster engagement (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). They would promote feelings of manager support, cited by Mone and London (2018) as being a predictor of employee engagement, and they would align with the Qatari concept of the workplace as a family unit led by caring "brothers" and "fathers."

In addition, corrective and performance management procedures could be formally structured for greater "professionalism," and uniformity, ensuring that they become a source of improved performance rather than a potential factor in disengagement as cited by some respondents in follower positions as well as leaders who pride themselves on their abilities within the "art of command." Measures such as these are supported by Rast's (2015) argument that the psychological effect of leadership practices should be taken into account. Simply meeting material wants and needs without taking the psychological needs of followers into account fails to exploit the opportunities for enhanced engagement inherent in implementing practices that positively affect the psychological outlook of followers.

With such a diversity in leadership practices already in existence, instituting practices that foster employee engagement would require training and mentoring for leaders to be implemented by organisation. Performance reviews for leaders could be formulated to include indicators of positive and consistent leadership practice and leaders' engagement, and this, together with indicators of follower engagement such as improved workplace performance and reduced absenteeism as posited by Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) could be taken into account as important factors in leadership performance.

Ibrahim and Al Falasi (2014) also argued that performance was the clearest indicator of engagement, and if fostering engagement becomes a key performance area for the evaluation of leader performance, the benefits to law enforcement in Qatar as a result of improved employee engagement could be substantial. Should recognition for employee engagement as a measurement of leadership success become part of the organisational environment at all levels, all activities performed by the organisation, including those not directly relevant to law enforcement, could be measurably enhanced.

In essence Raelin's (2016 b) LAP concept could be instrumental in transforming leadership into a united, collective action. Thus, leadership ceases to be a "theory" and becomes a repeatable series of actions that is uniformly practised. These practices

should be informed by the context principles and values of Islam and Arabic culture in order to meet expectations of followers. This way, these practices may become more influential in enhancing employees' engagement, as advised by the thesis' conceptual framework (figures 1 and 2).

### 6.2.4 Organisation-wide training initiatives for leaders

Since it is recommended that efforts to advance engagement should be organisation-wide, it is imperative for strategic management and operational management to be aware of the importance of employee engagement, its benefits, and how it can be promoted, acting to develop an organisational culture that enables line managers to work towards this end. Although local context may call for modification of accepted knowledge in this field, these seem to relate primarily to interpersonal relationships and the way in which principles are applied and many of the accepted principles regarding how engagement can be heightened appear to match local culture. For example, mutual respect is accepted as a prerequisite for engagement in Western approaches to engagement (MacLeod and Clarke, 2013) and is seen as a guiding principle in Qatari society and under Islam (Rizvi, 1995). Hence, the principles underlying the concept of employee engagement should not be entirely alien, and it is recommended that management at all levels should be equipped with the knowledge necessary to understand the importance of employee engagement, its basic, underlying principles, and the methods used to measure it.

In addition, it is notable that some junior officers in the Qatar Rescue Police appear not to have been sufficiently exposed to police work to properly understand follower reports or the procedures that should be followed. Experienced constables expressed frustration as a result of delays necessitated by these officers having to refer matters to their superiors before decisions could be made and communicated. While the nature of policing is such that some situations are highly sensitive and non-routine, and require top-level intervention, those for which there are clear procedures, but that require higher-level approval, should be familiar to junior officers required to perform supervisory roles. That this is not always the case indicates a possible need for further

training, practical exposure to police work, and a system of certification specifying their decision-making powers and competency to act as supervisors. In support of this, Cordero *et al.* (2004) observed that at supervisory level, technical skill is important in creating a stimulating work environment.

When high-level input is a requirement, direct communication between constables (followers) and commanders should be initiated as a matter of urgency, thereby limiting delays in police response caused by extended communication channels. This may indicate a need for improved resourcing in the form of communications technologies that allow for the rapid escalation of reports requiring senior officers' attention.

### 6.2.5 Providing formal training opportunities for followers that empower them to work more effectively and with greater autonomy when performing their duties.

In interviews, several respondents noted that opportunities for further training would be welcomed. In addition, followers frequently reported that they were not empowered to act without direct instructions from leadership even when they knew which procedures should be followed. Respondents reporting that their leaders "trusted" them in routine matters appeared to feel some pride in the confidence placed in them and appeared to exhibit greater engagement in their work.

Training and a system for recognising competency in certain areas of policing could be used as a means of empowering followers to work with greater autonomy and efficacy, reduce feelings of frustration, hasten police response to emergencies, and become a form of recognition towards which followers would be willing to strive as a means of facilitating their work, as an indicator of status, and a recognition of performance. When budgets allow, material recognition could add further weight to the value of these skills. These recommendations are based on respondents' comments regarding autonomy and self-determination in interviews and match the conclusions of authors studying engagement in Western contexts including Anitha (2014), Mani (2011), and Kahn (1992) who noted that autonomy was among the drivers of

engagement. Apart from using training as a means of promoting autonomy, the mere fact that employees have opportunities to upskill could lead to enhanced employee engagement in line with MacLeod and Clarke's (2009) citation of the finding from their 2009 *Engaging for Success* review that improvements in skill and capability are second only to the perception of caring leadership in promoting engagement.

Allowing constables with adequate knowledge and proven performance to have greater autonomy would simultaneously reduce the amount of time required for leadership input into operations, allowing followers to "take the lead" under certain circumstances, and allowing leaders to become more productive in non-routine areas in which the need for leadership input is greater. Instead of spending a large amount of their time simply verifying the need to initiate procedures already known to followers, they could undertake a greater role in contributing to policing strategies and other, more intellectually stimulating tasks which may, in turn, contribute to their engagement (Breevart et al., 2014) and the overall efficiency of the Qatar Rescue Police.

### 6.2.6 Instituting clear guidelines for the provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards

Also at organisational level, the provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards should be reviewed and standardised. Presbitero (2016) observed that the management of rewards as a practice can have positive results on engagement and organisational outcomes. Whether or not perceptions of favouritism or lack of equity in the provision of rewards are subjective, confirming a transparent guide that indicates the requirements for their allocation could either end inequities, or clarify what is required in order for incentives to be awarded. The achievement of rewards and recognition could thus form a clearly-defined enabling factor in the promotion of engagement, since employees at all levels would be aware of the actions to be taken in order to gain them. From a faith-based perspective, "*God blessed a person who perfected his work*" (Almusnad: 4386). With opportunities for recognition strategically aligned with the

organisation's objectives, they can be used in their furtherance as well as in promoting employee engagement.

However, budgetary limitations may be a constraining factor and alternatives to monetary rewards should be explored. For example, an area of concern among followers was the non-payment of overtime owing to budgetary constraints. Since this is a contractual issue, it would appear that the organisation should prioritise finding ways to address it, or risk being regarded as an organisation that does not fulfil its contractual obligations - with severe impact on the trust it engenders in its followers and inevitable negative effects on employee engagement. One respondent suggested that giving time off in lieu of overtime could be an acceptable alternative, but it appears that this method is used by some leaders and not others. Since fairness, trust and mutual respect form an important basis for engagement (MacLeod and Clarke, 2013) and their importance was often referred to during interviews, basic considerations such as offering time off in lieu of overtime should become a minimum standard procedure while the organisation works to overcome its budgetary constraints.

Implementing standardised practices targeting employee benefits and rewards or seeking alternatives when rewards-based obligations and expectations cannot be met would not only have an impact on feelings of engagement or the lack of disengagement, but will also be of benefit to public order. For example, although constables' shifts are predetermined and span a specified number of hours, it is not always possible to complete actions in progress within the allocated time. Failing to offer some form of remuneration for overtime, even if it is not in the form of financial remuneration, may cause constables to feel sufficiently disengaged in their work to omit taking action in the absence of direct orders to do so because they are aware that it will require them to work longer, unremunerated hours.

This recommendation takes the form of direct transactions and accords with the transactional influence discussed by Breevaart (2014) in which rewards allocated to followers meet their expectations. Failing to meet a reasonable expectation, namely

some form of remuneration for overtime, either in money or time off, is an important factor in disengagement in an organisation like the Qatar Rescue Police where employee engagement and the maintenance of public order are likely to be closely linked. Despite the fact that these are organisational issues, absence of following the recommended actions and practices may have severe implications on employee engagement.

Finally, public verbal recognition for excellent performance is also a form of reward and should form part of the agenda during briefings. An example of this was seen in a meeting (OBS 5 and OBS 10) in which an officer rewarded constables' outstanding performance with time off in the presence of their colleagues with what appeared to be a strong uplift in overall morale following the interaction. This will ensure that followers are aware that their achievements are noticed and appreciated, and may encourage them to further their efforts toward excellence.

### 6.2.7 Attempting to formulate a uniform policy for the deployment of staff taking cultural context and the nature of the work required into account. Consideration of the concept of more permanent employee partnerships.

In discussions related to engagement and disengagement among followers in the Rescue Police, it appeared that there was some lack of clarity in understanding why constables are deployed in certain ways when proceeding with patrols. One respondent suggested some rotation of patrols, allowing all constables an opportunity to work on generally preferred routes at some time or another.

Further complicating the issue is the valid observation that in geographical areas dominated by certain tribes, it would be undesirable to deploy constables with tribal affiliations that are too nearly related to that which is prevalent in the area. It was felt that initiating punitive action against tribal "brothers" may lead to disengagement, either because the action is carried out but not preferred owing to social stigma, or not carried out at all. And, when political or social tensions occur between tribes or nationalities residing in Qatar, it may be counter-productive to deploy members of these tribes in working partnerships. This issue is unique to this context and may have

limited applicability in the Western settings Tribal affiliations and loyalties are a powerful social force in Qatar and the extent to which this may affect the work environment forms a potential area for future study.

Finally, the idea of pairing constables into more permanent partnerships was raised as a means of promoting efficacy and engagement: a suggestion that may be more difficult to apply in practice, and have more questionable benefits, than it may superficially seem. While in some instances it may benefit employee engagement and police efficacy, it may be less beneficial, and even deleterious, in others. Further investigation would be needed in order to decide whether this recommendation can yield benefits and how it could be implemented.

While implementing some or all these suggestions may not always be practicable, they should nevertheless be considered on their merits, with attempts made to adjust deployment rosters where benefits may be realised. As a minimum, it would seem that a clear policy on deployments that is understood by both leaders and followers could contribute to greater understanding as to the reasoning employed, allowing followers to grasp the challenges deployment decisions entail. This is supported by Srivastava (2015) who asserted that organisational policies play a role in employee engagement. These considerations fall under the organisation context in the conceptual framework.

### 6.2.8 Access to confidential counselling for constables experiencing family or work-related problems

Police work can often be stressful, traumatic or disturbing and the resulting burnout can lead to disengagement. In Western cultures, access to counselling, usually from a psychologist, for police constables is an accepted norm. In the Arab world, however, there is a greater stigma associated with consultation with mental health professionals than there is in the West (Al-Krenawi, 2005).

For this reason, juniors will often approach senior officers to act as counsellors, even though they may not have formal training in this area. An example of this was seen in the leader who, in his interview, related an anecdote in which he provided counselling and mediated a family dispute confided in him by a constable in order to address disengagement in his work owing to this "distraction". This intervention is very context specific and unique to this culture, and might differ from Western settings. Once again, this leadership practice is rooted in the societal expectation that a leader should act as a father-figure. In other words, constables expect their leaders to engage in paternalistic practices beyond the workplace settings. In contrast, in a Western context, such practices are considered inappropriate since any interventions into employees' personal life would indicate a lack of respect for their right to privacy.

For constables however, this approach may not always be ideal depending on their relationship with their senior officers, the nature of their concerns, and fears that their confidences may result in prejudice against them. Confidentiality, on the other hand, is not as much of a concern. The right to privacy and the protection of information that has been disclosed confidentially are enshrined as a form of "sacred trust" in Islam.

Nevertheless, there may be times when access to a trained counsellor who is not a direct superior may be helpful to constables experiencing trauma, severe disengagement from their work, or the need for personal advice. In the cultural context, a senior ranking director may be the most acceptable person to take on this role. As a possible alternative, the health services could be promoted, allowing constables confidential access to trained counsellors when dealing with recovery from trauma. Nevertheless, stigma may discourage constables from accessing such a service.

It is therefore proposed that as accepted "father figures," leaders should be trained in some of the basic tenets of acting as counsellors and be required to avail themselves in this role when followers require it. However, if for some reason, constables should feel the need for an alternative, a more senior member of the organisation, possibly with a higher level of training, should be designated as the person to consult, and

constables should feel that they can do so without in any way prejudicing their positions in the workplace and on the understanding that any form of direct intervention (for example, in acting in the role of mediator) would occur with consent.

By encouraging followers to seek counselling, the Qatar Rescue Police could, to some degree, address or help to mitigate disengagement caused by family issues, workplace conflicts, or trauma incurred in the course of work, providing additional support and helping to build on the desired "family-like" nature of the employment relationship. For expats, in particular, a dearth of opportunities for support from their direct family in other countries within the region would no doubt be felt, and by reinforcing the supportive, "father figure" role of leaders, this could to some extent be mitigated while simultaneously promoting engagement.

As has been presented, the cultural context in the Arab world, and in Qatar in particular, and its role in employee engagement and leadership has not been examined in great depth in published literature. It could therefore be argued that by inculcating relevant leadership practices into procedures and by building on the leader's perceived role as a "father" or "elder brother," in this and other contexts, employee engagement could be fostered, as suggested by the conceptual framework.

### 6.2.9 The encouragement of formal and informal opportunities for social interaction between leaders and their followers: "fun" with the workplace family

The perceived "power distance" in countries like Qatar may exist to a certain degree and in specific contexts, but societal values limit the degree to which there is approval for "distance." When leader and follower respondents use the terms "brother" and "father," it is not simply a matter of vocabulary, but a deep-seated recognition of the nature of the society, and individuals' perceptions of responsibility towards one another, albeit in a context in which seniority is deeply respected.

Strengthening the bonds implied by this relationship can be difficult when workplace pressures intervene, however, efforts should be made to support its furtherance, both in formal and informal contexts. It was noted that when one of the followers related an

anecdote about constables being invited to play football with their leader, it was evident that this consideration both delighted the respondent and contributed to his respect for, and relationship with, the leader in question. In addition, an informal meeting between junior and senior leaders (OBS 4), while not productive in the strictest sense of the word, appeared to contribute to cohesion and feelings of respect between the senior officer and his juniors. Plester and Hutchinson (2016) identified opportunities for workplace "fun" as a potential driver of engagement, and it is possible to argue that in a high-stress environment such as that presented by police work, it may be nothing but more effective in heightening engagement.

Although time pressure and shortages of manpower when confronted with intensive demands on policing (such as that experienced during the recent Football World Cup in Qatar) are all too apparent, leaders in the Qatar Rescue Police can do much to build morale, engagement, and their relationship with followers when able to indulge in formal and informal, social interactions.

It is recommended that such practices be encouraged and that when possible, organisational support in the form of facilities or events occurring during working hours be provided.

### 6.2.10 Factors not related to leadership per se but having a role in engagement: practical evidence of a need for ongoing consultation with followers

While this study uncovers several practical recommendations to foster employee engagement, lesser factors not related to leadership per se, but nevertheless of interest in fostering engagement include the issues regarding food and uniforms.

In context, many constables are sending most of their earnings home to their families abroad and it would appear that some are not retaining sufficient funds to purchase food when on duty. Despite the sample size of the study, this issue was raised in more than one interview and should be seen as having some significance. Although it would be easy to dismiss this as a simple matter of constables needing to manage their budgets better, it is natural that they should prioritise the welfare of their families, and

the provision of meal allowances for constables on patrol should be considered since a wage increase would likely also be transferred to constables' families instead of adding to their personal budgets for day-to-day necessities.

In addition, the lack of suitability of uniforms for physically demanding work in a hot climate appears to show a lack of consultation between those who specified the choice of clothing and those who are required to wear it. This highlights the need for a consultative process in seemingly-small, practical decisions that affect police constables in their work.

Finally, during observations of leader-follower interactions, it was noticed that line managers did not always have access to meeting rooms in which privacy was possible. With certain interactions being of a sensitive nature, better access to private meeting facilities would be beneficial, and in this regard a suggestion for the management to provide a separate meeting room for each section of the Rescue Police Department sections.

## 6.3 Summary and Final thoughts

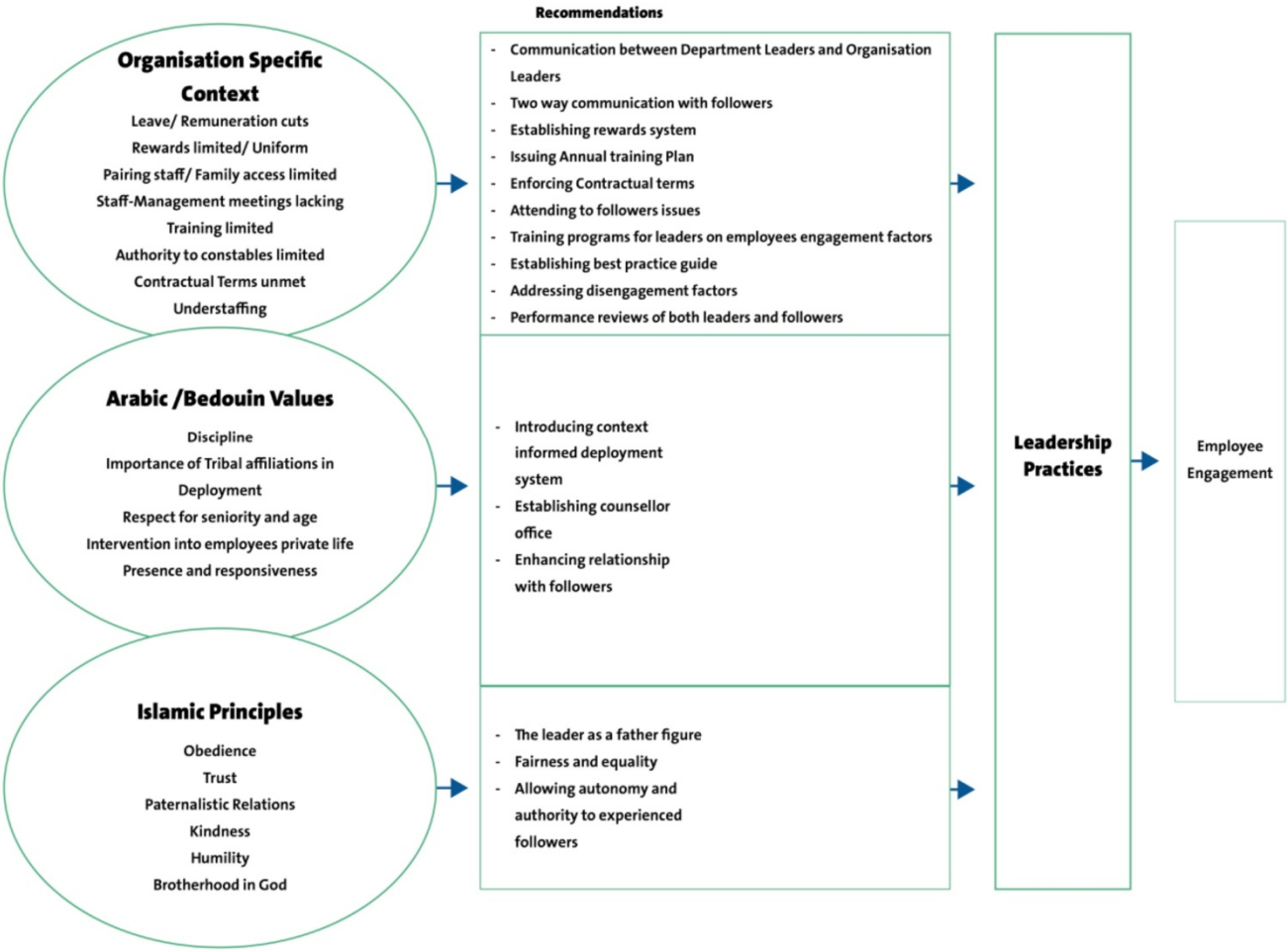
In finding answers to the question posed in the title of this thesis, it became apparent that leadership does matter in effecting employee engagement in the Qatar Rescue Police even when direct leaders are limited by organisational-based constraints. However, certain organisational and leadership practices may contribute to disengagement. Beyond the relationship between constables and their direct supervisors and leaders, a strategic approach to the development of leadership practice is suggested, allowing for a top-down, organisation-wide approach to engagement strategies.

Specific interventions that may contribute to this initiative at operational level were identified, and these broadly accord with many of the leadership and engagement theories outlined in mainstream literature, with differences relating to the cultural and organisational context taking the form of nuances that modify, but do not necessarily contradict, these theories. However, nuanced though they may be, they highlight the

importance of local and organisational context in implementing interventions and caution in implementing interventions based on theory alone even when this is complemented by practical experience in Western contexts. Although many of the suggestions in themselves would be relevant to certain extent in Western organisations, viewing them through the lens of Islamic values is enlightening as this exposes differences in the ways in which they may be implemented and the manner in which they would be received. For example, while caring management is welcomed by employees across cultural contexts, paternalistic overtones, seen as ideal in the Islamic values system, may be less welcome in other cultural contexts. In addition, application of Islamic values to strategies targeting employee engagement may magnify the efforts made towards this end and the results achieved since they become underpinned and reinforced by spirituality and religious duty. Hence, it would be possible to frame steps taken to elevate employee engagement as a moral duty rather than "just" a means of fostering greater organisational efficacy. In short, the context of Islamic culture informs the "style" and method of implementation; may serve to magnify dedication towards the stated goal of enhanced employee engagement; and may further serve to amplify the results achieved.

The figure (5) below presents the link between revealed data and remedy actions required to improve the practices towards elevated employee engagement within the Rescue Police Department.

## Figure 5: Summary of Data Revealed and Recommended Practices




It could thus be argued that when implementing mainstream approaches to engagement in non-Western contexts, leaders should be sensitive to cultural and societal differences and their potential for rendering well-intentioned interventions ineffective. For example, access to counselling is widely accepted as a means of promoting mental health, averting burnout, and contributing to engagement in police operatives, but while access to a psychologist would be the correct means of implementing this in the West, stigma, and the feeling that by showing "weakness" they are demonstrating a lack of the "courage" required from followers in the cultural context would limit its applicability in Qatar.

In the context of leadership, the "father figure role" often negatively regarded in the West, was seen as highly constructive in fostering engagement. However, such a role is considered to be positive in context and has the potential to be both benign and consultative. Farh *et al.* (2000) define paternalistic leadership as a combination of discipline and authority coupled with "fatherly benevolence." The father figure is present, cooperative, collaborative and involved, and the interviews conducted as part of this study appear to reinforce the importance of practices that serve as practical demonstrations of these qualities. Within the cultural context, as well as the militaristic one, it could be argued that practices furthering the familial nature of relationships between employees and their leaders could be extremely beneficial in fostering employee engagement and statements made during interviews seem to support this. This conclusion is supported by a study conducted in Pakistan by Khan and Zia-ur- Rehman (2021) in which the authors found that paternalistic leadership can be correlated with job-related affective wellbeing in their Islamic cultural context.

However individual interpretations of leadership and what constitutes constructive leadership practices lead to inconsistency, hence the conclusion that Raelin's (2016) concept of Leadership as a practice that is developed collaboratively could serve as culturally appropriate inspiration for creating a more consistent and constructive approach to leadership within the Qatar Rescue Police, furthering organisational goals and employee engagement among both operational leaders and their subordinates.

It has been noted that relatively small sample sizes and the organisational levels accessed in this study represent limitations in its findings. With the need for organisation-wide commitment to employee engagement having been identified, studies encompassing engagement, leadership, and current attitudes towards these concepts among higher-ranking decision-makers could prove revealing with regard to the nature and extent of interventions that may prove effective in achieving elevated employee engagement among leaders and followers alike.

As an organisation with militaristic structures, the Qatar Rescue Police may appear to present a different milieu to that found in other government departments. However,

attitudes towards command and leadership discussed in this study are rooted in the cultural context prevailing in Qatar and the broader principles applicable to effective leadership and its role in employee engagement may have applicability beyond the context of the organisation. However, confirming or refuting the potential of these findings for applicability in contexts other than that of the Qatar Rescue Police would require further study.

Furthermore, should the Qatar Rescue Police's leadership agree to the proposed leadership training and standardisation of practice, the nature and efficacy of the chosen methods and interventions and the measurements applied to evaluate their effect on employee engagement could form a further area for future research.

Hence, it may be said that the current study has shown the importance of leadership in employee engagement in the Qatar Rescue Police, but presents broad conclusions and recommendations that give rise to additional questions regarding their operationalisation while posing questions regarding employee engagement among leaders, particularly those occupying decision-making roles. Indeed, if employee engagement is to form a strategic focus for the organisation, engaged high-level leadership that is committed to the concept of employee engagement as a means of achieving greater organisational efficacy will be a requirement for its future success.

At operational level, this study identifies obstacles to engagement and leadership practices that promote engagement among the primarily expat workforce. However, obstacles to engagement and factors that may promote engagement are likely to differ when examining the primarily native Qatari demographic seen among higher echelon leadership. With engaged leadership being a primary requirement in driving an organisation-wide commitment towards heightened employee engagement, determining the factors that promote engagement among higher-echelon leaders in Qatari government organisations represent a potentially fruitful field for future study.

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# APPENDICES

**Participant invitation email:**

**Subject/** Participate in the research project titled "Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Police Department"

**Dear Participant,**

Hope you are doing well.

This is Musaab Jasim Mohammed, a Doctorate researcher from the University of Central Lancashire – UK and my contact details are 0097477085863 or mmohammed1@uclan.ac.uk

I am conducting interviews and observations as part of my Doctorate research study to increase understanding of how leadership practices affect staff engagement in the work place. I have been given permission from your department directors to go ahead with the research on staff of the department of rescue police.

As a staff in the rescue police department of Qatar, you are in an ideal position to give us valuable first hand information from your own perspective and experience through participating in an interview and be subject to being observed by the researcher during work activities.

The interview takes around 45-60 minutes of face-to-face time to complete and is completely voluntarily. Please be advised that your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. Each interview will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers are not revealed during the analysis and write up of findings. There is also an observation element involved during the research process such as work activities and interactions (meetings, briefing and debriefing gatherings...etc). Kindly be advised that while responses in the interview are confidential, participation in the observation process is not anonymous as it will be apparent who the researcher is observing. However, you have the right to withdraw from the observation if you choose to with all your observed data removed.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to our research and findings that could lead to greater public understanding of leadership practices and can inform a better behaviour and practices in the future in this field.

I've enclosed a participant information sheet and consent form that provides further information about my study.
If you are willing to participate please suggest a day and time by responding to my contact details above whether on email or phone. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank You,
**Musaab Jasim Mohammed**
**University of Central Lancashire 77085863**

## Participant Information Sheet (31/3/2021):

*You have been invited to take part in a research study titled: Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Police Department.*

*This study is being conducted by Musaab Jasim Mohammed who can be contacted at: 0097477085863 or mmohammed1@uclan.ac.uk*

*I understand that **my participation is voluntary** and that I can refuse to participate or stop taking part any time without giving any reason and without facing any penalty. Additionally, I have the right to request the return, removal, or destruction of any information relating to my identity.*

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

*I understand that the purpose of the study is to explore leadership practices within the Qatar Police and their potential relevance for enhancement of employee's engagement.*

**PROCEDURES**

*I understand that if I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to participate in two forms: A) sit in for a structured interview that will take between 60 and 90 minutes to complete, and B) be subject to be observed during work activities and meetings in the work place.*

**BENEFITS**

*I understand that my participation is voluntarily and no financial benefits are expected.*

**RISKS**

*I understand that the risks, discomforts, or stresses I may face during participation include: fatigue from completing the interview or be subject to covid19 infection and both myself and the researcher will strictly adhere to the local health and safety rules namely wearing masks, using safety and protection equipments, as well as maintaining safe distance at al times.*

**HOW YOUR DATA WILL BE USED**

*The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit".*

*Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. The University privacy notice for research participants can be found on the attached link*https://www.uclan.ac.uk/data_protection/privacy-notice-research-participants.php kindly access it should you need to know more information.

*Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.*

| | |
|---|---|
| How will my data be collected? | You will be asked to participate in the study through two steps: A) sit in for a structured interview that will take between 60 and 90 minutes to complete, and B) be subject to be observed during work activities and meetings in the work place, at your department headquarters. |

| | |
|---|---|
| How will my data be stored? | The data you provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Central Lancashire (mentioned with link above). The data will be saved and be retained in possession of the researcher; in his own PC which is password protected and only him and his supervisor will have access to it. |
| How long will my data be stored for? | The data you provide will be stored until the end of the study which might take up to 12 to 18 months. |
| What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data? | The data you provide will be stored until the end of the study which might take up to 12 to 18 months. |
| Will my data be anonymised? | Your data will be anonymised using 3 digit code system. The only people who will know that you are a research subject are members of the research team. No individually-identifiable information about you, or provided by you during the study will be shared with others. Your identity, rights and welfare will be protected at all times.<br>Kindly be advised that while responses in the interview are confidential, participation in the observation process is not anonymous as it will be apparent who the researcher is observing, however; the notes collected will be confidential. |
| How will my data be used? | Your data can be quoted in research outputs such as research papers, university dissertations, journals as well findings presentations, however your data will be anonymised and no personally identifiable information will be presented. Thus, any sample or information used in the research will be anonymised and your identity will be protected. |
| Who will have access to my data? | The only people who will have access to your data are the researcher and his supervisors in the University of Central Lancashire. No one else will have access to the data. The data collected will only be used by the researcher and his university dissertation supervisors to inform the finding of the research. |
| How will my data be destroyed? | The collected data will be destroyed after the research dissertation is concluded and the research is published. The anticipated period is between 2 to 5 years. |

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

*I understand that the only people who will know that I am a research subject are members of the research team. No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the study will be shared with others to protect my rights and welfare at all times.*

*Kindly be advised that while responses in the interview are confidential, participation in the observation process is not anonymous as it will be apparent who the researcher is observing.*

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

*I understand that any further questions that I have, now or during the course of the study can be directed to the researcherorhissupervisor on the contact details stated below.*

**Note:** If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to the researcher with, then please contact the Research Governance Unit at OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk

*My signature below indicates that the researchers have satisfactorily answered all of my current questions about this study and that I understand the purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks described above.*

## Consent Form:

University of Central Lancashire
UCLan

**Participant consent form**

Version number & date: **6 – 31/03/2021**
Research ethics approval number: ..... Name of researcher: **Musaab Jasim Mohammed**
Title of the research project: ***Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Rescue Police Department***

1. I confirm that I read and understood the information sheet dated [31/03/2021] for the above study. I had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
2. I understand that taking part in the study involves [an audio or video recorded interview]. ☐
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. I am also free to decline to answer any particular question or questions. ☐
4. I understand that if I withdraw from this study data collected prior to my withdrawal will be retained but no further data will be collected. ☐
5. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Central Lancashire. ☐
6. I understand that signed consent forms and [original audio/video recordings/files] will be retained in [possession of the researcher, in his own PC] until [The end of his study]. ☐
7. I understand that the research team will respect my confidentiality and I give permission for them to have access to my responses. ☐
8. I agree that my responses can be quoted in research outputs such as [research papers, university, journals, internal organization's reports and presentations]. ☐
9. I understand that any samples or information given to research groups will be anonymised and my identity will be protected. ☐
10. I understand that my contact information will be collected and retained within the [Pre-Visit Check form] for the purpose of facilitating contact tracing by the Ministry of Public Health, but this information will be destroyed 21days after our last face-to-face interaction. ☐
11. I understand that there is still a potential increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 by attending face-to-face, despite the mitigating actions detailed in the information sheet dated 31/03/2021 to reduce the risk. ☐
12. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
13. I understand that I can ask for specific interactions to be removed by specifying the part to the researcher, specifically relevant to.....

| Participant name | Date | Signature |
|---|---|---|
| Name of person taking consent | Date | Signature |

**Principal Investigator**
[Dr. Dorota Marsh]
[Preston-UCLAN-UK]
[00441772894728]
[dmarsh@uclan.ac.uk]

**Student Investigator**
[Musaab Jasim Mohammed]
[Qatar/Doha – Police College-MOI]
[77085863]
[mjalkubaisi@moi.gov.qa]

Version 6-31/03/21

**Interview Protocol for Leaders:**

**Thesis titled:** *Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Police Department.*

**Section 1: Participants' Demographic**

PseudonymName:

Position:

Participant's Code Number:

Email Address:

Department:

Interview Date/Time:

Duration:

Start time:

End time:

Interview Venue:

**Introduction**

My name is Musaab Jasim Mohammed. I am a doctoral student from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). I am currently collecting data for my thesis concerning the role of leadership in shaping employee engagement. The objective of the research is to examine existing leadership practices in the Qatar Police department in order to determine whether, or not, they enhance employees' engagement. I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in the research.

Please do not hesitate to ask for a break whenever you need a break, I will simply pause the audio recorder and wait for us to continue. (Participant will now read consent letter) and ask any questions he/she may have regarding the interview process. This helps to clarify any aspect of the interview that is not clear to participants. Before I start, would you like to ask any questions?

**Section 2:**

**Part A: Understanding how leadership is viewed by leaders, and how it enhances employees' commitment to the organisation**

**(Please introduce yourself, including how long you have worked in this organisation)**

1. When you hear the word 'leadership' what comes to mind?
a. What do you think of employee engagement at the work place?
b. How do you experience your employees' engagement in your organization?
c. How do you see your role having effect on it?
d. What activities/practices inspiring employees' engagement?
e. Do you think employees' engagement matters for the organization? Why?
f. What else affects your employees' engagement in your organization?
g. Are there any aspects of the organization's culture (settings, habits) which may shape it?
h. Who are the leaders? Why?
i. How would you describe the relationship between the leadership practices in your organization and the performance of your employees?

2. What is the level of autonomy available for your employees?

a. How do you manage your employees in terms of tasking them? (Please give examples).
b. Do you tell them what to do and how they do it? (Please give examples).

**Part B: Identifying factors causing employees' disengagement towards work, and how to address them**

a. In your experience, do you find that employees enjoy their work?
b. Do you think employees find their job is challenging?
c. If yes, do you agree with this? Is their job challenging?
d. How can you help to address these challenges?
e. How do you describe their level of skills/competences to do their jobs?
f. Do they have relevant resources to do their jobs? (Please give examples).
g. What are the barriers facing employees engagement?

**Part C: Identifying leadership practices fostering employee engagement,**

1. What are the challenges for leaders managing the rescue police department?
2. Can you think of any ways that leadership practices are applied more effectively?

**Interview Protocol for Employees:**

**Thesis titled:** *Does leadership matter for employee engagement? Exploratory study of leadership practices within the Qatar Police Department.*

**Section 1: Participants' Demographic**

PseudonymName:

Position:

Participant's Code Number:

Email Address:

Department:

Interview Date/Time:

Duration:

Start time:

End time:

Interview Venue:

**Introduction**

My name is Musaab Jasim Mohammed. I am a doctoral student from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). I am currently collecting data for my thesis concerning the role of leadership in shaping employee engagement. The objective of the research is to examine existing leadership practices in the Qatar Police department in order to determine whether, or not, they enhance employees' engagement. I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in the research.

Please do not hesitate to ask for a break whenever you need a break, I will simply pause the audio recorder and wait for us to continue. (Participant will now read consent letter) and ask any questions he/she may have regarding the interview process. This helps to clarify any aspect of the interview that is not clear to participants. Before I start, would you like to ask any questions?

**Section 2: Part A: Understanding how leadership is viewed by employees, and how it enhances their commitment to the organisation**

**(Please introduce yourself including how long you have worked in this organisation)**

2. When you hear the word 'leadership' what comes to your mind?
a. How would you describe the leadership activities/practices within your department?
b. How do these leadership practices influence your performance at work and why?
c. What do you think of employee engagement at the work place?
d. How do you see your leaders' role having effect on it?
e. What else affects employees' engagement in your department?
f. Are there any aspects of the organization's culture (settings, habits) which may shape it?
g. How would you describe the relationship between your department leadership practices and the performance of the employees?
h. Is a particular leadership practices encouraged by the department?
3. What is the level of autonomy available for you at work?
a. How do you receive your tasks from your boss? (Please share your experience).
b. Do you get told what to do and how to do it? (Please explain).

**Part B: Identifying factors causing employees' disengagement towards work, and how to address them**

1. Do you enjoy your work?
2. How do you see the challenges at work?
3. How do you describe the resources available to you in your job?
4. How would you describe your job satisfaction level at work?
a. How do you ensure you do your job effectively?
b. Is there anything that would help you do your job more effectively?
5. How would you see the organisations' culture, activities and policies having influence on your engagement?

**Part C: Identifying leadership practices that foster employee engagement, and appropriate leadership practices for managing the police department**

**1. How would you describe the practices of your boss?**

a. What aspects you find particularly good? Why?

b. What practices you would want to change? Why?

**c.** What if you were made the boss? What will you do?

**Followers interviews**

**F1 transcript**

f1- Constable, with 11 years of field experience...

1.00

Leadership is respecting others whether senior or junior to you. Respectful and being disciplined in achieving your work tasks.

2.00

I maintain a good relationship with my colleagues and supervisors. We all receive our tasks from our higher ups during the morning meeting and this is what we do during our 8 hours shift. All is going well in my work, whatever we receive from our warrant officer or senior officer, we act and achieve with no issue.

3.00

What is not going well with me and many of my colleagues is the leaves system. By law we have 45 calender days annually, but we practically receive only 30 days of them each year. The rest are kept in the credit but we can't take them due to work staffing requirements.

3.30

Yes these practices affect our performance. We have 8 hours of security response work which is sometimes reactive in response to emergency calls, but other times it is mainly proactive and this is where people's performance varies, one can engage in with offenders proactively by searching for the crime and achieving work targets in our areas of operation in the city of Doha. We as rescue police are the first responders in the field. So if anyone wants to excel at his performance and be more productive they can do it if they have the will to do it. I myself have received 4 rewards and thanks letters drom the ministry of Interior for my proactive

achievements in combating and reporting offenses and crimes. My bosses also gave me few days off as a reward for my excellent service.

So achievements are based on your own psychological willingness to achieve more. This is how one can develop himself by being engaged and proactive.

5.45

Staff Engagement is very important and i think it can be increased by simple things like leaves given by senior officers to high performing employees, giving them best treatment and reward for their hard work and excellent achievements. The more they give respect and recognition to their staff, the more their staff become engaged and productive.

6.45

Other things can be given to staff to keep them highly motivated including casual leaves, rest days thatbwe can use them when we don't feel well or busy with family sickness that we need to attend to. If we are in such situations we cannot face the public and provide them with best service. We have to be fully engaged and relaxed so we can be at our best achievement and performance levels when facing the public and solving their problems.

9.00

We frontline staff are of two types, some staff have their families in country, and some others have their families in their home country. So, those who are residing here in Qatar and their family are abroad would be mostly affected by the leave system. If they are not given enough amount of leaves to unite with their families how could they be engaged? No matter in this case their leaders practices, they need to go home and see their wives and children.

10.00

Some times when it is emergency situations, or peak season and circumstances, our leaves get cancelled due to staffing issues and this will cause myself and many of my colleagues to be

down in our feelings, psychological state as well as reflected upon our performance and engagement.

11.00

Sometimes it is down to the shift manager himself. If he is experienced enough and knows the areas and procedures very well, his actions and way of management can differ from a junior shift manager who can be suspect the skills and abilities of frontline staff and as a result can be of little assistance to the staff in the field.

There are other issues that I would like to talk about if I may, our salaries have been cut during Covid-19 pandemic and this has had severe impact on our lives and on our performance. Added to that we are expected to buy our own food during our shift hours. I suggested that the department should provide ready meals for staff to help lesson the pressures on their salaries.

Other departments of the MOI like Training department have chefs and food provided to resident students, we should get the same.

12.00

I see some of our colleagues are short on their spending and may have little left in their savings so they become economic in their food which might impact their performance as they don't have full power to perform a frontline duties dor 8 hours. You can see they lack energy due to their ill feeding.

13.00

Another issue is the over time, when we come late we are accounted for the delay, but when we stay beyond the shift working hours due to operational needs, we don't get paid an overtime. To be fair some officers give us hours in lieu, but i think overtime payment is fairer and would influence staff engagement and performance.

13.30.

Another issue is if our top management can assist us with the visas for our families, we are expats working here and our families are away from us, if it is easy to get them on a visit visa this will allow us to see our families more often and of course will affect our psychological wellbeing and state.

14.00

Another issue is the uniform, we are given only 2 sets of uniforms for the whole year and this is not enough. The ones we qre given are only good for winter, definitely not for summer. Most of us we buy extra sets from the market on our cost.

15.00

My authorities are on the field, i am the man in the situation and i should be able to evaluate and act accordingly. I use the spirit of the law sometimes. I use my experience, my good communication skills to solve problems. I had the privilege to work with senior officers and staff and learned from them. However, sometimes i resort back to the boss to get support and guidance or decision depending on the situation. In many cases i faced peoblems but luckily i was supported and backed up by my line managers.

17.40

Depending on the level of experience comes the level of authority from our supervisors and leaders. When i think back to my early days I appreciated that i had not much authority, i could have made many mistakes in dealing with the public. Now i am more confident with my actions and decisions.

18.00

Some bosses would not give us the green light to take decisions in the field because they feel they need to be aware of the situation and help in the decision making process. In such cases we

might have missed certain opportunities or caused the problem to escalate. Then the boss would back off and listen to our recommendations and let us take the necessary actions.

18.40

On the other hand, i had different experience with a captain who was our duty officer (shift manager) who would trust my actions and always listen to my advice. So i have to say that it is down to the boss and down to the level of experience of the staff in the field.

19.20

We are in urgent need of some important training courses to develop our skills and field capabilities. These courses will make us feel important and more confident, this would increase our level of engagement in our work place. Sometimes we face difficulties in the field dealing with criminals or dangerous people, some incidents involve assaults from some dangerous trouble makers who in one incident broke the nose of one of my colleagues in an attempt to escape the police patrol officer handcuff process. These courses will give pur field colleagues an image and strength. In the absence of monetary rewards, such initiatives will give us a push in our daily work and make us more productive.

22.30

I feel satisfied and happy at my work. I would continue to do this role for many years to come. I enjoy what i do. However, there are certain initiatives that need to be in place to give me full satisfaction. These are namely allowing our families to visit us and provide us with accommodation.

25.00

As for the resources we have in our work, the guns we use are heavy and not so helpful, i think there are other types and tools which are handy. Some systems can be of more use to us.

26.00

There certain things that me and many of my colleagues demand to be in place, example is mobile phone credit allowance as we sometimes use our own phones during work hours. The salaries are not so great so we cannot afford to pay extra from our own credit to get our work done. Our department needs to provide such things like extra uniforms or phone credit and data, as well as meals durimg working hours.

28.00

We do get affected by the practices of our leaders and our environment at the work place. For example, if our work provides us with accommodation for our families to live in or they give us a pay rise, we would go back home from work feeling upbeat and happy to give more. Certainly this is something not in the hands of our managers only but the organization has the ultimate power.

29.00

Our salaries have been fixed since we joined the organization. Market prices have increased but our salaries stayed the same. So in essence it means our salaries dropped but still the work demands are the same, or actually on the rise.

30.00

We have suggested few ideas to our department and the aim is to raise the engagement level of staff. For instance, creating coupons for staff meal with one of the restaurants so patrolling staff can get a discount on meals they purchase during serving hours. This way they would pay less since the work does not provide meals during shifts.

31.00

I have spent 10 years at the development and never done any problem. I have received 4 recognition letters for my excellent performance. We should be given something in return of our

excellence. Engagement is about everything and can only be achieved in a completely healthy environment.

33.00

Our work is field work of great importance to the safety of the public and communities. Yet, we feel there are a lot of opportunities for our organization to maximize to achieve better engagement from staff side.

35.00

One of my staff officers used to speak to us every morning at the start of the work shift giving us advice and asking us to look after ourselves. This might sound simple but it was very impactful on our feelings because it is out of care on us. On the other hand the organization can do the same.

37.00 till end:

I remember one other boss walked through us in the morning gathering and he saw that i am well dressed and shaved, he gave me one day casual leave. I felt so happy that day and that certainly gave me a positive push to give more to my work place. It is these little practices and initiatives that make the difference in how we feel we engaged in our work.

**Observation activity:**

**Meeting between head of a unit (major rank) with 2 constables**

10.00 am - "*The leader holds the rank of Major and is head of a Unit. The 2 staff are both constables. The Major started the meeting with an invitation to the constables to comment on issues that can develop the work procedures. The constables lists a number of issues including internet issues and phone calls credit for the operational staff so they can be in contact if they have no access to radios or when they need to have specific locations of victims or accidents. The Major listened without interruption and was taking notes as the constable was speaking, and then asked specifically about how leadership practices from his junior officers impacted constables. They replied that his own style and openness would encourage staff to work with him and be committed to their tasks. However, they observed that not all officers they have worked with are as accessible or as caring about staff feelings, concerns and demands. The Major mentioned that he is meeting with the Director of the department to discuss these matters with him and to seek support. The meeting concluded with the major thanking the constables for their honesty. They acknowledged him with a smile and thanks."*

***FIELDNOTE - OBS8***