



Transformational leadership, co-worker support, engagement and motivation at institutions of higher learning in Windhoek, Namibia

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Orientation: The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic brought on a surge of mass changes globally, and academic institutions were not exempted from these changes. Many institutions of higher learning in Namibia transferred and modified most of their courses from the traditional face-to-face mode of learning to online platforms or a combination of both.

Research purpose: This study investigated the role of the transformational leadership style and co-worker support and their influence on employee engagement and work motivation of academic staff at institutions of higher learning in Windhoek, Namibia.

Motivation for the study: To investigate whether transformational leadership and co-worker support have a bearing on employee engagement and work motivation of academics.

Research approach/design and method: Data were collected from 106 academic staff from various institutions of higher education in Windhoek using a purposive sampling technique. Data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 27.0.

Main findings: The results showed that there is a positive relatedness between transformational leadership and employee engagement as well as transformational leadership and work motivation, even though not statistically significant. Co-worker support was statistically significantly related to employee engagement and work motivation.

Practical/managerial implications: Institutions of higher education should manage and capitalise on employee relations in a manner that adds value to the institutions.

Contribution/value-add: Institutions of higher learning in Namibia should work on trainings and interventions that allow for the development of positive co-worker relations and support at different organisational levels.

Keywords: transformational leadership; co-worker support; academic staff; institutions of higher learning in Namibia; employee engagement; motivation.

Introduction

Lecturers, also referred to as academics, are field experts who can construct, develop and provide learning material utilising a range of methods and programmes in an educational setting (Havighurst, 2020). Kulikowski et al. (2021) mention that lecturers play an important role in the transfer of knowledge to scholars at institutions of higher learning.

Higher education aids in securing employment opportunities in the labour market as one must acquire certain knowledge and skills to be absorbed into the labour market (Havighurst, 2020). The degree to which institutions of higher learning in Namibia successfully execute their mandate (i.e. aim and mission) is dependent on the effective delivery and transfer of knowledge and skills from the lecturers to facilitate further independent study and learning. With the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) triggering changes in what is considered the norm in teaching and learning, it is important that lecturers at institutions of higher learning are engaged and are motivated in their work to ensure that effective transfer of knowledge continues to take place.

Employee engagement is widely regarded as a critical component of a company's success (Dara et al., 2020). Dara et al. (2020) assert that engaged and motivated employees perform better and are more lucrative and healthier. If institutions of higher learning in Namibia have lecturers who are engaged and committed, amid and post the pandemic, impactful and meaningful transfer of knowledge, as well as an enhanced virtual (blended) learning environment, could be envisioned.

An involuntary transition to e-learning creates entirely new settings for university education and results in the reorganisation of academic professions (Kulikowski et al., 2021). The blended approach to learning is also confronted with challenges, such as lack of training and expertise, lack of academics and students' confidence in utilising the approach and limited access to functional computers and the Internet (Abel, 2020). This could be argued to negatively affect lecturer engagement and motivation at work, which inevitably also affects the effective transfer of knowledge and skills.

This study adds to the limited literature database on engagement and motivation of lecturers with a specific emphasis on the Namibian context. The research results may be beneficial for intervention development specifically tailored to enhance employee engagement and work motivation at institutions of higher learning in Windhoek, Namibia.

Research purpose and objectives

The objectives of the study are twofold:

1. *Investigate the relationship that exists between transformational leadership and employee engagement and employee motivation.*
2. *Investigate the relationship that exists between co-worker support and employee engagement and employee motivation.*

Hypotheses of the study:

- H1:** Transformational leadership has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement.
- H2:** Transformational leadership has a statistically significant relationship with work motivation.
- H3:** Co-worker support has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement.
- H4:** Co-worker support has a statistically significant relationship with work motivation.

Literature review

Transformational leadership

Leadership is crucial in influencing the behaviour of employees in a way that is effective in achieving the goals of the organisation (Aibieyi, 2014). The modern-day work is characterised by precarious work conditions because of unpredictable and changing work environments (Kreshpaj et al., 2020). Leadership style is crucial to inspire and motivate employees to navigate the work-related challenges that emanate from the stressors that accompany precarious work (Howell et al., 2022).

The transformational leadership style may be defined as the full involvement of employees in the decision-making process regarding goal setting and organisational functioning (Aibieyi, 2014). Asbari et al. (2020) mention that a transformational leadership mindset can encourage employees in organisations to creatively tackle work-related challenges. The fundamental elements of the transformational leadership style include demonstrating idealised behaviour, inspirational motivation by tackling challenges from various angles and individual

consideration by portraying strong characteristics that benefit the whole work team and intellectual stimulation by challenging followers' assumptions and beliefs (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Leaders display an empathetic and encouraging attitude towards employees, and in return, employees are more forthcoming with their leaders (Aibieyi, 2014). For this study, Bass and Avolio's (1993) conceptualisation of the transformational leadership style is utilised.

Employee engagement

Kahn (1990, p. 694) describes engagement as 'the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; where people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances'. Kahn (1990) contrasts personal engagement and personal disengagement in acts of engagement. Personal engagement refers to connecting organisation members' selves to their employment role (Kahn, 1990). According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement may be defined in the dimensions that motivate employees; thus, it requires employees to be physically, cognitively and emotionally engaged in their work. Personal disengagement is described as the detachment of the self from employment roles, where people retreat and guard themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role engagement (Kahn, 1990). Research has shown that employees who are engaged have greater involvement in company programmes, are more inclined to stay and are further inclined to be loyal to the organisation (Storey et al., 2008). As a result, engaged employees are associated with greater productivity and efficiency (Albrecht et al., 2021). It is crucial to mention that the conceptualisation of employee engagement by Kahn (1990) is used for this study. Leadership styles were discovered to be a considerable predictor of employee engagement (Othman et al., 2017). Employees behave in a manner that reflects their leaders' behaviour (Grant et al., 2019). One may deduce that employees are more prone to behave in a positive manner if modelling their leaders' positive behaviour; thus, leaders are greatly responsible for their employees' engagement in the workplace. In Britt et al.'s (2006) study, it was discovered that transformational leadership has no significant impact on employee engagement. This could entail that transformational leadership behaviour may not greatly influence how engaged employees are; perhaps it may moderately influence employee engagement. A study by Schaufeli et al. (2002) found a rather substantial relationship between work engagement and transformational leadership. Similarly, in their study, Othman et al. (2017) reported that leadership style, particularly worker-orientated leadership style, corresponds to high levels of engagement among organisational members. The worker-orientated leadership style is concerned with constructing relationships with employees and considering their input in the process of work operations. Henkel's (2016) study examined the relationship between transformational leadership and university part-time faculty engagement. The findings of the study revealed that part-time faculty work engagement was marginally associated with perceived transformational leadership styles

of campus academic directors (Henkel, 2016). A study by Marlita et al. (2021) investigated the influence of transformational leadership on organisational performance through lecturer engagement. Their findings indicate a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement (Marlita et al., 2021).

Employee work motivation

Deci et al.'s (2001) self-determination theory provides a framework that seeks to explain our innate growth tendencies and psychological needs, which serve as the foundation for self-motivation (Wissing et al., 2020). The self-determination theory posits that people have basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Fulfilment of psychological needs is essential for people's psychological health and growth, autonomous motivation, optimal functioning and self-actualisation (Deci et al., 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

McLeod (2007) claimed, however, that individuals are psychologically motivated by a hierarchy of needs. Maslow stated that motivation arises from a person's attempt to meet five fundamental needs (Maslow, 1954). The hierarchy of needs is made up of (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, (3) love needs, (4) esteem needs and (5) self-actualisation needs (Maslow, 1954). Based on McLeod's (2007) assertions, humans are often driven by the desire to acquire or sustain the many conditions that underpin these fundamental satisfactions, as well as more intellectual goals. Any chance of obstructing these fundamental human aspirations and/or desires is seen as a psychological threat (McLeod, 2007).

According to Jose and Mampilly (2014), motivation is the driving force behind behavioural patterns, and leadership behaviours affect employee motivation. Employee motivation has been found to be related to employee performance (Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016; Putra & Dewi, 2019). To increase employee performance and to achieve optimal levels of organisational effectiveness and performance, leaders need to have the capacities to motivate their employees to perform efficiently and productively.

Naile and Selesho (2014, p. 175) stipulate that 'the more motivated the supporters, the more effective the leader; the more effective the leader, the more motivated the followers', providing further basis on the necessity of leadership in any organisation. It is argued that leaders who are unmotivated may struggle to motivate their employees (Sarros et al., 2014). In Naile and Selesho's (2014) study on the role that leadership has in employee motivation, the study used school principals' perspectives of the transformational leadership style. The study revealed that a strong relationship exists not only between transformational leadership behaviours and commitment, but it additionally plays a key role in motivating teachers (Naile & Selesho, 2014).

The motivation and leadership styles of college teachers were explored in a study by Jabeen et al. (2019). The findings revealed that transactional and transformational leadership

styles of school principals were positively correlated with teachers' motivation. The study by Andriani et al. (2018) sought to examine the impact of transformational leadership and work motivation on teacher job performance. According to the findings, transformational leadership and work motivation have a significant positive effect on educators' performance (Andriani et al., 2018).

Pongpearchan (2016) studied the impact of transformational leadership and a high-performance work structure on job motivation and task performance at Thai university business schools. The findings indicated that transformational leadership and a high-performance work structure have a significant positive influence on job motivation; furthermore, work motivation continues to have a significant correlation with task performance (Pongpearchan, 2016).

Co-worker support

Co-worker support, according to Zhou and George (2001), refers to co-workers assisting one another in their tasks, when necessary, by transferring the knowledge, as well as providing inspiration and support. There is perceived co-worker support if an employee in the organisation considers that assistance, mentoring, affability and positive aspects related to job resources are always available from working colleagues within the organisation (Nordat et al., 2019). Furthermore, co-worker support also entails that employees have rewarding interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Makera et al., 2019). Empirically, co-worker support has been found to have a positive significant relationship with employee engagement and work motivation in various occupational settings, such as nurses, academics, cancer care workers, private sector employees, special education teachers, financial service sector employees, etc. (Ariani, 2016; Blanco-Donoso et al., 2019; Murangi & Bailey, 2022; Ojeleye et al., 2023; Vera et al., 2016). In conceptualising co-worker support in this study, Zhou and George's (2001) definition was utilised.

Following the literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypotheses of the study:

- H1:** Transformational leadership has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement.
- H2:** Transformational leadership has a statistically significant relationship with work motivation.
- H3:** Co-worker support has a statistically significant relationship with employee engagement.
- H4:** Co-worker support has a statistically significant relationship with work motivation.

Research design

Research approach and strategy

A quantitative research approach with a correlational research design was used. The study sought to determine whether there is a correlation (positive, negative or no relationship) between the variables.

Participants

Academics at institutions of higher learning in Windhoek, Namibia, participated in the present study. A non-probability sampling approach with a purposive sampling technique was used. There were more female participants compared to males. The age group that appeared frequently is the 31–40 years age group, accounting for 36.2% of the participants. Most of the respondents have acquired a master's degree as their highest level of qualification. The majority of the participants have been working for their specific institutions for 7–10 years. Furthermore, 57.5% of the participants are employed in the rank of lecturer (compared to senior lecturers and professors). The demographic details are presented in Table 1.

Measuring Instruments

Participants' biographical information was collected using an online survey developed by the researchers to get information regarding the participants' sex, age and academic qualifications; their tenure at specific institutions of higher education and the positions they held at their institutions.

Transformational leadership style was measured by utilising a scale developed by Carless et al. (2000) titled the *Global Transformational Leadership Scale*. The scale has a total of seven items; an example of an item includes 'my leader fosters trust, involvement and co-operation among team members' (Carless et al., 2000). These items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 0 representing rarely and 4 representing very frequently. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.81, which is considered reliable.

The **Employee Engagement** scale developed by May et al. (2004) was utilised as a measuring instrument to assess employee engagement. This scale was utilised as it measures

engagement as conceptualised by Kahn (1990). The scale is divided into three subscales, and examples of items from each subscale include cognitive engagement (i.e. 'performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else'), emotional engagement (e.g. 'I get excited when I perform well on my job') and physical engagement (i.e. 'I avoid working overtime whenever possible'). These items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. May et al. (2004) validated the employee engagement scale and discovered a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77, indicating acceptable reliability.

The Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) developed by Gagne et al. (2010) measures work motivation at the domain level (Gagne et al., 2010). The scale has four subscales, namely external regulation and/or extrinsic motivation, introjection, identification and intrinsic motivation, with five items for each subscale (Gagne et al., 2010). Gagne et al. (2010) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to reduce the MAWS to 12 items from the initial 20 items. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1, representing 'not at all', to 7, representing 'exactly'. Items from each subscale showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from 0.70 to 0.93 (Gagne et al., 2010). An example of an item on the MAWS is 'because I enjoy this work very much' (Gagne et al., 2010).

The Co-worker Relations subscale from May et al. (2004) antecedents' scale was used as a measuring instrument to assess co-worker support. Ten items were used to assess co-worker relationships (May et al., 2004). The items are scored on a Likert scale with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree' and 5 indicating 'strongly agree'. An example of an item on the scale is 'my interactions with co-workers are rewarding'. For the co-worker support scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.93, indicating high reliability (May et al., 2004).

Design

The study adopted an online survey method where a link was circulated to academics at institutions of higher education in Namibia. Before data were collected from the sample, the researcher had to receive institutional permission from the different institutions of higher learning involved in the study. The institutional permission requests also stipulated the informed consent and elucidated the participants' anonymity. An email communicate was sent to academic staff, with study details and a link to the online questionnaire. Those willing to participate in the study took part in the study using the provided link. Confidentiality and/or anonymity were assured as participants were not required to provide any personal details.

Data analysis

The data were analysed and computed using SPSS Version 28.0 (SPSS, 2022). The internal consistency of the measuring instruments was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and the relationship between the variables was determined using Pearson correlation coefficients. To determine the practical implications of the research findings, effect sizes were used (Dhaka, 2019).

TABLE 1: Biographical details of sample ($N = 106$).

Demographics	Groupings	<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Male	46	43.4
	Female	60	56.6
Age groups (years)	20–30	6	5.7
	31–40	38	35.8
	41–50	31	29.2
	51–60	13	12.3
	60+	17	16.0
	Missing values	1	0.9
Highest qualifications	Degree	15	14.2
	Master's degree	54	50.9
	PhD	37	34.9
Tenure (years)	1–2	19	17.9
	3–4	17	16.0
	5–6	25	23.6
	7–10	43	40.6
	11–15	2	1.9
	Missing values	1	0.9
Positions held	Tutor or SDF	9	8.5
	Lecturer	61	57.5
	Senior lecturer	20	18.9
	Associate professor	7	6.6
	Full professor	5	4.7
	Other	4	3.8

SDF, Staff Development Fellow; PhD, Doctor of Philosophy.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the University of Namibia Department of Psychology and Social Work Ethics Committee (No. PS-SoAHS-FHSVM-2021/25). To collect data, a link, with a participant information sheet, was circulated to academics at various institutions of higher learning. No participant names or other identification information was requested to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the data. The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Participants' data were digitally stored in a password-protected computer, with access to it only by the researchers.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations (SD) and Cronbach's alpha were computed and are depicted in Table 2. All measures utilised to assess the constructs yielded satisfactory reliability statistics (range of 0.68–0.91).

As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the strength of a two-variable linear relationship (Ratner, 2009). The correlation coefficient could indeed feasibly take any value between +1 and -1, including the end values +1 or -1 (Papageorgiou, 2022; Ratner, 2009). Using the correlation coefficient, it was found that there is a positive but weak correlation between the transformational leadership style and employee engagement ($r = 0.10, p < 0.05$). Similarly, the transformational leadership style reported a positive but weak correlation with motivation at work ($r = 0.04, p < 0.05$). A study by Mozammel and Haan (2016) using a sample of employees in the banking sector found similar results. Another study by Balwant et al. (2020), however, found support for a significant relationship between transformational leadership and engagement in retail employees. Additionally, Yusup and Maulani (2023) also found support for a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee motivation in a sample of manufacturing employees. It could be implied, based on empirical studies that investigated the constructs in unique populations, that transformational leadership, such as in the case of the current study, has no significant bearing on employee engagement and employee motivation at work.

Co-worker support was found to relate to motivation significantly and positively at work ($r = 0.29, p < 0.05$; small effect). Similarly, a positive significant relationship was uncovered between co-worker support and work engagement

TABLE 2: Means, standard deviations and reliabilities of subscales.

Scales	α	Mean	SD
Global transformational leadership	0.79	2.73	1.09
Work engagement	0.77	1.88	0.82
Motivation at work	0.68	1.67	0.73
Co-worker support	0.91	3.76	0.61

SD, standard deviation.

($r = 0.24, p \geq 0.05$; small effect). This corroborates with findings by Murangi and Bailey (2022), who found similar findings in a sample of special education teachers.

The study further uncovered that the transformational leadership style and co-worker support have distinct relationships with the dimensions of engagement and motivation at work.

Transformational leadership was found to have negative, insignificant relationships with cognitive engagement ($r = -0.01, p \geq 0.05$) and emotional engagement ($r = -0.05, p \geq 0.05$). It was further uncovered that transformational leadership has a positive, yet insignificant, relationship with physical engagement ($r = 0.16, p \geq 0.05$). The findings reveal that the transformational leadership style does not have a significant bearing on employee engagement in its entirety or in parts.

Contrastingly, the transformational leadership style was uncovered to have a positive, yet insignificant, relationship with intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.07, p \geq 0.05$); a negative, insignificant relationship with identified regulation ($r = -0.11, p \geq 0.05$); a negative, insignificant relationship with introjected regulation ($r = -0.10, p \geq 0.05$) and a positive, yet insignificant, relationship with external regulation ($r = 0.05, p \geq 0.05$).

In further analysis, co-worker support was found to have a positive relationship, although not statistically significant, with cognitive engagement ($r = 0.13, p \geq 0.05$), emotional engagement ($r = 0.17, p \geq 0.05$) and physical engagement ($r = 0.16, p \geq 0.05$). Further, co-worker support was found to have a positive significant relationship with intrinsic motivation ($r = 0.21, p \geq 0.05$), a positive insignificant relationship with identified regulation ($r = 0.03, p \geq 0.05$), a positive significant relationship with introjected regulation ($r = 0.20, p \geq 0.05$) and a positive significant relationship with external regulation ($r = 0.21, p \geq 0.05$).

Discussion of results and managerial implications

Leadership has always received tremendous attention as a critical pillar in organisation efficiency and productivity (Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021). However, this study provided evidence that shows that co-worker support, in contrast to transformational leadership, is a key determinant of engagement and motivation at work.

TABLE 3: Pearson correlation coefficient results.

Relationships	Coefficients	Significant/not significant
Transformational leadership to work engagement	0.10	Not significant
Transformational leadership-work motivation	0.04	Not significant
Co-worker support-work engagement	0.29*	Significant (small effect)
Co-worker support-work motivation	0.24*	Significant (small effect)

Practically significant correlation (small effect): $r \leq 0.29$.

Practically significant correlation (medium effect): $0.30 \leq r \leq 0.49$.

Practically significant correlation (large effect): $r > 0.50$.

*, Statistically significant: $p \leq 0.05$.

The findings reveal that when workplaces are marked by co-worker engagements that validate others' input, collegial appreciation, genuine co-worker connection, mutual respect and engagements that foster trust, employees' engagement and motivation are enhanced (May et al., 2004). The study further indicates that for academics to function optimally, emphasis should be geared towards harnessing co-worker relationships as a key social resource at work. Van Wingerden et al. (2017) assert that collaborative job crafting (i.e. when two or more co-workers strategise and plan on how to best do work) can be utilised to increase personal resources of employees and to reduce job demands. Academics can support each other with material and content development for blended learning modalities and offer technical support to one another for an enriching online learning experience, etc.

As such, co-worker support at institutions of higher learning may come in the form of emotional support, instrumental help, informational support and appraisal from others (Darke et al., 2024; Jo, 2014). Academics can be argued to better understand the nature of work of other academics because of similar job demands and job resources in their work environments and, as such, are better suited to support one another. Furthermore, co-workers' engagement can be enhanced when co-workers show appreciation for each other's outstanding work and effort.

Tertiary institutions in Namibia are confronted by a lack of infrastructure to support the advancement of 21st-century skills acquisition (Asino, 2023), with large student numbers faced by space limitations and limited funding (Karuuombe, 2023). For optimal functioning, and to be able to meet the demands inherent in academic work, the study provides evidence that co-worker relations and support could become a crucial resource in influencing employees' emotions positively. The blended approach to learning is now adopted as the modality for teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning in Namibia. To effectively fulfil the mandate of higher learning in Namibia, co-worker support needs to be deconstructed at the university level to ensure all co-workers take responsibility for co-worker support activities to enhance each other's engagement and motivation. Institutions can capitalise on team-building interventions to improve collegial support.

Employees can partner on projects and additionally partner on work that takes a toll on employee optimal functioning. This can be argued to not only enhance employee motivation and engagement but also contribute to employee mental health and overall well-being (Irvine, 2023). The world of work has changed drastically, and mental health issues have become prevalent in workplaces (Kelloway et al., 2023). To remain functional and effective in the 21st-century work of work, organisations must prioritise activities that foster meaningful and healthy co-worker relations.

In view of our earlier discussion, it is crucial to acknowledge that co-worker relations can benefit greatly from motivation

and support from management. Management can advocate and encourage avenues for healthy co-worker relations by promoting and allocating resources to build healthy interpersonal relationships while advocating for policies and practices that reduce bullying and toxic behaviour among colleagues. Research has shown that toxic work environments do not just emerge (Rasool et al., 2021). Toxic work environments are a result of unhealthy interactions between employees that manifest as bullying, victimisation and favouritism (Ribeiro et al., 2022). In curbing such behaviour, focus must be geared towards capacitating employees to contribute to a healthy, functional work environment. This has the potential to reduce the toxic work environments.

In summary, the study calls for an urgent shift and focus from leaders in organisations to employees (inclusive of leaders) who make up the organisation to revamp workplace practices and policies that foster healthy co-worker relations.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

Several limitations were encountered in the present study.

Firstly, the cross-sectional research design of the present study made it difficult to make a causal inference and to assess incidence. Cross-sectional studies often need to select a sample of subjects from a large and heterogeneous study population. This limitation came in the form of a smaller sample size that was acquired, which made statistical analysis delicate, as conclusions regarding the relationship between the variables could not be verified. Therefore, it is recommended that longitudinal studies should be conducted for future research. A longitudinal study involves repeated observations of the same variables over a longer period, which thus may be more reliable than a cross-sectional study.

Secondly, the study only investigated transformational leadership style and co-worker support as key predictors of work engagement and work motivation. There could be many other factors that could also influence the work engagement and work motivation of academics at institutions of higher education in Windhoek, Namibia. Future studies can include other factors such as supervisor support, organisational climate, job attitudes, job resources and demands, etc.

Thirdly, it is recommended to use a different data collection method (such as the use of hard copy papers), as the use of online surveys may have negatively impacted the sample size because of a low response rate.

Conclusion

Employee engagement and work motivation are important and critical aspects that greatly contribute to the optimal functioning of employees within organisations during and after the COVID pandemic. Organisations must find avenues to enhance the engagement and motivation of employees so that they can create effective, productive and conducive work environments by capitalising on the strengths and positive attributes of employees within the workplace. This study revealed that the

potential resource for enhancing engagement and motivation lies with and within the co-workers themselves and not so much in the leadership component as traditionally expected.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

U.N. conceptualised the study, collected data, analysed the data and wrote the original manuscript.

A.M. collected and analysed the data and edited the manuscript. A.M. also supervised the project.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, A.M., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder or agency or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

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