



Entrepreneurial Leadership and Employee Engagement: A Longitudinal Analysis within the Framework of Bangladeshi SMEs' Culture

Mohammad Salman Sadik

Master's Thesis

May 2024

School of Business

Master's Degree Programme in International Business Management

Sadik, Mohammad Salman Sadik, Mohammad Salman

Entrepreneurial Leadership and Employee Engagement: A Longitudinal Analysis within the Framework of Bangladeshi SMEs' Culture

Jyväskylä: JAMK University of Applied Sciences, May 2024, 60 pages.

Master's Degree Programme in International Business Management. Master's thesis.

Permission for web publication: Yes

Language of publication: English

Abstract

The influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement within the cultural framework of Bangladeshi small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was investigated. The objective was to examine how various leadership characteristics, such as decisiveness, empathy, transparency, and the ability to inspire, affect employee perceptions and behaviors. Qualitative interviews were conducted with leaders and employees from five distinct SMEs to gather data. The analysis identified four main themes: Valued Leadership Characteristics, Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviors, Innovation Encouragement, and Cultural Integration and Employee Engagement. It was found that leadership styles emphasizing inclusivity, open communication, and cultural alignment significantly enhanced employee engagement. Leadership practices that encouraged risk-taking and creativity were also crucial in fostering a motivated and committed workforce. Additionally, integrating cultural values into business practices emerged as a pivotal factor in improving employee satisfaction and organizational loyalty. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics between leadership and employee engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs, offering insights for leaders aiming to foster an environment that maximizes employee potential and aligns with local cultural values. This research contributes to the literature on leadership and organizational behavior by highlighting the importance of culturally informed leadership practices. Practical recommendations were provided for SME leaders to enhance employee engagement through targeted leadership strategies, emphasizing the need for cultural competency in leadership development.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Entrepreneurial leadership, employee engagement, Bangladeshi SMEs, leadership characteristics, organizational culture, inclusivity, innovation, cultural alignment, employee perceptions, leadership styles, cultural competency.

Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Background.....	3
1.2	Motivation.....	5
1.2.1	Relevance to a Broader Audience (Society/Industry).....	5
1.2.2	Relevance to Companies	6
1.2.3	Relevance to the Researcher	6
1.3	Research Problem, Objectives, and Questions	7
1.3.1	Research Problem.....	7
1.3.2	Research Objectives.....	7
1.3.3	Research Questions	7
1.3.4	Research Approach.....	8
1.4	Structure of the Thesis	8
2	Literature Review	9
2.1	Relevant Key Concepts.....	11
2.1.1	Entrepreneurial Leadership	11
2.1.2	Employee Engagement	13
2.2	Limitations of the Literature Review.....	16
2.2.1	Entrepreneurial Leadership and SME Organizational Dynamics.....	16
2.2.2	Employee Engagement in SME Organizational Contexts	18
2.3	Theoretical Framework	20
3	Research Methodology	22
3.1	Research Approach	23
3.2	Research Context	23
3.3	Data Sources and Collection	24
3.4	Data Analysis	27
3.4.1	Detailed Coding.....	30
3.5	Verification of Findings	30
3.6	Research Ethics.....	33
4	Results.....	35
4.1	In-depth Analysis of Themes Derived from the Qualitative Data.....	36
4.1.1	Theme 1: Innovation Culture.....	36
4.1.2	Theme 2: Leadership Communication.....	37
4.1.3	Theme 3: Participatory Leadership.....	39
4.1.4	Theme 4: Cultural Integration	41

4.2 Entrepreneurial Leadership and Its Impact on Employee Engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs: A Thematic Analysis	42
4.3 Answering Research Questions.....	44
5 Discussions	48
5.1 Implications of the Study	48
5.2 Theoretical Contributions	50
5.3 Limitations of the Study	52
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research	53
References	54
Appendices	60
Appendix 1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	60
 Figures	
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework.....	21
 Tables	
Table 1: Coding.....	30
Table 2: Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs	44

1 Introduction

Entrepreneurial leadership (EL) emerges as a distinct paradigm that integrates the dynamism of entrepreneurship with the structured approach of leadership to steer organisations towards success (Jahanshahi et al., 2020). Recognised for its significant influence on organisational outcomes, entrepreneurial leadership embodies a blend of proactive, innovative, and risk-taking behaviours that inspire both the vision and operational aspects of business (Ahmed & Harrison, 2023). This leadership style is pivotal in settings that demand rapid adaptation and creative solutions, such as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries like Bangladesh.

The concept of employee engagement, meanwhile, revolves around the emotional and cognitive commitment of employees to their organisation, which is increasingly seen as a key driver of productivity and retention (Kocherlakota, 2020). Studies indicate that leadership styles, particularly those that are entrepreneurial in nature, have a profound impact on the degree of employee engagement, shaping the overall work environment and influencing organisational support perceptions (Islam & Asad, 2021; Liu et al., 2022).

Given the dynamic and evolving business landscape of Bangladeshi SMEs, where cultural contexts play a crucial role in shaping business operations and employee behaviour, this thesis seeks to explore how entrepreneurial leadership influences employee engagement over time. This longitudinal study aims to bridge the research gap by providing empirical insights into the interplay between entrepreneurial leadership style and employee engagement within the unique socio-economic and cultural frameworks of Bangladesh.

1.1 Background

Entrepreneurial leadership (EL), a relatively recent focus in academic research, integrates key aspects of leadership with entrepreneurial dynamics, addressing unique challenges in today's fast-evolving business environments (Simon, 2023). This research framework is especially pertinent to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh, where the cultural dynamics significantly impacts business operations and employee behaviour. The concept of entrepreneurial leadership encompasses a range of skills and competencies, including proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking,

vision articulation, motivation, and effective communication, which are essential for organisational success across various contexts (Ahmed & Harrison, 2023).

SMEs in Bangladesh represent a crucial segment of the economy, characterised by their flexibility, local engagement, and significant employment contribution (Rahaman et al., 2021). However, these enterprises face distinct challenges, such as resource constraints, regulatory hurdles, and a competitive market environment that demands innovative leadership to sustain growth and development. Within this context, the role of entrepreneurial leadership becomes even more critical as it fosters an environment that encourages employee engagement and innovative practices.

Employee engagement, a key indicator of organisational health, reflects the emotional and cognitive commitment of employees to their work and the organization. Research indicates that engaged employees are more likely to contribute positively towards organisational goals and exhibit higher levels of productivity and satisfaction (Yaneva, 2021). In the dynamic setting of Bangladeshi SMEs, how entrepreneurial leadership influences employee engagement can provide insights into optimizing management practices and enhancing organisational effectiveness (Islam & Asad, 2021).

Further, studies such as those by Liu et al. (2022) illustrate the impact of entrepreneurial leadership on aspects like employee improvisation—a critical skill in unpredictable business environments. This study shows that entrepreneurial leadership positively correlates with employee improvisation, mediated by workplace spirituality and positive affect, highlighting the complex interplay of leadership style, employee emotions, and organisational culture in fostering an adaptive and proactive workforce.

Moreover, the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement is nuanced by cultural factors, as demonstrated by Yan et al. (2021), who explored how individualism-collectivism orientations can influence the effectiveness of leadership practices. In cultures with a strong collectivist orientation, such as that of Bangladesh, the communal values and group cohesion significantly impact how leadership styles are perceived and how effective they are in engaging employees.

This background forms the basis for a longitudinal analysis of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs. The research aims to dissect how these elements interact over time, influenced by cultural and economic variables specific to the region. Such an investigation is not only relevant for academic purposes but also offers practical insights for business leaders and policymakers aiming to bolster the SME sector's resilience and growth through enhanced leadership practices and engaged workforces.

In sum, this paper seeks to fill the research gap by providing a detailed exploration of the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial leadership can enhance employee engagement in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. By focusing on a sector that is both vital and under-researched, this study aims to contribute significantly to the fields of business management, organisational behaviour, and cultural studies, offering both theoretical advancements and practical recommendations.

1.2 Motivation

This research is driven by a multifaceted motivation, encompassing societal, industrial, and personal dimensions, to explore the intersection of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs.

1.2.1 Relevance to a Broader Audience (Society/Industry)

Entrepreneurial leadership, as a burgeoning field of study, presents a critical lens through which the dynamic interplays within organisations can be understood, especially within the rapidly evolving economic landscapes of developing countries like Bangladesh. Studies such as those by Ahmed & Harrison (2023) and Kim & Beehr (2023) highlight the pivotal role of entrepreneurial leadership in promoting essential organisational behaviours such as innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness, which are indispensable for the success and competitiveness of businesses. Particularly in SMEs, which are often constrained by limited resources and external uncertainties, the adoption of entrepreneurial leadership can significantly influence organisational resilience and growth.

Moreover, the engagement of employees, as discussed in the research by Yan et al. (2021) and Liu et al. (2022), is increasingly crucial in maintaining high productivity and fostering an innovative climate. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute creatively to their organisations, which is

essential for businesses operating in competitive and culturally diverse environments such as Bangladesh. By examining how entrepreneurial leadership can enhance employee engagement, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can guide SMEs in developing effective leadership strategies that align with their cultural and operational contexts.

1.2.2 Relevance to Companies

For companies, particularly those within the SME sector, understanding the mechanisms through which leadership styles like entrepreneurial leadership influence employee attitudes and behaviours is crucial. This research will offer empirical insights that can be directly applied to enhance management practices, improve employee morale, and ultimately, drive business performance. Companies investing in leadership development programs based on the findings of studies like those conducted by Islam & Asad (2021) and Hou et al. (2024) can expect to see improvements in employee creativity, engagement, and overall job satisfaction, contributing to sustained organizational success.

1.2.3 Relevance to the Researcher

From a personal perspective, this study represents an opportunity to contribute to an under-researched area in business management, particularly within the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. The intersection of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement offers a rich field for exploration due to its applicability in addressing some of the critical challenges faced by SMEs in developing economies. Moreover, the longitudinal aspect of this research allows for a deeper understanding of the temporal dynamics of leadership and engagement, providing a more nuanced perspective than what is commonly available through cross-sectional studies.

Additionally, this research aligns with the academic goals of contributing to the broader discourse on leadership and management practices in culturally diverse settings. By integrating theories such as those outlined by Ravet-Brown et al. (2023) and exploring the overlap between different leadership styles, this study not only seeks to delineate the specific attributes of entrepreneurial leadership but also to clarify its distinct impacts on employee outcomes compared to other leadership paradigms.

In summary, this research is motivated by the potential to influence both theory and practice. It addresses a significant gap in the current understanding of how entrepreneurial leadership can function as a lever for enhancing employee engagement and organisational performance in the specific context of Bangladeshi SMEs. Through rigorous empirical research, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective leadership strategies that are both culturally attuned and operationally effective, providing substantial benefits to society, individual companies, and the academic community.

1.3 Research Problem, Objectives, and Questions

1.3.1 Research Problem

Despite recognition of the crucial role entrepreneurial leadership plays in organizational success, its effects within small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing nations, particularly within the culturally distinct environment of Bangladesh, are under-researched. The lack of empirical studies specifically examining the nuances of entrepreneurial leadership and its influence on employee engagement in such settings is notable. This gap is significant, considering Bangladesh's unique blend of traditional business practices and rapid modernization, which could uniquely influence leadership effectiveness.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

The central objective of this research is to explore the influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs from a qualitative perspective. The study aims to:

1. Identify the attributes of entrepreneurial leadership perceived as most effective in fostering employee engagement within the Bangladeshi cultural context.
2. Understand how these attributes influence employee engagement from the perspectives of employees and leaders.

1.3.3 Research Questions

Based on the outlined research problem and objectives, the main research question is:

How does entrepreneurial leadership influence employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs-

This main question is elaborated through the following sub-questions:

- a. Which characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership are valued by employees and leaders in Bangladeshi SMEs?
- b. How do these characteristics influence perceptions and behaviors related to employee engagement?

1.3.4 Research Approach

This study will adopt a qualitative research methodology to provide in-depth insights into the dynamics of entrepreneurial leadership and its impact on employee engagement. Data collection will primarily involve semi-structured interviews with both leaders and employees across multiple SMEs in Bangladesh. These interviews will explore participants' perceptions of leadership and its effects on their engagement levels. Additionally, thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data, allowing for the identification of common themes and patterns related to the impact of entrepreneurial leadership traits on employee engagement.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis will be organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction - Introduces the topic, outlines the research problem, objectives, and questions, and sets the research context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - Reviews existing literature on entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement, with a focus on research within similar cultural and economic settings.

Chapter 3: Methodology - Details the qualitative research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and analytical strategies employed in the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis - Presents the data collected through interviews, organized around emergent themes that illustrate the impact of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion - Discusses the findings in the context of existing literature, outlines the theoretical and practical implications of the study, acknowledges its limitations, and suggests areas for further research.

2 Literature Review

This chapter is done through the extensive reading and understanding of differential literature based on leadership and management even though there have been so many journals that are being used or being researched as the means of operative control over this particular area of the entire research project. Even there is so much theoretical knowledge gained through business management courses. All the information and inclusive business facts are already narrated by the authors and are being designed throughout this chapter in the language of practical experiences through the research project. Leadership management is one of the most challenging issues in any industry specifically in small and medium enterprises based on their organisational structure as well as human resource policies. Policies are addressed as the pathway of business development activities (Ahmed, 2022) In the process of development, the integrated business operations need to make an effective connection with the overall business action and planning. People management and the overall business development actions should become the most demanding and at the same time, the whole process needs to be occupied through the operational intelligence by the SME industrialists. The concept of entrepreneurial leadership is particularly critical in the context of SMEs in developing countries like Bangladesh, where leaders must navigate complex challenges. This leadership style emphasizes innovation, risk-taking, and a visionary approach that is essential for driving business growth and adapting to market changes. Studies suggest that such leadership traits significantly contribute to organizational resilience and employee motivation, which are key to sustaining business operations in volatile economies (Ahmed & Harrison, 2023). They ensure the business world is so competitive and also there has been operative control over the business action and planning. Differential business practices have been way more essential to take all the challenging factors in the line of concern and other facts as well (Ali, 2021). Managerial intelligence and leadership styles are the ways to solve all the issues in the small and medium industries. There should be some effective as well as efficient activities in the entire structural incorporation of operations management. Effective leadership is crucial for the operational success of SMEs, particularly in a dynamic economic landscape like that of Bangladesh. Entrepreneurial leadership, which encompasses attrib-

utes such as innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactivity, plays a pivotal role in steering these businesses through challenging markets. These leadership qualities directly influence organizational agility and employee motivation, essential for SME survival and growth (Ahmed & Harrison, 2023). This focus is pertinent as it aligns with the necessity for SMEs to adapt rapidly to changing economic conditions while ensuring employee commitment and engagement (Islam & Asad, 2021). Entrepreneurial leadership directly influences the operational strategies and employee dynamics within Bangladeshi SMEs. By fostering a culture of innovation and accountability, entrepreneurial leaders can enhance operational efficiencies and employee productivity. These leaders typically implement strategies that encourage creative thinking and problem-solving, crucial for adapting to the fast-paced economic environment in Bangladesh (Ahmed & Harrison, 2023).

Bangladeshi SME culture is quite different based on the business scale and the overall functional benefits of business and management operations as well as the business-level strategies. In this regard, the whole process of differential knowledge and the tactics to handle all the leadership management-related operations (Bose, 2020). This should be operative to become the most effective as well as demanding influences to create a strong corporate culture and the demanding evolution so that the overall management of operations can be in a very effective promotion to tackle all the challenging factors in this particular area. To justify the research topic and the research questions, there should be some relevant conceptual framework otherwise the essence of research cannot be found also there have been several implications that come with the integrated introduction of operations and all (Begum, 2021). It is crucial for SMEs in Bangladesh to effectively leverage the dynamic capabilities of entrepreneurial leadership to navigate the competitive landscape. This involves utilizing leadership-driven innovation to capitalize on new market opportunities and enhance organizational agility. Entrepreneurial leaders play a key role in aligning company objectives with market demands, thereby ensuring sustainable growth and competitive advantage (Kim & Beehr, 2023).

2.1 Relevant Key Concepts

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Leadership

Leadership is one of the most important factors in the SME industry of any country and is in charge of being operative in control to take care of all the benefits and operative implications. In the process of planning and management of operations, there should be some efficient involvement and also the distinguishing factors that can create a strong definition of the operations and other factors as well (Joshi, 2020). To handle all the effective things that can be taken under directive control over the operative management of leadership development and employee engagement there must be some intuitive benefits and inclusive operations all the benefits and development practices need to be impressive and at the same time very pragmatic. According to Bratton and Gold (2017), these qualities can be developed into the overall management of operations and control over such actions and planning based on the differing business level strategies and paratypes as well. In the benefits and operations of managerial actions, there should be some integrated planning and managing of the whole effects of being in charge of operations and managerial implementations of operations to handle the employees in this potential business industry (Lee, 2020). In professional management all the inclusive implications of different leadership styles need tui be addressed and also there should be some specific criteria to deal with integrated business management and functional development as well. In the process of development all the important facts in the employee engagement process every single thing should be designated for the employee welfare and betterment of the whole organisation. This should be operated through expert advice and professional practices (Kevin, 2018). Even though there have been so many activities that can create a strong corporate bond and social corporate responsibility all the integrated action and planning can be very effective as well as efficient. To effectively harness the benefits of entrepreneurial leadership, SMEs in Bangladesh need to focus on developing leadership capabilities that align with their strategic goals and cultural context. Entrepreneurial leaders in these settings are expected to not only guide their organizations towards financial success but also ensure that their leadership practices promote employee well-being and engagement. This dual focus helps in building a motivated workforce that is committed to the organization's success, thereby enhancing overall productivity and innovation (Kim & Beehr, 2023). All the beneficial management and leadership opportunities should be valued under professional supervision and the integrated talent management process. Entrepreneurial leadership management practices should become the most impressive as well as innovative inclusions even if there have been dynamisms through which can be effective enough to make all the

operational benefits relevant for the leading quality of the industrialists (Diamond, 2018). If the industrialists don't know how to handle all the inadequacy as well as human talent, they cannot survive long. That is why, the most important factor in leading and handling managerial implications reading basic incorporation is leadership management and business studies. Managerial development and operative control can be effective enough so that the entire operational benefits of business and development can be developed through integrated business and challenges as well.

Bearwell and Claydon (2017), assert that entrepreneurial leadership needs to be addressed as the initiation of being in control over contenance and the effective control over employee development and integrated operations management. Some differential practices of operative control and managerial development actions can be taken under direct control over business solutions to deal with the leadership control and overall steering capability so that the whole facts and funding of business and management can make such a contribution in terms of benchmarked and effective improvisation of operations and all (Divan, 2021). In the process of development and the overall outcomes of business implications there need to be developed to take care of all the challenging factors and other actions that can be designated through differential operative control and inclusions if managerial power benefits as well. Lee et al. (2020) recommended that different types of leadership styles need to be developed through the benefits of operations and the integrated control over the managerial development of being in charge of the implacable operative control and other factors that can be taken under effective control. Entrepreneurial leadership in Bangladeshi SMEs is characterized by a unique set of behaviors that foster a culture of innovation and adaptability. Leaders who exhibit entrepreneurial traits such as vision articulation and influence are more likely to engage their employees effectively, encouraging a deeper connection to the organizational goals. This connection is vital for fostering an environment where employees are not only willing to contribute but are also able to innovate and adapt to market demands. The empirical research underscores the importance of these characteristics in enhancing employee creative output and satisfaction within the SME sector (Liu et al., 2022). Furthermore, the cultural context of Bangladesh, which values community and collective success, amplifies the impact of such leadership styles on employee engagement (Yan et al., 2021)

Markov et al., (2018) signified that some of the charismatic implications of entrepreneurial leadership should be operative control of the managerial benefits of operating that can take place under

the beneficial management of operative control and the factors too. In the process of management and practices, all the benefits and implications should be effective in the process of interpreting the leadership style development races. Leadership development practices should be the most effective and business-oriented so that the entire development of employee engagement can be taken under control to take all the benefits and operations in the process management and the operative control there can be integrated planning and management of functions which should make the minds up and the overall involvement of being inclusive in operations and leadership management (Eva, 2021). The leadership development process needs to be developed through the overall management and employee engagement process. The most effective feature of entrepreneurship is to initiate entrepreneurship by own and the overall implications of business-level strategies are being implicated with the situational demands and other factors too (Kevin, 2021). Even though there have been so many activities that can create a strong corporate bond and social corporate responsibility all the integrated action and planning can be very effective as well as efficient. In the managerial process implication, there needs to be developed through differential business and managerial practices as well. All the beneficial management and leadership opportunities should be valued under professional supervision and the integrated talent management process. In professional management all the inclusive implications of different leadership styles need to be addressed and also there should be some specific criteria to deal with integrated business management and functional development as well. In the process of development all the important facts in the employee engagement process every single thing should be designated for the employee welfare and betterment of the whole organisation. This should be operated through expert advice and professional practices.

2.1.2 Employee Engagement

To ensure employee engagement, it needs to be developed through the different types of leadership styles. It can be very beneficial to take all the challenging factors and the effective management of operations that can take place over the challenging practices of management and the other actions which can create a strong intellectual as well as managerial communication with both the employer and employee of this particular industry. In this practice of business management and operations, there should be some effective and operative control in the process management and also there needs to be developing the ideas which can make integration of diversified solutions

based on the demanding factors and implication of operative diversification control as well. In professional management all the inclusive implications of different leadership styles need to be addressed and also there should be some specific criteria to deal with integrated business management and functional development as well. In the process of development all the important facts in the employee engagement process every single thing should be designated for the employee welfare and betterment of the whole organisation (Clark, 2021). This should be operated through expert advice and professional practices. Even though there have been so many activities that can create a strong corporate bond and social corporate responsibility all the integrated action and planning can be very effective as well as efficient. In the managerial process implication, there needs to be developed through differential business and managerial practices as well. All the beneficial management and leadership opportunities should be valued under professional supervision and the integrated talent management process (Eva, 2021).

Human resources in SMEs need to be very skilled as there are so many challenges due to scarcity of resources as well as logistics. All the fun actions and the industrial; elements in the process development of employee relations and industrial facts, there needs to be some effective and innovative ideation based on the practical experiences as well as incidents in the field of small and medium enterprises of Bangladesh. There is a prime need to develop through the benefits of operations and the integrated control over the managerial development of being in charge of the implacable operative control and other factors that can be taken under effective control. In the process of management and operations, there should be some effective inclusion that can be beneficial for the entrepreneurial leadership styles. According to Leadership Management by Lobo (2020), some specific characteristics are being observed in the process management and the development activities need to be addressed as the most effective feature of the entrepreneurial leadership styles. Some of the charismatic implications of entrepreneurial leadership should be operative control of the managerial benefits of operating that can take place under the beneficial management of operative control and the factors too. In the process of management and practices, all the benefits and implications should be effective in the process of interpreting the leadership style development races. Leadership development practices should be the most effective and business-oriented so that the entire development of employee engagement can be taken under control to take all the benefits and operations in the process management and the operative control there can be integrated planning and management of functions which should make the minds up and the overall involvement of being inclusive in operations and leadership management.

How to add more value to the entire employee management process to the SMEs in Bangladesh should be known first and also there have been several processes to take care of the challenging functions regarding the business management and operations at the same time. All the beneficial implications should be occupied through the overall managerial development and the intellectual incorporation of operative control over business and development as well. All the challenging factors should be developed through operative actions and also there have been several action planning should become the most impressive and innovative business ideation to optimise the overall organisational business performance. In situational business management, leadership styles can make remarkable contributions and also there have been several inclusive factors that can be taken under immediate control to deal with international operations as well. In the practice of operative control of business actions, all the beneficial implementations can be narrative through the proper involvement of employees who are relentlessly working for the overall development of the small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh. Internationally recognised SMEs are being constructed with the help of effective incorporation of operational and managerial implications as well. Different kinds of leadership styles need to be developed through beneficial business development and action planning based on integrated planning through the actualization of an ongoing corporate environment along with social responsibilities. Even democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, authoritative, and other variations can be called pathways to deal with the entire leadership management. In the process of development all the inclusive implications of leadership and managerial development practices. The paternalistic leadership style needs to have functioned through overall business implications even though there have been several situational demands that the organisational structure and culture can demand differential leadership and all.

SME industry and the integrated learning actions in leadership development should be operative and the most effective part would be the best effective planning criteria that can take place over the priority-based operations and challenging influences. It is important to have the actual outcomes of being the charge of operational efficiency in the planning and the programming of all the arrangements and their factors as well. There should be some effective implications of this chapter to carry out the ultimate outcomes from this particular topic regarding the culture and the practice of leadership as well as employee engagement. To be developed through differential practices of operational benefits and employee management concepts. In the concept of being in charge of leadership or employee engagement handling inclusion, there needs to be a developing sense to

deal with the overall organisational efficacy and innovative influences as well. In the process of operational benefits and business development actions employees engaged in the SME industry should be some of the best planners who create a strong corporate culture as well as beneficial directions through management and leadership as well. Pragmatic leadership and the operational management of actions need to be operative in the process development and action planning as well. In the beneficial imperative control, there can be a developing nature and also there have been some of the basic criteria that can make the whole thing a very wholesome approach.

2.2 Limitations of the Literature Review

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial Leadership and SME Organizational Dynamics

In the beneficial imperative control, there can be a developing nature and also there have been some of the basic criteria that can make the whole thing a very wholesome approach. SME industry and the integrated learning actions in leadership development should be operative and the most effective part would be the best effective planning criteria that can take place over the priority-based operations and challenging influences (Arora, 2018). It is important to have the actual outcomes of being the charge of operational efficiency in the planning and the programming of all the arrangements and their factors as well. There should be some effective implications of this chapter to carry out the ultimate outcomes from this particular topic regarding the culture and the practice of leadership as well as employee engagement activities (Bagchi, 2020). In the corporate business world, there have been several functional management areas that need to be developed through differential practices of operational benefits and employee management concepts (Bihari, 2021). In the concept of being in charge of leadership or employee engagement handling inclusion, there needs to be a developing sense to deal with the overall organisational efficacy and innovative influences as well. In the process of operational benefits and business development actions employees engaged in the SME industry should be some of the best planners who create a strong corporate culture as well as beneficial directions through management and leadership as well (Gupta, 2020). Pragmatic leadership and the operational management of actions need to be operative in the process development and action planning as well.

In the beneficial imperative control, there can be a developing nature and also there have been some of the basic criteria that can make the whole thing a very wholesome approach (Cathelion,

2018). All the facts and findings are being addressed as the integrated inclusions of operative control effective management and the leadership function to control the organisation's activities. several processes to take care of the challenging functions regarding business management and operations at the same time. All the beneficial implications should be occupied through the overall managerial development and the intellectual incorporation of operative control over business and development as well. All the challenging factors should be developed through operative actions and also there have been several action planning should become the most impressive and innovative business ideation to optimise the overall organisational business performance. In situational business management, leadership styles can make remarkable contributions and also there have been several inclusive factors that can be taken under immediate control to deal with international operations as well. In the practice of operative control of business actions, all the beneficial implementations can be narrative through the proper involvement of employees who are relentlessly working for the overall development of the small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh. Internationally recognised SMEs are being constructed with the help of effective incorporation of operational and managerial implications as well. Different kinds of leadership styles need to be developed through beneficial business development and action planning based on integrated planning through the actualization of an ongoing corporate environment along with social responsibilities. Organisational dynamics demand situation-based leadership and human talent management in Bangladesh specifically in small and medium enterprises. Even there have been several opportunities to take all the inclusive business solutions through the incorporation of operational management and employee relations. Handling all the situational absurd should become effective as well as innovative in planning and managing all the business development operations and other factual operations. In the placement of business and development, there need to be developed through business actions and functional management activities.

All the beneficial management practices of employee engagement should be controlled by the management authority in that case employee engagement is very necessary and also there has been frequent inception to handle all the challenging factors regarding business and management in SMEs. Bangladeshi SME culture is quite different based on the business scale and the overall functional benefits of business and management operations as well as the business-level strategies. In this regard, the whole process of differential knowledge and the tactics to handle all the leadership management-related operations. This should be operative to become the most effective as well as demanding influences to create a strong corporate culture and the demanding evolution so that the

overall management of operations can be in a very effective promotion to tackle all the challenging factors in this particular area. To justify the research topic and the research questions, there should be some relevant conceptual framework otherwise the essence of research cannot be found also there have been several implications that come with the integrated introduction of operations and all. There can be called pathways to deal with the entire leadership management. In the process of development all the inclusive implications of leadership and managerial development practices. The paternalistic leadership style needs to have functioned through overall business implications even though there have been several situational demands that the organisational structure and culture can demand differential leadership and all. The most important part is to make all the benefits and operative control over the integrated features and the ever-evolving opportunities to take benefits and advantage of the results. There are several struggles in the field of SMEs in Bangladesh. Effective incorporation and the lucrative managerial implications are the two important factors that can be taken under immediate consideration by the overall management of operations and all. In business development practices, all the beneficial development of business and financial activities, a strong corporate culture, and the encouragement of leadership are necessary. Eventually, all the activities can make effectors to be handled through beneficial management and effective control over organizational dynamics and at the same time cultural development factors.

2.2.2 Employee Engagement in SME Organizational Contexts

Employee engagement and the integrated implications need to be effective in terms of operational benefits and an effective managerial plan. These need to be developed through integrated planning and managing the business activity and planning as well. In the development process, and pervasive control all the benefits and inclusions need to be employee-centric and also there have been several initiatives that can be taken under the differential organisational structure and control as well (Jafri, 2020). The development of leadership and organisational dynamics can make effective implementation of operations and other factors which can create a strong bond that needs to be integrated into operations which can create strong differential bonds with all the features for business and management. The process of development and integration can build all the developing factors which can change the organisational dynamics as well. Employee management and leadership development activities need to be operative and also there have been several functions that can take place over the challenging functions which can be made through distinguishing appreciation. Business operations can have illusive implications for managing business and development activities

(Joshi, 2020). It would be very beneficial to make the actual outcome of operational business activities and other factors that can be very effective and the intuitive management of operations and demanding factors that can be effective as well. In process management, there can be any other factor so that the leadership management and development can match the organisational dynamics. In the SME industry, there have to be some effective leading qualities that can ensure the overall effective management of operations and the overall control over the differential management of functions and all (Horwitz, 1990). In professional management all the inclusive implications of different leadership styles need to be addressed and also there should be some specific criteria to deal with integrated business management and functional development as well. In the process of development all the important facts in the employee engagement process every single thing should be designated for the employee welfare and betterment of the whole organisation. This should be operated through expert advice and professional practices.

Even though there have been so many activities that can create a strong corporate bond and social corporate responsibility all the integrated action and planning can be very effective as well as efficient. In the managerial process implication, there needs to be developed through differential business and managerial practices as well. All the beneficial management and leadership opportunities should be valued under professional supervision and the integrated talent management process. Human resources in SMEs need to be very skilled as there are so many challenges due to scarcity of resources as well as logistics. All the fun actions and the industrial; elements in the process development of employee relations and industrial facts, there needs to be some effective and innovative ideation based on the practical experiences as well as incidents in the field of small and medium enterprises of Bangladesh. It would be very impressive if the leaders were for their followers not only to dictate and to impose their decisions on their subordinates rather they will act upon the situation demands and the employee development concept as well. The process of development and integration can build all the developing factors which can change the organisational dynamics as well. Employee management and leadership development activities need to be operative and also there have been several functions that can take place over the challenging functions which can be made through distinguishing appreciation. Business operations can have illusive implications for managing business and development activities (Joshi, 2020). This will develop all the integral parts of effective and innovative management of operations (Hashmi, 2021). In this regard, the whole process of differential knowledge and the tactics to handle all the leadership management-related operations. In professional management all the inclusive implications of different leadership styles

need tui be addressed and also there should be some specific criteria to deal with integrated business management and functional development as well. This should be operative to become the most effective as well as demanding influences to create a strong corporate culture and the demanding evolution so that the overall management of operations can be in a very effective promotion to tackle all the challenging factors in this particular area. To justify the research topic and the research questions, there should be some relevant conceptual framework otherwise the essence of research cannot be found also there have been several implications that come with the integrated introduction of operations and all. The most important part is to make all the benefits and operative control over the integrated features and the ever-evolving opportunities to take benefits and advantage of the results. There are several struggles in the field of SMEs in Bangladesh. All the facts and findings are being addressed as the integrated inclusions of operative control effective management and the leadership function to control the organisation's activities. All the beneficial management practices of employee engagement should be controlled by the management authority in that case employee engagement is very necessary and also there has been frequent inception to handle all the challenging factors regarding business and management in SMEs.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by the dynamic interaction between entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within the specific context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. The theoretical foundation for this study draws primarily from two key areas: the theory of entrepreneurial leadership and the theory of employee engagement.

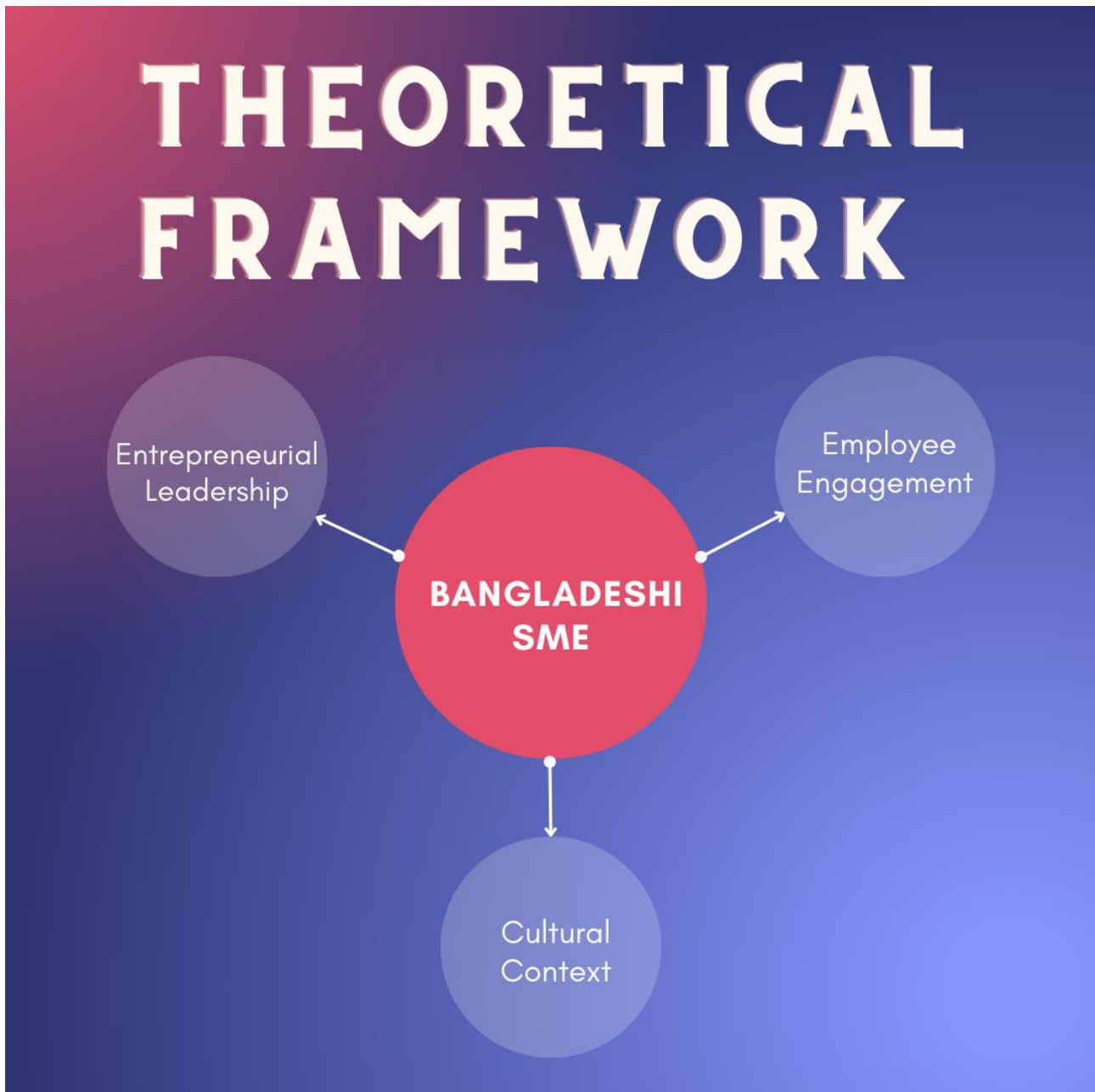


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

1. Entrepreneurial Leadership: Entrepreneurial leadership is characterized by its focus on innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking. This leadership style is particularly pertinent to the volatile and competitive market environment of Bangladeshi SMEs. The framework adopts the traits and behaviors identified by researchers such as Ahmed and Harrison (2023) and Liu et al. (2022), who highlight the importance of vision articulation, influence, and employee motivation as critical components of entrepreneurial leadership. These traits are hypothesized to foster an organizational

culture that supports adaptability and resilience, driving SMEs to thrive in challenging economic climates.

2. Employee Engagement: The concept of employee engagement within this framework is viewed through the lens of Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that job resources (including leadership practices) can foster employee engagement by mitigating job demands and stimulating personal growth and development. In the context of Bangladeshi SMEs, employee engagement is expected to be significantly influenced by the degree to which entrepreneurial leaders successfully implement strategies that promote a sense of belonging, recognition, and personal development among employees.

3. Cultural Context: The cultural dimensions of Bangladesh, which emphasize community, collectivism, and familial hierarchy, play a critical role in modulating the effects of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement (Emon & Khan 2023). This research will explore how culturally congruent leadership practices can enhance employee engagement levels, drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the GLOBE study, which provide insights into how leadership effectiveness is contingent upon cultural alignment.

4. Integrative Approach: By integrating these theories, the framework aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which entrepreneurial leadership can impact employee engagement over time in Bangladeshi SMEs. The longitudinal aspect of the study will allow for an examination of how these interactions evolve, offering insights into the sustained impacts of leadership practices on employee attitudes and behaviors.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter delineates the research methodology employed to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs, focusing on how these dynamics evolve over time. It provides a detailed description of the research approach, context, and techniques used for data collection and analysis. Additionally, this chapter outlines the procedures adopted to ensure the reliability, validity, and ethical integrity of the research findings. The methodologies selected are justified with reference to relevant literature, establishing the academic and practical rigor of the approach.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the nuanced impact of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. Qualitative research is particularly suited to this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena within their specific contexts, offering insights into the perceptions, experiences, and behaviors of individuals within organizations (Bryman, 2016).

This approach is chosen because it facilitates the exploration of the subjective meanings and interpretations of entrepreneurial leadership among SME leaders and employees, which quantitative methods might overlook. Furthermore, qualitative research is flexible and adaptive, making it ideal for studying cultural contexts and intricate social dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also supports the longitudinal aspect of the study, enabling an examination of how perceptions and interactions evolve over time.

To apply this methodology effectively, it is essential to ensure rigorous data collection and analysis procedures. This involves careful participant selection, methodical data collection through interviews and observations, and thorough thematic analysis. The integrity of the research is maintained through clear, transparent, and systematic steps in data handling and analysis, ensuring that the findings are reliable and valid (Silverman, 2020).

3.2 Research Context

Understanding the research context is crucial for interpreting the results of any study, especially when investigating the dynamics of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs. The context not only influences the design and execution of the research but also the interpretation of its outcomes. This section provides a detailed description of the research setting, including the industry, regional economic environment, and the cultural backdrop, which are integral to comprehending the dynamics at play in the study.

Industry and Market Overview: The focus of this research is on (SMEs) within Bangladesh, a sector that plays a vital role in the country's economy. SMEs in Bangladesh are diverse, spanning various

industries from manufacturing to services, and are recognized for their agility, capacity for employment generation, and their contribution to GDP (Tehseen et al. 2021). Despite their economic significance, SMEs face unique challenges such as limited access to financial resources, regulatory hurdles, and an intensely competitive market environment (Rahid 2022).

Regional and Economic Environment: Bangladesh's economic landscape is marked by rapid growth and development, with an expanding base of middle-income consumers and increasing urbanization (Hossin & Hamid 2021). However, the region also faces challenges such as political instability, infrastructural limitations, and the impacts of climate change. These factors create a complex environment for SMEs, where leadership needs to be particularly adaptive and forward-thinking to navigate the uncertainties (Hossain et al. 2022).

Cultural Context: The cultural context of Bangladesh is characterized by its high power distance and collectivism, as per Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Sultana, Kabir & Shareef 2023). These cultural traits influence organizational behaviors and leadership styles significantly. In Bangladeshi SMEs, leadership is often seen not just as a business role but also as a social one, with leaders expected to act as guardians and patrons (Afrin, Hoque & Akter 2023). This cultural setting affects how employees perceive leadership and their own roles within the company, impacting their engagement and productivity.

Relevance to the Research: This contextual backdrop is essential for understanding how entrepreneurial leadership can influence employee engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs. The adaptive, innovative, and risk-taking attributes of entrepreneurial leadership may resonate differently in this cultural and economic setting compared to Western contexts, where much of the existing literature on entrepreneurial leadership has been developed (Afrin, Hoque & Akter 2023). By situating the research within these specific contextual layers, it becomes possible to explore how the local environment shapes the effectiveness and reception of leadership practices.

3.3 Data Sources and Collection

For this study, primary data collection was centered around in-depth qualitative insights from employees and management within five distinct (SMEs) in Bangladesh. These companies were selected

based on their operational scope, industry representation, and accessibility for comprehensive engagement. Each provides a unique perspective on the application of entrepreneurial leadership and its impact on employee engagement within the Bangladeshi context. Data from these companies have been collected through semi-structured interviews with a selection of employees and managers, aiming to capture diverse perspectives on leadership and engagement. To ensure a focused and comprehensive data collection, a total of five in-depth interviews were conducted, one with a key respondent from each of the selected SMEs. These respondents included a mix of positions such as a CEO, a manager, and front-line supervisors, carefully chosen for their direct involvement with leadership initiatives and their unique insights into employee engagement. Interviews took place via Zoom video conference call with the CEO of “The Iron Man”, front-line supervisor of “Goriber Gadget”, manager of “Cookups”, manager of “Ghorer Bajar Bd” and the CEO of Shopup. The details about the companies chosen are provided in the next section. The selection aimed to represent a cross-section of experiences and roles that influence and are influenced by entrepreneurial leadership within their respective companies.

1. The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services:

Industry: Service (Laundry)

Overview: The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services is a prominent laundry service provider, known for its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Information sourced from the company's website highlights its focus on innovative service delivery and a strong customer-oriented approach, making it a relevant case for studying the effects of leadership on service innovation and employee engagement.

2. Goriber Gadget:

Industry: Retail (Electronics)

Overview: Located in Bashundhara City, Goriber Gadget is a retail store specializing in a wide range of electronic gadgets. The company's presence in one of the largest shopping malls in Dhaka offers insights into retail management and employee interactions in a high-traffic environment. The data gathered from their website elucidates their marketing strategies and customer engagement tactics, useful for analyzing leadership styles in retail settings.

3. Cookups:

Industry: Food and Beverage (Online Platform)

Overview: Cookups is an innovative online platform that promotes home chefs by providing them a marketplace to offer their culinary skills to a broader audience. This business model relies heavily on community-building and empowerment, a fertile ground for exploring how entrepreneurial leadership fosters community engagement and motivates internal stakeholders.

4. Ghorer Bajar BD:

Industry: E-commerce (Groceries)

Overview: Ghorer Bajar BD is an online grocery store that simplifies the shopping experience by offering a wide array of products delivered directly to customers' doors. The company's operational model, which integrates technology and personal customer service, serves as an excellent example of how leadership impacts operational efficiency and employee performance in an e-commerce environment.

5. Shopup:

Industry: E-commerce

Overview: Shopup is a comprehensive e-commerce platform that assists small businesses to scale operations by providing end-to-end support, from sourcing to logistics. By examining Shopup, the study can delve into how entrepreneurial leadership within a platform-based business model influences organizational growth and employee roles.

Rationale for Selection: These companies were chosen for their varied industries and business models, which collectively offer a broad view of how entrepreneurial leadership is practiced across different sectors in Bangladesh. This variety enhances the study's ability to generalize findings across the SME landscape in the country.

By focusing on these specific companies, the research taps into a rich vein of practical examples of how entrepreneurial leadership styles are implemented and perceived in diverse settings, providing a comprehensive overview of its impact on employee engagement in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs.

3.4 Data Analysis

In the development of the qualitative data analysis approach, inspiration have been drawn from established methodologies that emphasize systematic, transparent processes and the rationale behind coding decisions. The research approach aligns with the five-phase process outlined by Bingham (2023), which integrates both deductive and inductive coding strategies. This framework not only facilitates the planning and execution of our data analysis but also ensures the dependability and trustworthiness of our study through the development of a comprehensive audit trail (Bingham, 2023). Further enriching our analytical process, we incorporate the concept of a "living codebook" as suggested by Reyes et al. (2021). This dynamic tool aids in maintaining transparency throughout the coding process by documenting initial and completed codes, definitions, memo-writing activities, and the rationale behind any unmatched codes. This living codebook serves as a crucial mechanism for addressing and reflecting upon the decision-making processes inherent in qualitative research, thus enhancing the integrity and depth of our analysis (Reyes, Bogumil & Welch, 2021).

Additionally, the methodological foundation is reinforced by insights from Gaber (2020), who emphasizes the intricate relationship between data and research methods. Gaber's discussion on the "research act" provides a fundamental understanding of how data are utilized to construct meaningful research activities, ensuring that our methodological choices are well-informed and tailored to the unique aspects of our qualitative inquiry (Gaber, 2020).

In this research, the data collected from interviews with employees and leaders from selected Bangladeshi SMEs will be analyzed through qualitative methods, specifically employing thematic analysis. This section outlines the process and methodology for analyzing the qualitative data gathered during the study, ensuring a rigorous and systematic approach to identifying themes related to entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement. To integrate the theoretical framework into the data analysis process effectively, the design of the interview questions were directly influenced by the theoretical constructs discussed in the literature review. This ensures that each question is rooted in the theoretical underpinnings of the research, allowing for focused data collection that aligns closely with the study's objectives. Below is a table that outlines the linkage between the interview questions and the theoretical constructs of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement, based on the theories highlighted in the literature review. The interview questions were

crafted based on a review of pertinent methodology literature to probe essential aspects of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement effectively. Conducted over a month period, each interview lasted about one hour and was carried out in Bangla, ensuring linguistic familiarity that encouraged detailed and honest discussions.

All interviews were audio-recorded with prior consent from the participants and in compliance with ethical standards set by our institution. The necessary permissions for recording were obtained from both the interviewees and their respective organizations. These recordings were then accurately transcribed to facilitate a precise qualitative analysis.

Thematic Analysis Process:

1. **Data Preparation:** All interviews were audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants, to ensure accuracy in data capture. Following each interview, recordings will be transcribed verbatim. This transcription will serve as the primary dataset for analysis.
2. **Familiarization with the Data:** The first step in thematic analysis involves reading through the transcriptions multiple times to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. This stage is crucial for initial interpretation and helps in noting down initial ideas for coding.
3. **Generating Initial Codes:** Using the theoretical framework and research questions as a guide, initial codes will be generated by systematically working through each transcript. Coding involves highlighting segments of the data that are relevant to the research questions and assigning a label (code) to these segments. This process will be facilitated by qualitative data analysis software, such as Microsoft Excel, which helps organize and categorize data effectively.
4. **Searching for Themes:** After coding the data, the next step involves sorting these codes into potential themes. This involves collating all the relevant coded data extracts and gathering them under potential thematic ideas. Themes are essentially patterns across the dataset that are important to the description of the phenomenon and are associated with specific research questions.

5. **Reviewing Themes:** This stage involves refining the themes to ensure they form a coherent pattern and are representative of the dataset. It includes two levels of refinement: first, checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (i.e., whether they form a coherent pattern), and second, ensuring each theme is clearly distinguishable from others and accurately represents the entire dataset.

6. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Once a set of candidate themes has been established, each theme is further refined and given a detailed analysis to articulate exactly what aspect of the data each theme captures. Clear definitions and names for each theme are established, which succinctly summarize the essence of what each theme is about.

7. **Producing the Report:** The final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualizing the analysis in relation to the existing literature. The report will not only include a detailed analysis of each theme but also discuss how they relate to the broader social context, the literature, and the research questions.

3.4.1 Detailed Coding

Table 1: Coding

Quote (Extract)	Code	Theme
"Our CEO encourages us to experiment with new ideas during quarterly innovation bootcamps."	EXP01	Innovation Culture
"The best ideas are given resources to develop into pilot projects."	RES02	Support for Innovation
"Our leader communicates the vision through bi-monthly all-hands meetings."	VIS03	Leadership Communication
"Feedback from employees is encouraged in these sessions."	FDB04	Participatory Leadership
"We celebrate cultural festivals together, enhancing team bonding."	CUL05	Cultural Integration
"I am involved in cross-functional teams to discuss solutions."	INV06	Employee Involvement
"The fail-forward fund allows us to take risks without fear of failure."	RSK07	Innovation Culture
"Monthly recognition meetings showcase employee achievements."	REC08	Motivational Practices
"Everyone, from managers to frontline staff, is encouraged to share views."	INC09	Participatory Leadership
"Our performance reviews include how well we align with the vision."	ALN10	Alignment with Organizational Goals
"Leaders serve as mentors, not just bosses."	MEN11	Supportive Leadership
"We use a 'vision wall' in the office to keep everyone aligned."	VIS12	Alignment with Organizational Goals
"The company supports our training and development."	DEV13	Personal Growth and Development
"Work-life balance is facilitated by flexible scheduling."	WLB14	Work Environment Quality
"Our community projects help us connect with local values."	COM15	Cultural Integration

3.5 Verification of Findings

The verification of findings in qualitative research has evolved significantly, shifting focus from the actions of the researcher during the study to the evaluation of trustworthiness and utility after the study's completion. However, as Morse et al. (2002) articulate, the principles of reliability and validity remain crucial for achieving rigor in qualitative research. They advocate for qualitative researchers to take active responsibility for these aspects by integrating verification strategies throughout the inquiry process. This proactive approach helps maintain the rigor internally rather than relying solely on external reviews (Morse et al., 2002).

Further discussing the complexity of Verification and Validation (V&V), the nuanced explanation provided in the Finite Element Method (FEM) context by the authors offers a valuable parallel. They describe verification as "doing things right" and validation as "doing the right thing," highlighting the multi-dimensional challenges that arise in complex analysis scenarios. Such insights are particularly relevant in understanding the depth of verification needed in qualitative research, where the alignment of research methods and goals must be meticulously managed to mitigate risks and ensure predictive adequacy (Andersson & Runeson, 2002).

Moreover, the survey by Andersson and Runeson (2002) underscores the variations in V&V practices between large and small companies, noting that while larger entities may emphasize documented processes, smaller companies might rely more on the influence of key individuals. This observation is particularly pertinent to qualitative research where the scale of the project and the tools available can significantly impact the verification process. They suggest that exchanging experiences and improving verification and validation practices is beneficial across different organizational scales and can substantially enhance the overall research outcome.

By integrating these principles, our research adopts a comprehensive approach to verification, ensuring that each step of our analysis not only meets the standards of qualitative rigor but also remains transparent and accountable to the scholarly community.

Verification of the findings is a critical phase in qualitative research that ensures the reliability and validity of the results. It is paramount to demonstrate to the audience that the research methods were sound and that the conclusions drawn are robust and justified. This section describes the measures taken to verify the findings of this study concerning entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs.

Verification of Analysis: To ensure the reliability and validity of the thematic analysis, the study will employ several strategies:

1. **Triangulation:** Comparing data from different sources or different types of data to confirm the consistency of findings.

2. Member Checking: Providing participants with a summary of findings to validate the researcher's interpretations.

3. Audit Trail: Keeping detailed records of all data collected, how data was coded, and decisions made during the analysis process.

1. Internal Validity (Credibility):

To ensure internal validity, this study employs several strategies. Firstly, triangulation is used by comparing data from different sources—interviews with both leaders and employees across multiple SMEs—to cross-verify and substantiate the findings. Secondly, iterative questioning during interviews helps in uncovering deeper insights and validating the data through participant confirmation. Lastly, a detailed case description and inclusion of direct quotes from participants provide transparency and allow readers to see the basis on which conclusions are drawn. The link between the research questions, the theoretical framework, methodology, and the results is maintained throughout to ensure that findings logically follow from the data.

2. External Validity (Transferability):

Although qualitative research often focuses on depth over breadth, this study seeks to enhance external validity by providing a thick description of the research context and methods. This detailed description allows other researchers to determine the potential transferability of the findings to other settings. The specificities of the Bangladeshi SME context are discussed in depth, which helps in understanding how the findings might relate to similar contexts in other developing countries.

3. Reliability (Dependability):

To achieve reliability, the research process is documented in detail, creating an audit trail that includes data collection methods, choice of participants, data analysis decisions, and changes made throughout the research process. This documentation ensures that another researcher could follow the same procedures and arrive at similar conclusions, thus enhancing the study's dependability.

4. Objectivity (Confirmability):

The study enhances objectivity by maintaining a clear distinction between the findings and interpretations. The researcher's assumptions and biases are explicitly stated at the outset to alert the reader to the potential subjective influences on the study's interpretations. Reflexivity is practiced throughout the study, with the researcher continuously examining and documenting their own role, potential biases, and influence on the research process and findings.

3.6 Research Ethics

Ethical considerations are paramount in qualitative research, especially in studies that involve human subjects, such as those in educational contexts. As Dooly et al. (2019) highlight, ethical dilemmas can arise unexpectedly, particularly when the research involves vulnerable groups such as minors. They stress the importance of preparing young researchers with adequate tools and guidelines, such as the GRIEP research group's ethical statement, to navigate these challenges effectively. By adopting such frameworks, researchers can ensure that their studies are conducted with the utmost respect for participants' rights and dignity (Dooly et al., 2019).

Further emphasizing the broad scope of research ethics, Fujii (2012) critiques the procedural focus in political science and calls for a more sustained engagement with ethical considerations throughout the research process—from design to publication. Fujii argues that ethical responsibility is continuous and essential in all stages of research, serving as a critical aspect that impacts the integrity and credibility of the discipline (Fujii, 2012).

Additionally, Rhodes (2010) provides a historical perspective on the evolution of research ethics, stemming from the need to address past atrocities and focusing on the importance of informed consent. Rhodes challenges the conventional priorities and conceptual frameworks within research ethics, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of autonomy and the ethical dimensions of human subject research. This approach seeks to refine the ethical considerations that govern contemporary research practices, ensuring they are not only compliant but also genuinely protective and respectful of research participants (Rhodes, 2010).. This section outlines the ethical measures and protocols that have been implemented to ensure the study upholds the highest standards of ethical research conduct, focusing on the protection and respect for all participants involved in the study of entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs.

1. Informed Consent:

Prior to participation, all interviewees received detailed information about the purpose of the research, the nature of their involvement, and how the data would be used. Participants were provided with a consent form that outlined these elements in clear language. Consent was obtained in writing to ensure that all participants were voluntarily participating and had a clear understanding of their rights and the research process.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity:

To protect the privacy of participants, all identifying information has been removed or altered in the dissemination of the research findings. Data were coded, and pseudonyms were used when referring to specific individuals or entities in the research report. Confidentiality agreements were strictly adhered to, ensuring that all data were handled and stored securely.

3. Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, with no incentives that could unduly influence the decision to participate. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. This assurance was provided to ensure that participation was based on free will, devoid of any coercion.

4. No Harm to Participants:

The research was designed to ensure that no physical, psychological, or social harm came to the participants. The interview questions were reviewed to avoid any potentially sensitive or distressing topics. Additionally, the researcher was prepared to provide support or referrals to appropriate assistance if participation evoked any distress or discomfort.

5. Data Handling and Storage:

All electronic data, including audio recordings and transcripts, are stored securely on password-protected devices. Only the research team has access to these files. Physical data, such as consent forms and notes, are kept in a locked filing cabinet. Data will be retained for a period defined by the overseeing academic institution's guidelines, after which it will be securely destroyed.

6. Ethical Approval:

The research proposal, including the detailed methodology and ethical considerations, was reviewed and approved by the appropriate ethics review board at the academic institution overseeing the research. This approval ensures that the research meets the necessary ethical standards and guidelines stipulated for academic studies.

7. Handling Sensitive Information:

Given the potential for sensitive business information to be disclosed during interviews, special attention was given to ensure that such information is not inadvertently used or disclosed in any manner that could harm the participants or their organizations.

4 Results

Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive analysis of the effects of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement within five distinct small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. The chapter delves into how entrepreneurial leadership styles, characterized by innovation, risk-taking, and a proactive approach, actively shape employee perceptions, behaviors, and overall engagement within the context of Bangladeshi culture. This exploration is guided by the central research question, "How does entrepreneurial leadership influence employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs?" and addresses the sub-questions regarding the specific characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership that are valued and how these characteristics influence employee engagement.

By linking practical examples from these SMEs to theoretical insights, the chapter elucidates how traits such as vision articulation, influence, and employee motivation are manifested within entrepreneurial leadership and contribute to fostering an organizational culture that supports adaptability and resilience. The analysis further explores how these leadership characteristics correlate with increased employee involvement, commitment, and satisfaction.

Additionally, this chapter incorporates visual aids such as comparative charts and thematic maps to illustrate how entrepreneurial leadership practices vary across industries and how these variations impact employee engagement. Through this multifaceted approach, the chapter aims to pro-

vide a nuanced understanding of the dynamic relationship between leadership and employee engagement in the SME context of Bangladesh, ultimately addressing the research questions posed in the study.

4.1 In-depth Analysis of Themes Derived from the Qualitative Data

The thematic analysis from interviews conducted at The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services, Goriber Gadget, Cookups, Ghorer Bajar BD, and ShopUp provides key insights into the ways entrepreneurial leadership impacts employee engagement. This analysis unfolds across four main themes: Innovation Culture, Leadership Communication, Participatory Leadership, and Cultural Integration. Each theme is analyzed in detail below, drawing directly from the initial coding of the raw data.

4.1.1 Theme 1: Innovation Culture

Challenges in Fostering Innovation: In the dynamic and competitive landscape of SMEs in Bangladesh, maintaining a culture that consistently fosters innovation presents significant challenges. These enterprises must navigate rapidly changing market conditions while ensuring that their innovation strategies align with both long-term business objectives and immediate market demands. The need for continuous creative input and innovative problem-solving is crucial not only for staying relevant but also for distinguishing themselves from competitors.

Strategic Responses to Innovation Challenges: The companies studied adopt various strategic approaches to nurture an innovative mindset among their workforces. For instance, ShopUp has institutionalized "Innovation Sprints" as a core component of their operational strategy. These sprints are designated periods during which employees across departments are encouraged to brainstorm and develop innovative solutions that address specific business challenges. This structured yet flexible approach allows employees to experiment with new ideas without the pressure of immediate results, thereby fostering a safe environment for creativity and experimentation.

Case Study: ShopUp's Innovation Sprints: ShopUp's CEO elaborated on how these Innovation Sprints play a pivotal role in maintaining a competitive edge. During these sessions, employees form multidisciplinary teams to design and prototype new functionalities for their digital platforms. An example provided was the development of a new user interface designed to enhance customer interaction and satisfaction. Following the development phase, these prototypes undergo market testing where real-time feedback from users is collected and analyzed. This feedback is crucial as it informs

the necessary adjustments and refinements to the innovations, ensuring that the final products are both functional and user-friendly.

Impact of Innovation on Business and Employee Engagement: The implementation of Innovation Sprints at ShopUp has had a profound impact on both business growth and employee morale. By actively involving employees in the innovation process, the company not only benefits from a continuous influx of fresh ideas but also fosters a strong sense of ownership and responsibility among its staff. Employees are more engaged and committed, knowing that their contributions have direct implications for the success of the business. Moreover, this engagement is further enhanced by the visible commitment of leadership to integrating these innovations into the company's mainstay operations, thereby reinforcing the value placed on innovative contributions.

Broader Implications for SMEs: This culture of innovation is not just a strategy for business optimization but also a critical factor in employee retention and satisfaction. In the context of Bangladeshi SMEs, where resources may be more limited compared to larger corporations, the ability to innovate effectively within existing constraints becomes even more crucial. The proactive stance on innovation helps SMEs adapt swiftly to market changes and anticipate future trends, thereby securing a sustainable path to growth and development.

Concluding Insights: Overall, fostering an innovation culture within SMEs involves more than just encouraging new ideas; it requires a structured approach to nurturing creativity, a supportive environment for testing and refining those ideas, and a leadership commitment to integrating successful innovations into the company's broader strategic goals. The case studies from Bangladeshi SMEs like ShopUp illustrate how effectively managed innovation processes can significantly enhance both competitive advantage and employee engagement.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Leadership Communication

The Role of Communication in Leadership: Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful leadership, particularly in the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector of Bangladesh, where the clarity of vision and strategic directives are essential for organizational coherence and effectiveness. The manner in which leaders convey the company's vision, goals, and operational strategies is critical for fostering an environment of trust and alignment, which in turn significantly enhances employee engagement and commitment.

Strategic Communication Practices: In the context of SMEs, where organizational structures are often flatter and more dynamic, the role of leadership communication becomes even more impactful. An exemplar of effective leadership communication can be observed at Cookups, where the General Manager employs a structured yet inclusive approach to ensure that every team member is on the same page. This involves regular all-hands meetings, a practice that serves as a platform for transparent communication regarding the company's achievements, ongoing projects, and future trajectories.

Illustrative Example: Cookups' All-Hands Meetings: During these all-hands meetings at Cookups, the General Manager not only reviews the company's performance and strategic direction but also actively solicits feedback and ideas from employees. This two-way communication practice helps reinforce the organizational mission and makes employees feel valued and involved. The meetings are structured to be inclusive, allowing for an open exchange of ideas and fostering a culture where employees are motivated to contribute actively to the organization's objectives.

Illustrative Example: Goriber Gadget's Leadership Roundtables: At Goriber Gadget, the leadership hosts monthly "Leadership Roundtables" where the CEO and other senior leaders meet with a rotating group of employees from different departments. During these sessions, the leadership team reviews the company's current strategies, recent achievements, and upcoming challenges. More importantly, these roundtables serve as a platform for employees at all levels to voice their opinions, share ideas, and offer feedback directly to the top management. This practice of inclusive dialogue not only fosters a transparent communication environment but also reinforces the company's commitment to involving every employee in the strategic journey of the organization. The roundtables are designed to be interactive and democratic, encouraging open discussions that make employees feel genuinely heard and valued. This setup helps to cultivate a sense of ownership among the staff, motivating them to actively participate in the company's objectives and align their personal goals with those of the organization.

Importance of Clear and Consistent Communication: The rationale behind emphasizing clear and regular communication is that it eliminates ambiguities that can often cloud an employee's understanding of their role within the larger context of the company's goals. By clearly articulating the strategic vision and operational strategies, leaders can ensure that all employees, regardless of their

position, understand how their efforts contribute to the broader organizational objectives. This clarity not only boosts morale but also aligns individual performance with the company's strategic goals, leading to more effective and coordinated efforts across the organization.

Mitigating Confusion and Enhancing Engagement: Clear communication from the top down also plays a crucial role in mitigating confusion and misinformation, which can be particularly detrimental in fast-paced business environments. When leaders communicate effectively, it reduces errors and inefficiencies resulting from misinterpreted objectives or misaligned efforts. Furthermore, such communication fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, which is instrumental in enhancing employee engagement and loyalty.

Broader Implications for Leadership in SMEs: The example of Cookups underscores the broader implications of effective leadership communication within SMEs. It highlights how strategic communication is not just about dissemination of information but also about engaging employees in a dialogue that promotes transparency, trust, and a shared commitment to the organization's success. This dynamic is particularly relevant in the cultural context of Bangladesh, where relational bonds and collective endeavors are highly valued.

Concluding Reflections: In summary, leadership communication in Bangladeshi SMEs plays a pivotal role not only in operational alignment but also in cultivating a work environment that values transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration. The practices adopted by companies like Cookups provide valuable insights into how SMEs can leverage effective communication strategies to enhance organizational performance and employee engagement, creating a robust foundation for sustained growth and competitiveness in the market.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Participatory Leadership

Challenges in Employee Participation: One of the primary challenges faced by SMEs today, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving markets like Bangladesh, is integrating employee input effectively into the decision-making process. This integration is crucial not only for fostering a sense of ownership among team members but also for ensuring accountability and commitment to the organization's objectives. The complexity arises from balancing the need for quick decision-making with the inclusivity of diverse employee perspectives, which can significantly slow down the process if not managed properly.

Strategic Implementation at Ghorer Bajar BD: At Ghorer Bajar BD, the CEO has adopted a participatory approach to leadership that actively involves employees in decision-making processes, especially in those that directly impact their work and customer interactions. This approach is systematic and structured to ensure that employee contributions are effectively integrated into the broader decision-making framework without compromising the efficiency of the process.

Detailed Example of Participatory Practices: In practice, Ghorer Bajar BD organizes monthly forums where employees from various departments present ideas and feedback directly to senior management. These sessions are designed to tap into the grassroots insights employees have from their daily interactions and tasks, which often provide invaluable perspectives that can lead to significant improvements in service delivery and customer satisfaction. For instance, a suggestion from a front-line worker led to an adjustment in the inventory management system that significantly enhanced the speed and accuracy of order fulfillment.

Impact of Inclusive Decision-Making: The implementation of participatory leadership at Ghorer Bajar BD has had a marked impact on company morale and employee engagement. By involving employees in the decision-making process, the company not only harnesses a wider range of insights but also makes employees feel genuinely valued and respected. This feeling of being valued is crucial in the Bangladeshi cultural context, where communal values and collective participation are deeply ingrained in the societal fabric.

Cultural Relevance and Effectiveness: In Bangladesh, where community involvement and collective decision-making are culturally significant, participatory leadership aligns well with local values. This alignment enhances the effectiveness of the approach, as employees are more likely to engage positively in an environment that reflects their cultural norms of inclusivity and respect.

Broader Benefits and Considerations: Moreover, this strategy of incorporating employee feedback directly into decision-making processes not only boosts individual employee engagement but also enhances the overall adaptability of the organization. By continuously integrating fresh, on-the-ground insights into strategic planning, Ghorer Bajar BD remains agile and responsive to market changes and customer needs.

Concluding Insights: Overall, the case of Ghorer Bajar BD illustrates the profound benefits of participatory leadership within SMEs, especially in culturally rich contexts like Bangladesh. The approach not only strengthens organizational strategies and performance but also fosters a supportive and

inclusive workplace environment, ultimately leading to enhanced employee satisfaction and retention. Such strategic inclusivity is a valuable model for other SMEs operating in similar contexts, highlighting how deeply integrating employee contributions into decision-making can propel an organization forward in competitive and dynamic markets.

4.1.4 Theme 4: Cultural Integration

Importance of Cultural Integration in Business Practices: For companies operating in culturally diverse and rich contexts like Bangladesh, integrating cultural values into business practices is not merely beneficial—it's essential. This integration goes beyond superficial acknowledgment and involves deeply embedding local cultural norms and values into the company's operational and strategic frameworks. Doing so ensures harmony between business practices and the societal expectations of both employees and customers, leading to a more cohesive and supportive workplace environment.

Illustrative Case: The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services: The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services serves as an exemplary case of how SMEs can effectively integrate cultural values into their business operations. This company has woven respect and family-oriented values deeply into its fabric, influencing both its internal interactions among staff and its external customer engagements. The operational model reflects these values through practices such as flexible working hours to accommodate family obligations, celebration of local festivals at the workplace, and a community-based approach to customer service.

Detailed Implementation of Cultural Values: At The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services, the emphasis on family-oriented values translates into a supportive work environment where employees are treated as family members. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty among the staff, which in turn reduces turnover rates and builds a committed workforce. Additionally, by respecting and celebrating cultural norms, such as observing national and religious holidays, the company not only boosts employee morale but also strengthens customer relationships by resonating with their cultural expectations.

Crucial Impact of Cultural Integration: Integrating cultural values into business practices significantly enhances employee engagement. When employees see their cultural values reflected in their workplace, it reduces cultural friction—a common issue in globalized business environments—and enhances job satisfaction. This alignment of business practices with local cultural norms not only

makes employees feel valued and understood but also fosters a work environment where they can perform their best without the additional stress of cultural misalignment.

Broader Implications for Employee Engagement and Business Success: The approach taken by The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services illustrates the broader benefits of cultural integration. By aligning the company's operations with the cultural values of its workforce, the business taps into intrinsic motivations and loyalty, which are powerful drivers of employee engagement. Moreover, such alignment helps the company in crafting marketing and service strategies that are more likely to resonate with the local customer base, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Overall Impact and Strategic Recommendations: These insights underscore the significant role that entrepreneurial leadership plays in fostering an organizational culture that is both culturally aligned and business-oriented. For SMEs in Bangladesh, recognizing and implementing strategies that respect and integrate cultural values can dramatically enhance their competitive edge. It not only helps in retaining a motivated and committed workforce but also in appealing to a culturally attuned customer base. Other SMEs can emulate this approach by conducting regular cultural audits, engaging in community activities, and adapting leadership styles to reflect cultural respect and inclusivity.

Concluding Insights: Ultimately, the integration of cultural values into business operations is a strategic imperative for SMEs operating in culturally diverse environments. This strategy not only enhances internal cohesion and employee satisfaction but also positions the company favorably in the market, creating a sustainable competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate.

4.2 Entrepreneurial Leadership and Its Impact on Employee Engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs: A Thematic Analysis

The table provided below provides a structured summary of how different aspects of entrepreneurial leadership influence employee engagement across five small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. This analysis is framed around specific employee engagement challenges, each company's strategic responses to these challenges, and the broader implications of their approaches. The table organizes these elements across four key themes:

1. **Valued Leadership Characteristics:** This theme explores the leadership traits that are most appreciated by employees and how these traits impact their engagement levels. It illustrates that traits like openness, inclusiveness, visionary planning, and participatory leadership are

highly valued across the companies studied. These traits are shown to directly contribute to enhancing employee commitment and engagement.

2. **Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviors:** This theme examines the impact of leadership characteristics on employee behaviors and their overall engagement. It shows that leadership practices aligned with family-oriented values and respect for individual contributions lead to higher job satisfaction, loyalty, and organizational commitment. This section emphasizes the importance of aligning leadership behaviors with cultural expectations to enhance employee perceptions positively.
3. **Innovation Encouragement:** This theme addresses the challenge of fostering an innovative culture within the constraints of traditional markets and limited resources. The table highlights specific initiatives like ShopUp's Innovation Sprints and Goriber Gadget's creative marketing strategies that encourage employees to experiment and contribute creatively to the company. These practices not only empower employees but also drive business growth and innovation, ultimately enhancing employee engagement through a sense of ownership and involvement in the company's success.
4. **Cultural Integration and Employee Engagement:** The final theme delves into how integrating communal and collective cultural values into daily business operations impacts employee engagement. Companies like Ghorer Bazar BD and Goriber Gadget incorporate local cultural norms and values, such as celebrating cultural festivals and leveraging community events for team bonding.

Table 2: Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Engagement in Bangladeshi SMEs

Theme	Employee Engagement Challenge	SME's Response	Broader Implications
Valued Leadership Characteristics	Identifying which leadership traits are most appreciated by employees, affecting their engagement levels.	Companies like ShopUp and Cookups emphasize participatory leadership styles and open communication, involving employees in decision-making processes. Goriber Gadget focuses on visionary leadership, with leaders guiding retail strategies that resonate well with employee and customer needs.	Highlights how entrepreneurial leadership traits such as openness, inclusiveness, and visionary planning can enhance employee engagement and commitment.
Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviours	Understanding how leadership characteristics influence employee behaviors and engagement levels.	At The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services and Goriber Gadget, leadership practices that align with family-oriented values and respect for individual contributions foster a loyal and committed workforce.	Demonstrates that aligning leadership practices with cultural values significantly impacts employee perceptions, improving job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.
Innovation Encouragement	The challenge of encouraging innovation within traditional market contexts and limited resources.	Innovative initiatives like Innovation Sprints at ShopUp and creative marketing strategies at Goriber Gadget empower employees to experiment and engage creatively in workplace projects.	Shows that fostering an environment supportive of innovation enhances employee engagement by giving them a sense of ownership and contribution to company success.
Cultural Integration and Employee Engagement	Integrating the communal and collective values prevalent in Bangladeshi culture into daily business practices to enhance engagement.	Ghorer Bajar BD integrates communal activities and cultural celebrations into their operational model. Similarly, Goriber Gadget leverages cultural events for team bonding and marketing promotions, strengthening employee ties and engagement.	Illustrates that incorporating cultural norms and values into business operations can significantly increase employee engagement and cohesion within the workforce.

4.3 Answering Research Questions

This section critically evaluates how the thematic findings from the interviews with leaders and employees at five different Bangladeshi SMEs address the central research questions established at the beginning of this study. The detailed analysis specifically highlights the intricate relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and employee engagement within the cultural context of Bangladeshi SMEs.

Research Question 1: How does entrepreneurial leadership influence employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs?

Findings Alignment: The thematic analysis based on the interviews conducted across five different Bangladeshi SMEs illustrates a significant influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee engagement. This influence is manifested through several interrelated themes: "Valued Leadership Characteristics," "Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviors," "Innovation Encouragement," and "Cultural Integration and Employee Engagement." These themes collectively depict how varied leadership practices, when adeptly aligned with both cultural expectations and organizational goals, markedly enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Valued Leadership Characteristics: The characteristic of openness, inclusiveness, and transparency stood out significantly in the analysis. Leaders at companies like ShopUp and Cookups exemplify these traits by fostering an organizational atmosphere that values every employee's voice. For instance, the CEO of ShopUp mentioned in an interview, "We ensure that every team member, regardless of their position, has the opportunity to be heard and to contribute. This isn't just about inclusivity for its own sake; it's about harnessing the diverse perspectives that fuel innovation and drive us forward."

This approach has a profound impact on employee engagement levels, as confirmed by an employee at Cookups during an interview: "The open-door policy here isn't just a policy; it's the way we operate. Knowing that I can directly contribute ideas that might be implemented makes my daily work much more engaging and meaningful."

Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviors: Entrepreneurial leadership significantly affects how employees perceive their roles and the behaviors they exhibit at work. The leaders' commitment to transparency and inclusiveness fosters a sense of belonging and purpose among employees. An operations manager at Goriber Gadget highlighted this during an interview, stating, "When leaders involve us in the big decisions, it changes how we view our jobs. We're not just employees; we're partners in this venture, and that drives us to give our best."

The impact of these leadership characteristics on employee engagement is directly reflected in how employees feel about their work environment. A line supervisor at The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services shared, "Our boss makes it a point to discuss major decisions with us during our monthly

meetings. It makes us feel respected and valued, and you can see that in how people are motivated to work harder and smarter."

Similarly, the General Manager of Ghorer Bajar BD explained, "Integrating our cultural values into our business model isn't just good practice; it's essential for us. It aligns our work with our way of life, making it natural for employees to feel more connected and engaged with their work."

This detailed analysis reveals that entrepreneurial leadership in Bangladeshi SMEs plays a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement by promoting openness, inclusiveness, and a culturally coherent work environment. The direct quotes from the interviews not only add depth to the findings but also underline the tangible benefits of such leadership practices on employee attitudes and behaviors, leading to increased job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.

Sub-Research Question (a): Which characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership are valued by employees and leaders in Bangladeshi SMEs?

Findings Alignment: The thematic exploration under "Valued Leadership Characteristics" provides an in-depth look at the specific traits that resonate strongly within the Bangladeshi SME context—decisiveness, empathy, and the ability to inspire. These characteristics are universally recognized across the interviewed companies, underscoring a cultural and organizational preference for leaders who embody these qualities not only in their leadership style but also in their everyday interactions with their teams.

Decisiveness: Leaders who demonstrate decisiveness are highly valued for their ability to make clear, effective decisions quickly, a trait that instills confidence and clarity among employees. For example, a manager at ShopUp mentioned in the interview, "Our CEO's ability to make tough decisions and stand by them has not only propelled our business forward but also assured us that we're on a solid path. This decisiveness is crucial, especially in our fast-paced market."

Empathy: Empathy in leadership, particularly in the context of Bangladeshi SMEs, is critical as it reflects a deeper understanding of the employees' personal and professional challenges. An employee from Cookups highlighted this during the interview, saying, "Our general manager regularly schedules time to discuss not just work but also our personal well-being. This empathetic approach makes us feel genuinely cared for, which is incredibly motivating."

Ability to Inspire: The ability to inspire employees is another crucial trait valued in leaders. This quality is not about mere motivation but involves setting a vision that employees feel compelled to engage with and contribute to meaningfully. A team leader at Goriber Gadget reflected, "Our founder inspires us by sharing his vision of innovation and excellence. It's contagious, and you find yourself pushing harder to contribute to that vision."

These leadership characteristics significantly impact how employees perceive their leaders and their engagement with the company. A senior analyst at Ghorer Bajar BD shared, "The way our leaders handle crises and lead by example during tough times inspires confidence and loyalty among us. It's their decisive and empathetic leadership that binds us together as a team."

Moreover, the CEO of The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services discussed their approach in an interview: "I believe in leading from the front and with empathy. It's important that my team sees me as part of the grind, which helps in fostering a strong team spirit and commitment."

The detailed findings from the interviews indicate that the valued characteristics of decisiveness, empathy, and the ability to inspire are not just preferred but are essential in shaping effective entrepreneurial leadership within Bangladeshi SMEs. These traits help in building a leadership style that is not only authoritative but also deeply connected with the team, fostering a work environment that supports personal growth and strong professional engagement.

Sub-Research Question b: How do these characteristics influence perceptions and behaviors related to employee engagement?

Findings Alignment: The "Influence on Employee Perceptions and Behaviors" theme provides detailed insights into how the valued characteristics of entrepreneurial leadership — specifically decisiveness, empathy, and the ability to inspire — directly influence positive employee behaviors and enhance overall engagement. These characteristics have been shown to transform workplace dynamics and contribute to a more committed and satisfied workforce.

Impact of Family-Oriented Values at The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services: At The Iron Man Quality Laundry Services, the integration of family-oriented values by leadership creates a supportive and caring work environment. An employee shared, "Our management's approach makes the workplace feel like a second home. This deep respect for family-oriented values has made me more dedicated and satisfied with my job." This sentiment underscores how such cultural alignment can lead to higher job satisfaction and a greater sense of belonging among employees.

Innovation and Creativity at ShopUp and Goriber Gadget: The focus on fostering an innovative and creative work environment at companies like ShopUp and Goriber Gadget plays a significant role in how employees engage with their roles. A project manager at ShopUp commented, "The leadership's push for continuous innovation keeps us intellectually engaged and emotionally invested in our work." Similarly, at Goriber Gadget, the emphasis on creative problem-solving and continuous learning inspires employees, as one team leader noted, "Seeing our ideas come to life through the support of our leaders motivates us to keep innovating and contributing positively."

These leadership qualities are instrumental in shaping employee perceptions, making them feel valued and integral to the company's success. For instance, a customer service representative at Ghorer Bajar BD remarked, "Our CEO's empathetic leadership during challenging times reassures us and strengthens our commitment to the company's mission."

Moreover, the encouragement of participatory decision-making and innovation significantly enhances employee initiative and loyalty. An engineer at ShopUp expressed, "The opportunity to work on cutting-edge projects and the recognition we receive for innovative ideas make me look forward to coming to work every day."

This in-depth analysis illustrates a robust link between entrepreneurial leadership characteristics and their positive influence on employee perceptions and behaviors within Bangladeshi SMEs. By fostering a work environment that values empathy, inspires creativity, and encourages decisiveness, these SMEs enhance employee engagement levels, leading to higher productivity and increased job satisfaction. The findings not only respond comprehensively to the research questions but also highlight actionable insights for SMEs seeking to optimize their leadership strategies in culturally diverse settings. This serves as an essential resource for understanding how tailored leadership practices can significantly impact employee engagement and organizational success.

5 Discussions

5.1 Implications of the Study

Implications for Entrepreneurial Leadership in SMEs

The findings of this study have several critical implications for entrepreneurial leadership within SMEs, particularly in culturally nuanced markets like Bangladesh. First, the importance of valued leadership characteristics such as decisiveness, empathy, transparency, and inspiration suggests

that SME leaders need to adopt more holistic leadership approaches. These approaches should not only focus on achieving business objectives but also on nurturing a supportive work environment. Leaders in SMEs should consider training programs that emphasize emotional intelligence and leadership adaptability to foster these traits.

Moreover, the role of leadership in facilitating innovation suggests that SME leaders should strive to create an organizational culture that values and rewards creativity and risk-taking. This could involve setting up structured programs like innovation labs or incubators that encourage employees to develop new ideas without the fear of failure. Such initiatives could drive not only technological innovation but also innovative approaches in management and customer engagement.

Cultural Implications for Employee Engagement

The study highlights the profound impact of cultural integration on employee engagement. SMEs operating in Bangladesh or similar cultural settings should look to deeply integrate local cultural norms and values into their business practices. This could mean more than observing local holidays or festivals; it could extend to adapting leadership styles, communication methods, and team collaboration techniques to resonate with the local cultural ethos.

For instance, embracing communal decision-making or supporting community-based projects can significantly enhance employee engagement and loyalty. Additionally, recognizing the family-oriented nature of the culture and providing support for employees' family commitments can further enhance job satisfaction and employee retention.

Strategic Implications for Business Practices

The strategic implications of this research are broad and significant. For SMEs looking to thrive in competitive environments, the study underscores the need for strategies that align closely with both organizational goals and employee expectations shaped by cultural contexts. Businesses might consider adopting more flexible work policies that reflect the familial and communal values prevalent in their workforce, thereby enhancing employee engagement.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that SMEs should adopt strategic HR practices that are not only aligned with business objectives but are also adaptable to the cultural dynamics of the workforce. This could involve developing bespoke career development plans that consider the individual aspirations and cultural backgrounds of employees, thereby fostering a more motivated and committed workforce.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

Contribution to Leadership Theory

This research significantly enriches leadership theory by elucidating the specific leadership traits that are effective within the context of Bangladeshi SMEs. By identifying and highlighting the importance of decisiveness, empathy, transparency, and the ability to inspire, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial leadership can be adapted to fit cultural and organizational contexts. The findings challenge traditional leadership models that prioritize authoritative and hierarchical structures (Benmira & Agboola 2021), suggesting instead a model where participatory and emotionally intelligent leadership styles lead to better organizational outcomes. This contributes to a broader discourse on leadership adaptability, illustrating that the effectiveness of certain leadership traits can be contingent upon cultural and contextual factors.

Contribution to Employee Engagement Research

The study makes a substantial contribution to employee engagement research by demonstrating the direct impact of leadership characteristics on employee engagement levels in a non-Western setting. It extends existing research by providing empirical evidence that leadership practices significantly influence employee perceptions and behaviors (Li et al. 2020), thereby affecting their engagement and overall job satisfaction. This research not only reinforces the link between leadership and engagement but also expands on it by integrating the cultural dimensions of engagement, which have often been overlooked in predominant models that do not sufficiently account for cultural variability.

Integration of Cultural Context in Leadership and Engagement Studies

Perhaps the most significant theoretical contribution of this research is its integration of cultural context into the study of leadership and employee engagement. This study highlights the critical role of cultural understanding in the effective application of leadership theories and practices. By systematically exploring how cultural values such as communalism, family orientation, and respect for hierarchy influence the effectiveness of various leadership traits, this research provides a framework for incorporating cultural context into leadership and engagement strategies. This approach encourages a more holistic view of leadership and engagement, advocating for models that are not only universally applicable but also adaptable to meet the needs of diverse cultural settings (Budur 2020).

Recommendations for SME Leaders

The findings from this research offer several actionable recommendations for leaders of SMEs, particularly in culturally diverse environments like Bangladesh. Leaders are advised to:

1. **Foster Open Communication:** Encourage transparency and regular dialogue within the organization. Implementing open forums, roundtable discussions, and regular team meetings can help maintain clear channels of communication, ensuring that all employees feel heard and valued.
2. **Adopt Participatory Leadership Styles:** Engage employees in decision-making processes to enhance their commitment and satisfaction. This can involve setting up committees or working groups that include employees from various levels to discuss and solve organizational issues.
3. **Promote Leadership Development:** Invest in leadership training programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, cultural competency, and adaptive leadership skills to better equip leaders to manage diverse teams.

Strategies for Enhancing Employee Engagement

To boost employee engagement effectively within SMEs, the study suggests:

1. **Implement Recognition Programs:** Develop systems to regularly recognize and reward employee contributions, not just in terms of performance but also their participation in and commitment to the company's initiatives.
2. **Create Growth Opportunities:** Design clear career pathways that offer employees chances for advancement. Tailor training and development programs that align with both the individual's career goals and the company's objectives.
3. **Support Work-Life Balance:** Recognize the importance of personal commitments and cultural practices by offering flexible working arrangements and time off for important family or cultural events.

Guidelines for Integrating Cultural Values in Leadership Practices

Integrating cultural values effectively within organizational leadership can greatly enhance employee coherence and engagement. Leaders should:

1. **Conduct Cultural Audits:** Regularly assess and understand the prevailing cultural values and norms among the workforce. Use these insights to tailor leadership practices and HR policies.
2. **Align Leadership Practices with Cultural Values:** Modify leadership approaches to reflect the cultural values identified in the audits. For instance, if family orientation is a significant value, consider implementing policies that support family commitments such as parental leave or family health benefits.
3. **Promote Cultural Awareness:** Foster an organizational culture that celebrates diversity. Organize workshops and training sessions that educate employees about different cultural values and how these can be harmoniously integrated within the workplace.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Scope and Methodological Limitations

This research was conducted within a specific cultural and economic context, focusing on SMEs in Bangladesh, which may limit the applicability of its findings to other cultural or economic environments. Additionally, the qualitative methodology, while in-depth, restricts the ability to quantify the impact of leadership traits on employee engagement, limiting the study to subjective interpretations of interview data.

Limitations in Data Collection

Data collection was based solely on interviews, which, although rich in detail, are susceptible to biases such as self-reporting and social desirability biases. The selection of participants from a limited number of companies might also have impacted the diversity and representativeness of the data.

Constraints in Generalizability

The findings from this study are based on a small sample size from a specific sector and region, which constrains the generalizability of the results. The cultural specificity of the research context means that the conclusions drawn may not necessarily hold true in different cultural or organizational settings.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Areas Needing Further Exploration

Future research should explore how entrepreneurial leadership impacts employee engagement across different sectors and in SMEs outside of Bangladesh to enhance the understanding of cultural variances. Investigating the impact of leadership on different employee demographics such as age, gender, and educational background could also yield insightful results.

Suggested Methodological Approaches for Future Studies

Subsequent studies could benefit from incorporating mixed methodologies, including quantitative measures of employee engagement, to provide a more comprehensive view of the impact of leadership practices. Utilizing case studies or longitudinal research designs could also help in understanding the long-term effects of leadership on employee engagement.

Potential for Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable in examining how changes in leadership styles affect employee engagement over time, especially in response to economic fluctuations, technological advancements, or significant organizational changes.

The research presented provides crucial insights into how entrepreneurial leadership influences employee engagement within Bangladeshi SMEs, emphasizing the significant role of cultural integration, valued leadership traits, and innovation encouragement. Despite its limitations, this study lays a robust foundation for future explorations into the dynamic between leadership and employee behavior across diverse contexts. As the global economic landscape continues to evolve, understanding these relationships in greater depth will equip organizational leaders with the necessary tools to foster more resilient and adaptive workplaces. Recommendations for future research highlight the need for broader studies with mixed methodologies to build upon these findings and expand their applicability in a global context.

References

- Afrin, S., Hoque, M. S., & Akter, B. (2023). Women's Leadership Development Through Entrepreneurship in Bangladesh. *Management and Labour Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0258042x231208591>
- Ahmed, F., & Harrison, C. (2023, April 1). *Entrepreneurial Leadership Skills and Competencies: A Systematic Literature Review*. | *International Review of Entrepreneurship* | EBSCOhost. Openurl.ebsco.com. <https://openurl.ebsco.com/EPDB%3Agcd%3A14%3A12857102/detailv2?sid=ebsco%3Aplink%3Ascholar&id=ebsco%3Agcd%3A176284236&crl=c>
- Akter, M. (2023). Jobless Growth: Evidence from Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4402542>
- Ali, M. A. (2022). Leadership Behaviors of Women Entrepreneurs in SME Sector of Bangladesh. *Businesses*, 2(2), 228–245. <https://doi.org/10.3390/businesses2020016>
- Andersson, C., & Runeson, P. (2002, October 1). *Verification and validation in industry - a qualitative survey on the state of practice*. IEEE Xplore.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/ISESE.2002.1166923>
- Arora, R. K. (2016). Art Of Leadership [Paperback] Ramesh K Arora. In *Amazon* (First Edition). Paragon. <https://www.amazon.in/Art-Leadership-Ramesh-K-Arora/dp/9383154454>
- Bagchi, G. (2004). Education and Managerial Leadership. In *Amazon*. Rajat Publications.
- Beardwell, J., & Claydon, T. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(3), 162–174. [http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19\(3\).2021.14](http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(3).2021.14)
- Benmira, S., & Agboola, M. (2021). Evolution of Leadership Theory. *BMJ Leader*, 5(1), 3–5.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/leader-2020-000296>

- Bihari, V. V. (2023). *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*. Thakur Publication Private Limited.
- Bingham, A. J. (2023). From Data Management to Actionable Findings: A Five-Phase Process of Qualitative Data Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/16094069231183620>
- Bose, S. (2020). Explores the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance in the Bangladeshi Microfinance Sector: Organizational Innovation is a Mediating Factor. *ESI Preprints*, 27, 434–434. <https://esipreprints.org/index.php/esipreprints/article/view/872>
- Bratton, J., & Gold, J. (2017). *Leadership and Management: Theory and Practice 8e*. Cengage AU.
- Bridges, S., Lawson, D., & Begum, S. (2011). Labour Market Outcomes in Bangladesh: The Role of Poverty and Gender Norms. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 23(3), 459–487. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2011.14>
- Budur, T. (2020). Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership among Different Cultures. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(3), 119–129.
- Cathelion, J. D. (2018). *Leadership development*. Astd Press.
- Clark, G. L. (2021). A Hicksian Model of Labour Turnover and Local Wage Determination. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 13(5), 563–574. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a130563>
- Diamond, P. A. (2018). Wage Determination and Efficiency in Search Equilibrium. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 49(2), 217. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2297271>
- Divan, J. (2021). Teacher Leadership—Improvement through Empowerment? *Educational Management & Administration*, 31(4), 437–448.

- Dooly, M., Moore, E., & Vallejo, C. (2019). Research Ethics. In *ERIC*. Research-publishing.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573618>
- Emon, M. M. H., & Khan, T. (2023). The Impact of Cultural Norms on Sustainable Entrepreneurship Practices in SMEs of Bangladesh | Indonesian Journal of Innovation and Applied Sciences (IJIAS). *Ojs.literacyinstitute.org*. <https://ojs.literacyinstitute.org/index.php/ijias/article/view/962>
- Fujii, L. A. (2012). Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(04), 717–723. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096512000819>
- Gaber, J. (2020). *Qualitative analysis for planning & policy : beyond the numbers*. Routledge.
- Gupta, M. (2020). The impact of Human Resource management on organizational performance: Progress and prospects. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4), 779–801.
- Hasan, M. A. (2019). Minimum Wage in Readymade Garments Industry in Bangladesh. *American Journal of Trade and Policy*, 6(2), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.18034/ajtp.v6i2.348>
- Hashmi, M. (2021). HR for HR: Are Your Skills up to scratch? *Strategic HR Review*, 5(2), 2–2.
- Horwitz, F. M. (2017). *The ideological evolution of human resource management a critical look into HRM research and practices*. Bingley, Uk Emerald Publishing.
- Hossain, M. I., Ong, T. S., Tabash, M. I., & Teh, B. H. (2022). The panorama of corporate environmental sustainability and green values: evidence of Bangladesh. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 26(1), 1033–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02748-y>
- Hossain, D., Mansor, Z. D., Mamun, M. A. A., & Saif, A. N. M. (2017). *Inderscience Publishers - linking academia, business and industry through research*. www.inderscience.com.
<https://www.inderscience.com/offer.php?id=124599>
- Hossain, Md. S., & Hamid, Md. K. (2021). Capital Market Performance and Bangladesh's Economy: An Empirical Study. *Global Business Review*, 097215092098224.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150920982247>

- Hou, F., Yu Pyeong Su, Qi, M., Dong, B., & Jia, Y. (2024). A multilevel investigation of the cascading effect of entrepreneurial leadership on employee creativity: Evidence from Chinese hospitality and tourism firms. *Tourism Management*, *100*, 104816–104816. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104816>
- Islam, T., & Asad, M. (2021). Enhancing employees' creativity through entrepreneurial leadership: can knowledge sharing and creative self-efficacy matter? *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/vjikms-07-2021-0121>
- Jafri, D. (2013). *Talent leadership : a proven method for identifying and developing high-potential employees*. American Management Association.
- Joshi, M. (2014). *Meeting the Challenge of Human Resource Management*. Routledge.
- Kevin Peter, S. P. (2021). Individual Learning and Organizational Routine: Emerging Connections. *Organization Science*, *2*(1), 135–139.
- Khan, M. L. (2022). Wage Determination with Special Reference to Role in a Family. *Review of Economic Perspectives*, *11*(1), 37–56. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10135-011-0006-y>
- Kim, M., & Beehr, T. A. (2023). Employees' entrepreneurial behavior within their organizations: empowering leadership and employees' resources help. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijebr-05-2022-0459>
- Kocherlakota, S. D. (2020). Employee Commitment: A Giant Leap in Employee Engagement. *OPUS: HR Journal*, *6*(1).
- Kydd, C. T., & Oppenheim, L. (1990). *Quality in Action*. Wiley.
- Li, P., Sun, J.-M., Taris, T. W., Xing, L., & Peeters, M. C. W. (2020). Country differences in the relationship between leadership and employee engagement: A meta-analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *32*(1), 101458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2020.101458>

- Liu, Y., Lee, J. M., & Lee, C. (2020). *Human Resource Management for Hospitality, Tourism and Events*. Taylor and Francis.
- Liu, J., Zhou, X., & Wang, Q. (2022). The influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee improvisation in new ventures: based on cognitive-affective processing system framework. *Kybernetes*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/k-10-2021-0933>
- Lobo, A. (2007). *The Practice of Managerial Leadership*. Xlibris Corporation.
- Logan, R. W., & Nitta, C. K. (2004). Verification & Validation: Process and Levels Leading to Qualitative or Quantitative Validation Statements. *SAE Transactions*, 113, 804–816.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44700002>
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690200100202>
- Rahid, A. O. (2022). SME FINANCING OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN BANGLADESH: POLICY DIRECTIONS BASED ON SME LOAN BORROWERS' VIEW. *International Journal of Small and Medium Enterprises*, 6(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.46281/ijsmes.v6i1.1831>
- Raihan, S., & Haque Bidisha, S. (2018). *Female employment stagnation in Bangladesh A research paper on Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth in Bangladesh*. https://www.asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EDIG-Female-employment-stagnation-in-Bangladesh_report.pdf
- Reyes, V., Bogumil, E., & Welch, L. E. (2021). The Living Codebook: Documenting the Process of Qualitative Data Analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 53(1), 004912412098618.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124120986185>
- Rhodes, R. (2010). Rethinking Research Ethics. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 10(10), 19–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2010.519233>

- Sultana, H., Kabir, T., & Shareef, M. A. (2023). Performance appraisal practices in Bangladesh: the role of culture. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 28(4), 472. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijicbm.2023.130167>
- Tehseen, S., Johara, F., Halbusi, H. A., Islam, M. A., & Fattah, F. A. M. A. (2021). Measuring dimensions of perceived business success among Malaysian and Bangladeshi SME owners. *Rajagiri Management Journal*, 17(2), 102–124. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ramj-05-2021-0045>

Appendices

Appendix 1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Theoretical Construct	Interview Question	Purpose of Question
Entrepreneurial Leadership	1. Can you describe how leadership within your organization encourages innovation and risk-taking among employees?	To explore how the traits of entrepreneurial leadership (innovation, risk-taking) manifest in organizational practices and influence employee behavior.
	2. How does your leader communicate and reinforce the organizational vision to the employees?	To understand the process of vision articulation by leaders and its impact on employee alignment with organizational goals.
Employee Engagement	1. In what ways do you feel involved in and enthusiastic about your work?	To gauge the level of emotional and cognitive engagement among employees and how it is influenced by leadership practices.
	2. What organizational support do you perceive as most influential in fostering your commitment to the company?	To identify specific organizational supports that enhance employee engagement, reflecting the JD-R model's focus on job resources.
Cultural Context of Bangladesh	1. How do you perceive the influence of Bangladeshi culture on leadership styles and practices in your organization?	To assess the cultural influences on leadership styles and their compatibility with traditional and modern business practices in Bangladesh.
	2. Can you give examples of how communal and collective values within your organization impact your daily work and engagement with the company?	To explore the practical implications of collectivism on employee engagement and daily operations, aligning with cultural theories.