

Effects of Less-Qualified Leaders on Highly Qualified Employees in Saudi SMEs

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Final Project - 2

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3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1.Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology used in this study to explore the effects of less-qualified leaders on highly qualified employees in Saudi SMEs. It describes the overall approach, research design, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures. The aim is to ensure the research process is systematic and aligned with the study objectives.

3.2.Operational definitions for research variables

To ensure clarity, the study defines each variable operationally as follows:

- **Leadership Qualification:** The level of education, experience, and management training of leaders within an SME.
- **Motivation:** The internal and external factors that influence employees to perform effectively and stay engaged.
- **Performance:** The degree to which employees achieve their work objectives and contribute to organizational goals.

These definitions provide the framework for designing the questionnaire and analyzing responses.

3.3.Research design (research onion)

The research design follows the ‘Research Onion’ model introduced by Saunders et al. (2019). The onion metaphor represents the layers of decisions researchers make in designing a study. Each layer guides the choice of philosophy, approach, strategy, and data collection methods.

- **Research Philosophy:** This study adopts a positivist philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured using quantitative methods.
- **Research Approach:** The study uses a deductive approach, starting from existing theories about leadership and testing them in the Saudi SME context.
- **Research Strategy:** A survey strategy is applied to gather data from employees through structured questionnaires.
- **Time Horizon:** The research is cross-sectional, collecting data at a single point in time.
- **Data Collection:** Quantitative data is collected through online questionnaires distributed via email and professional networks.

This design ensures that the study is structured, measurable, and replicable.

3.4. Research population & Sampling methods and technique

The research population includes highly qualified employees working in Saudi SMEs across various industries such as services, retail, and manufacturing. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants who meet specific criteria—employees holding at least a bachelor's degree and having a minimum of three years of work experience. The sample size is expected to range from 150 to 200 respondents, which is suitable for quantitative analysis.

3.5. Data collection method

Primary data will be collected using structured questionnaires designed based on literature review and previous validated studies. The questionnaire includes sections on leadership qualifications, employee motivation, and performance. A five-point Likert scale is used, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The survey will be distributed electronically through Google Forms to ensure easy access and higher response rates.

3.6. Types of data

This study uses quantitative data. The primary data comes directly from employee responses in SMEs through the questionnaire. Secondary data such as articles, reports, and previous research are also used to support the discussion and provide context for the findings.

3.7. Statistical analysis procedures

The data collected from the questionnaire will be analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation will summarize the responses. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, will be used to test the research hypotheses and determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Reliability will be tested using Cronbach's Alpha, while validity will be ensured through expert review of the questionnaire.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology adopted for this research, including the research design, population, sampling, and analysis methods. The quantitative approach and structured survey ensure objective data collection to address the research questions. The next chapter will focus on data analysis and the discussion of findings.