



Employee experience and Employer's Leadership Skills, a case study

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Abstract

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<p>The aim of this thesis was to know more about employee experience, leadership style that can enhance employee experience, and what is the relation of employee experience to employer's leadership skills and abilities. The topic is important due to the globalization, rapid change in employee's mindset, and new work arrangements, especially since the challenge is to develop leaders who can lead the individuals which are eager to grow both personally and professionally. The theoretical framework consists of employee experience and leadership skills. The target organization of this thesis's case study was ABB Marine and Ports division.</p> <p>The objectives of this thesis were twofold. On one hand, it aimed to understand employee experience and leadership skills while on the other hand, it aimed to identify the factors that influence positive employee experience and what are the best leadership style for promoting positive employee experience. Study also focused on knowing what are the best leadership styles and practices that can engage and retain talent while enhancing the employees' experience. The goal of this thesis research was to study factors that contribute to positive employee experience and point out practices that can be done differently to further develop employee engagement. The study was blend of quantitative and descriptive research. Methods used were combination of survey and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive data. The surveys provided quantitative insights that was complemented the descriptive findings.</p> <p>Based on the results, it was found that employers who invest in developing strong leadership abilities enhance positive employee's experience. Organizations should first invest in developing strong leadership abilities and leaders with diverse and comprehensive approach by utilizing various leaderships styles are more effective. It was also realized that businesses need to be mindful of their branding as employers with strong employer brand can draw in, keep talent, improve work happiness, and increase loyalty to the business. Similarly, organizations which are investing in programs that help leaders and managers to develop their abilities and skills promote positive employee experience.</p>
Keywords Employee experience, Leadership skills, employer branding, positive work culture

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1 Introduction

With implications for employee motivation, retention, and organizational performance, employee experience is a crucial construct in the study of organizational behaviour (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton 2001; Spector 1997). Recognition, autonomy, chances for professional and personal growth, and a healthy work-life balance are some of the elements that have been linked to employee experience over time (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 1959; Locke 1976).

Research suggests that effective leadership can improve employee experience by giving employees clear expectations, opportunities for growth and development, and a supportive work environment (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia 2004; Bass 1990). Leadership skills have also been identified as a critical factor in contributing to employee experience. Research on the effects of different leadership philosophies, including transformational, transactional, and servant leadership has been extensively studied in the literature (Bass & Riggio 2006a; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson 2008).

According to studies (Ambler & Barrow 1996; Berthon, Ewing & Hah 2005), a good employer brand may increase employee commitment, engagement, and retention which is interesting parameter which needs further study. According to Kaur (2013), one of the contributing factors to employee experience can be employer branding which attracts a lot of attention as a strategy for attracting and keeping talent. In other words, employer branding is clearly receiving a lot of attention as a method for luring and keeping talent. Kaur (2013) explains businesses are realizing how important it is to project a positive image of themselves as top employers in order to draw in top talent.

1.1 Research purpose

Major goal of this study is to study and understand more about employee experience and leaderships in organizations which can support employee experience. Similarly, one of the study's goals is to investigate the connection between employee experience and effective leadership in well-developed multinational companies. This study is noteworthy for a number of reasons. By analysing the relationship between these dimensions, it first aims to contribute to the research on employee experience and leadership abilities. It also aims to pinpoint the ways in which leadership qualities affect employee happiness and positive experience. For managers and organizations, it also has practical implications since it may aid in a better understanding of the elements that affect employee experience and retention.

1.2 Research questions

1. What are the factors which contribute to positive employer experience?
2. Which leadership skills and abilities are appreciated and result in positive employee experience?
3. To what extent effective leadership and employee experience are related?

1.3 Range and Restrictions

This study will limit its generalizability to other organizations and sectors by concentrating on workers in a single private sector firm. In this case, multinational organization ABB's marine department was chosen as the subject of this thesis' case study.

The Marine and Ports (MP) unit is situated in Helsinki, Finland. For the maritime or shipbuilding industry, the MP unit offers comprehensive power plant and electrical system solutions and services. The maritime sector is a well-known mode of transportation and plays a significant role in economic growth.

The MP unit's electrical system (ES) sales department has been the primary subject of this thesis research. It is unthinkable to overestimate the importance of employee experience in the MP unit's electrical system (ES) sales and sales support department within the framework of this thesis research. The department interacts with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, making it clear how important it is to have a happy and engaged workforce. Strong and capable leadership is essential for retaining staff and creating a happy work environment. For that reason, management team is considered as well for the purpose of this case study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between employee experience and leadership practices in the ES sales and sales support department. It highlights the vital role that effective leadership plays.

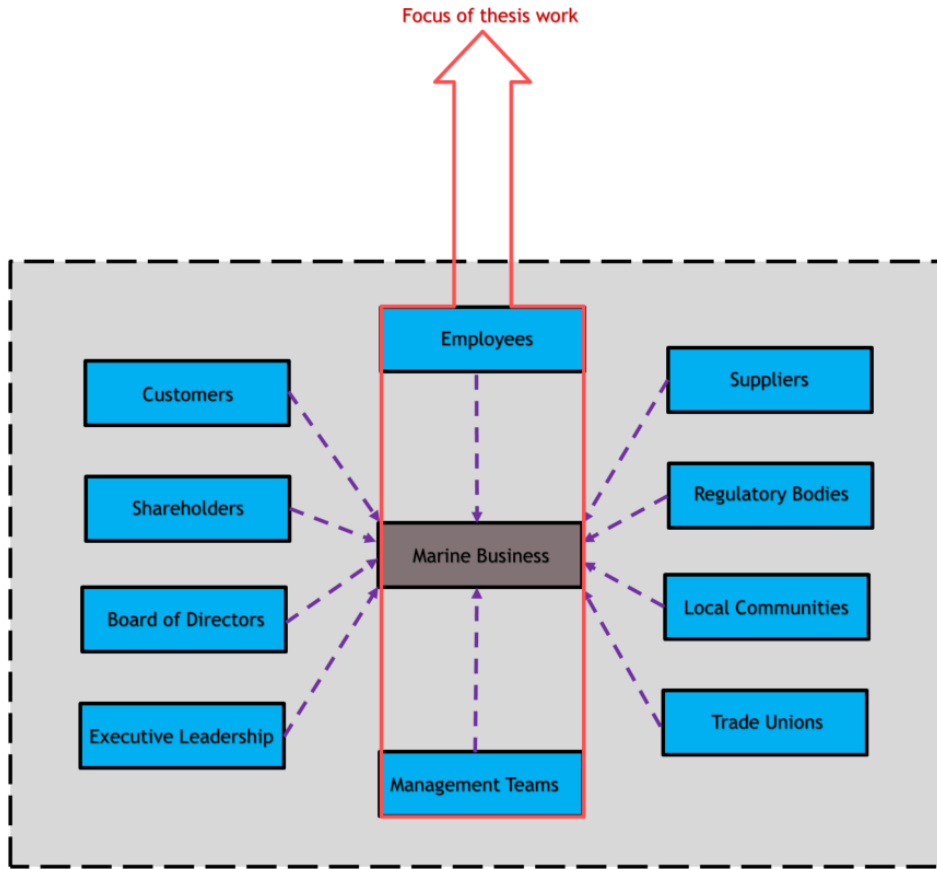


Figure 1: Stake holder mapping in this case organization

2 Theoretical Framework

It is important to study employee experience and leadership abilities especially in modern workplace dynamics. To obtain in-depth understanding of the subject, the literature research was not only based on searches for scientific publications but also on books on employee experience that have been read from the libraries of diverse departments (Engineering, Business, Arts and Design, etc.). Additionally, the snowball approach was used to search for new material relating to the study's topic by first looking through the reference list of previously published articles and research. Handling the literature review in this field comes with its own set of difficulties, and the method used to deal with this complex environment is described in the explanation that follows.

The key to doing efficient online searches was making the most use of keywords. For example, key words like employee experience, job wellbeing, workplace happiness, positive employee experience, work environment, work stress, work life balance, career satisfaction etc have been used to locate academic publications and literature for employee experience. Similarly, the terms and keywords that were frequently used to search literature and publication on leadership included leadership, leadership skills, leadership development, effective leadership, leadership qualities, leadership and management, ethical leadership, etc.

It is crucial to keep in mind that, even with the right keywords, a wealth of literature, studies, and articles can be located online, but their contents may not contain much information related to the topic being searched. Therefore, scanning was necessary to retrieve the necessary data.

The method of carefully reading the material and then determining how it relates to the thesis's topic was used to choose the materials for this thesis. To find facts and literature linked to the study topics, the abstract is first carefully examined. If anything, relevant is identified, the complete document is next carefully read. The year a resource was published was a crucial consideration when choosing literature. A vast array of literature spanning a wide range of publishing years has been chosen to account for the ongoing evolution of topic.

After gathering the literature resources, analysis is carried out by carefully looking over the chosen material to find connected concepts, theories, and subjects. Finding relevance with the research issues of this thesis was a crucial aspect of analysis.

2.1 Employee experience

Comprehending the dynamics between leadership skills and employee experience is crucial for companies and organizations seeking to improve output, employee experience, organizational success and overall performance. To understand more about leadership skills and employee experience, this

chapter explores a number of theoretical stances and empirical research. The discussion combines classic literature with newer theories to provide a thorough understanding of how leadership affects employee experience.

A key element in employee behavior and attitude toward their work is employee experience. An individual's general attitudes and sentiments regarding their employment or work environment are referred to as their level of employee positive experience (Jacob Morgan 2017). There are many theories and models that explain the nature and drivers of employee experience, which has been the subject of much study and research.

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM), put out by Hackman & Oldham (1976), is one of the most well-known models of employee experience. According to this concept, factors including job diversity, task identity, task relevance, autonomy, and feedback all have an impact on how satisfied people are at work. Herzberg's Two-Factor view, which contends that contentment and dissatisfaction are two distinct entities, and that the absence of discontent does not inevitably lead to positive employee experience, is another widely accepted view. According to Herzberg & al. (1959), extrinsic issues like pay and working conditions are more likely to result in job discontent than intrinsic elements like success, recognition, and the work itself.

Numerous studies have looked at the connection between organizational outcomes including turnover, absenteeism, and productivity, as well as work experience. According to study by Harter & al. (2002), for instance, businesses with greater levels of employee experience and engagement had lower turnover rates and were more productive.

Organisations looking to improve output, job satisfaction, and overall success must prioritise the employee experience. The totality of an employee's interactions with their company, from hiring through firing, is referred to as their employee experience (Morgan 2017). This covers a wide range of topics, such as job roles, organisational culture, work environment, leadership style, and opportunities for professional growth (Ben Whitter 2022). Higher levels of engagement, dedication, and motivation can result from a pleasant work experience, and these factors ultimately drive organisational effectiveness and success (Kahn & Kahn 2010).

The notion of employee experience surpasses conventional measures of job satisfaction. It takes a comprehensive approach to the employee's journey inside the company, taking into account social, cognitive, and emotional factors (Kahn & Kahn 2010). This comprehensive strategy recognises that workers are not just co-workers but individuals with specific needs, goals, and difficulties.

Studies have indicated that a positive work experience is associated with various advantageous consequences, including engagement, increased creativity, and enhanced customer

satisfaction(Harter & al. 2002). Positive work experiences increase an employee's likelihood of demonstrating discretionary effort, going above and beyond in their duties, and supporting their company(Cameron & Quinn 2011). On the other hand, a bad employee experience can lead to high turnover rates, absenteeism, and disengagement—all of which can be expensive for businesses.

Leadership abilities and employee experience interact in a very important way. Through a variety of channels, leadership has a significant impact on how employees perceive their work environment (Yukl 2020). A friendly and inclusive work atmosphere, goal setting, performance evaluation, and job design are all influenced by leaders (Northouse 2021). Good leadership may improve the work experience for employees by attending to their specific needs, creating a sense of community, and encouraging career advancement (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002).

It is crucial to explore a variety of theoretical stances and empirical research to comprehend the dynamics of employee experience. Modern ideas and seminal works shed light on the various ways that employee experience is impacted by leadership. Through the integration of these theories, organisations can devise strategies aimed at enhancing the employee experience, hence resulting in increased positive employee experience, motivation, and overall success of the organisation.

2.1.1 Characteristics of employee experience

Employee experience includes the interactions and opinions that workers have about their role, position, organization, and work environment. The work environment, organisational culture, leadership style, and job satisfaction are some of the aspects that affect employee experience. According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is an enjoyable or pleasant emotional state brought on by an evaluation of one's work or experiences at work. Numerous factors, including the nature of the work itself, compensation, chances for advancement, supervision, and connections with co-workers, affect this level of pleasure.

The physical and psychological aspects of the workplace have a big influence on how people view their jobs and companies. A favourable overall employee experience and increased job satisfaction are correlated with a well-organized and supportive work environment (Hackman & Oldham 1976). Furthermore, common values, beliefs, and conventions that make up an organization's culture influence how its members interact and view their positions. Employee engagement and happiness are increased when an organisation has a strong, positive culture that is in line with its values (Schein 2019). The way a leader leads also has a significant impact on the experience that employees have. Positive work environments are fostered by effective leadership that encourages, supports, and recognises staff members. This results in better levels of employee experience and engagement (Fondas & Denison 1991).

Comprehending these attributes facilitates the development of employee experience strategies by organisations, which in turn drives increased output, contentment at work, and overall success.

2.1.2 Literature on employee experience

Self-determination theory (SDT) developed by Ryan & Deci (2000) highlights the importance of intrinsic drive for promoting optimal functioning and well-being. Three fundamental psychological demands are identified by SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Leaders may greatly improve the employee experience by attending to these needs. Giving workers the chance to feel in charge of their work, for example, encourages intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci 2000). Furthermore, employees are more likely to report better levels of engagement and satisfaction when they believe that their competencies are being recognised and cultivated (Gagné & Deci 2005). According to Baard, Deci & Ryan (2004); Ryan & Deci (2000), relatedness—the sense of having a connection to others—is also essential for employee’s wellbeing since it creates a welcoming and encouraging work atmosphere.

Additionally, Van Den Broeck et al. (2008) discovered that meeting employees’ requirements for relatedness, competence, and autonomy predicts their well-being and reduces burnout. This emphasizes how crucial it is to have a workplace that meets these fundamental psychological requirements. Furthermore, Grant (2008) emphasizes that pro-social actions are more likely to be exhibited by employees who have high levels of intrinsic motivation, which supports a positive workplace culture.

Leaders that encourage individual autonomy can improve staff performance and innovation, according to research by Parker (2001). This is because autonomy support fosters employee initiative and creativity in problem-solving techniques. Similarly, positive employee experience and work engagement are positively correlated with job crafting, a proactive behaviour in which workers rework their employment to better suit their interests and strengths, according to a study by Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001). This suggests that in order to address the psychological demands of their workforce, employers ought to support job designing.

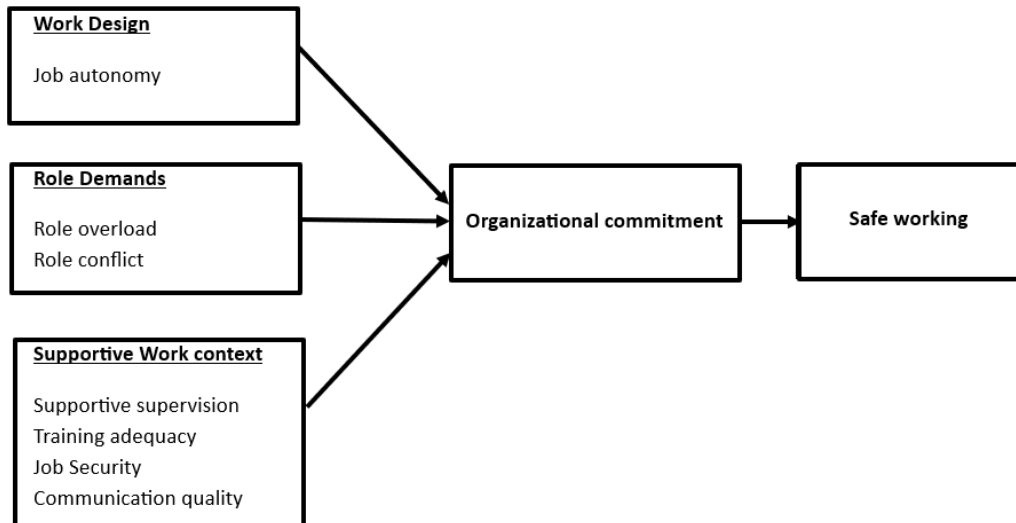


Figure 2: Model of antecedents of safe working (Parker 2001).

Furthermore, across cultures and industries, intrinsic motivation is strongly associated with employee engagement and well-being, according to a meta-analysis by Deci et al. (2017). This suggests that to enhance the employee experience, SDT principles can be successfully incorporated into a variety of organizational processes. Therefore, promoting intrinsic motivation, engagement, and well-being among employees requires attending to their core psychological needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence. A more upbeat and effective work atmosphere can be produced by leaders who comprehend these needs and put methods in place to accommodate them.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) linked employee experience to employer branding. It describes tactics that organizations use to market their value proposition to prospective and existing employees in order to draw in, engage, and retain talent. A robust employer brand can augment job contentment and organisational dedication by harmonising the organization's principles and customs with the anticipations of its workforce. Employee experience and loyalty to the company are enhanced by this alignment, which also gives workers a feeling of pride and belonging (Edwards 2009).

2.1.3 Effect of positive employee experience

Both the organization and the employees can gain a great deal from a positive work experience. Positive work experiences are associated with better levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and organisational commitment among employees (Locke 1976). Consequently, this may result in higher output, lower turnover rates, and an improvement in the general performance of the organisation (Harter & al. 2002). Furthermore, a happy work environment can improve the company's reputation, which will facilitate the recruitment and retention of top employees (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). An organization's performance can be ultimately driven by its staff, which is more motivated,

satisfied, and loyal when its leaders comprehend and actively endeavour to improve the employee experience (Ryan & Deci 2000). For instance, leaders can create an atmosphere where employees feel appreciated and understood by attending to their inherent psychological needs, which include relatedness, autonomy, and competence (Gagné & Deci 2005). Positive work environments can also reduce stress and burnout, which enhances employee wellbeing and promotes long-term commitment to the organization (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter 2001).

A fundamental definition of employee experience is given by Locke (1976), who describes it as an enjoyable or positive emotional state that arises from an evaluation of one's work or work experiences. Numerous elements, such as the work itself, compensation, prospects for advancement, supervision, and co-workers, affect how satisfied one is with their job. According to Locke's value-percept theory, job outcomes that are consistent with personal ideals lead to a sense of satisfaction. Leadership is crucial in determining these outcomes through goal setting, fostering a positive work atmosphere, and in influencing job design. Through goal setting, fostering a positive work atmosphere, and influencing job design, leadership is crucial in determining these results.

Similarly, according to Backhaus & Tikoo (2004), employer branding has great influence on employee experience, and it is the process of cultivating and sustaining an image of the company as a desirable employer in the eyes of both present and future employees. It entails a series of actions intended to promote the company's culture, values, and advantages to potential workers as well as to foster goodwill among current staff members and other stakeholders. As businesses become more aware of the need to recruit and keep top talent to stay competitive, employer branding has grown in importance as a component of human resource management (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). A business may stand out from its rivals and draw and keep top personnel by building a strong employer brand (Cable & Turban 2003). Additionally, it can aid in boosting dedication, work satisfaction, and staff engagement (Ambler & Barrow 1996).

The growth of a strong employer brand may be influenced by a variety of different variables. These include the company's culture, values, mission, and vision as well as its market standing, the caliber of its goods or services, and how it treats its staff Backhaus & Tikoo (2004). Employer referral programs, social media use, training and development efforts, as well as employee referral systems are all common components of effective employer branding strategies (Berthon & al. 2005).

2.1.4 Social identity theory and its role in employee experience

The social identity theory which Tajfel & Turner (2019) present, describes how people get some of their identity from the groups they belong. Strong social identities at work have been linked to higher

levels of motivation, loyalty, and positive employee experience. Through encouraging a feeling of inclusivity, belonging, and a common goal within the company, leaders can help people develop healthy social identities. Activities that foster teamwork, recognition schemes, and open communication can help achieve this.

2.2 Leadership skills

A key factor in determining employee experience, motivation, and general job satisfaction is effective leadership. It demands inspiring and encouraging others to achieve shared objectives in addition to managing and leading them (Bass & Bass 2009). A multitude of ideas and models have contributed to the understanding of how leadership affects employee experience, each providing a different perspective on the actions and characteristics of effective leadership (Northouse 2021).

Theories of leadership offer conceptual frameworks for understanding how leaders may effectively impact their teams. One strategy that has been demonstrated to greatly improve employee experience is transformational leadership, which centres on inspiring and motivating staff members through a clear vision and individualised attention. Transformational leaders cultivate an atmosphere of trust, respect, and admiration by engaging with their staff on a deeper level. Employees are encouraged to surpass their own goals and realise their full potential under this leadership style (Northouse 2021).

Conversely, transactional leadership relies on a system of incentives and sanctions. It may work well to keep things predictable and guarantee compliance, but it frequently fails to foster intrinsic motivation and long-term job happiness and therefore results in negative employee experience (Bass & Riggio 2006a). According to Avolio & Yammarino (2013), proficient leaders frequently combine transformational and transactional tactics, customising their approach to suit the requirements of their team members and the company.

The field of leadership study is evolving, but it still places a strong emphasis on communication, empathy, and emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent leaders are better able to comprehend and control both their own and their team members' emotions. This skill is essential for fostering supportive work environments and solid, healthy connections (Goleman 2013). In short, research on leadership emphasises the complexity of leadership and how much it affects the work experience of employees. Organisations can create strategies that effectively promote employee experience, motivation, and overall well-being by incorporating diverse leadership theories and models. This approach can ultimately result in improved organisational performance and success.

2.2.1 Characteristics of leadership

A variety of qualities and behaviours are included in leadership characteristics, which are crucial for motivating and directing workers. While these qualities might range greatly amongst leadership theories and models, there are some attributes that are always emphasised as essential to good leadership.

Vision

A key quality of successful leaders is their capacity to express a compelling vision in simple terms. A vision gives the organisation direction and purpose, which aids in employees' understanding of the organization's objectives and their part in accomplishing them. By illustrating a desirable future and showing how each person's contributions are essential to achieving that future, leaders with a compelling vision may inspire and motivate their teams (Kotter 2012).

Communication

Excellent communication is yet another essential quality of competent leadership. Leaders need to be able to communicate their objectives, goals, and vision in an understandable and convincing way. In addition to verbal communication, this also entails active listening, giving constructive criticism, and creating a welcoming atmosphere where staff members feel free to voice their problems and ideas. Effective communication keeps everyone on the same page and working towards the same goals. It also helps to establish trust (Yukl 2020).

Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to comprehend and experience another person's emotions (Goleman 2013). Empathetic leaders can foster closer bonds with their staff by genuinely caring about their well-being and taking their opinions into account when making decisions. According to (Goleman 2013), leaders that possess empathy are more expert at providing assistance to their teams, attending to their needs, and fostering a favourable work atmosphere that encourages employee engagement and positive experience.

Motivation and Inspiration

A distinguishing feature of transformative leadership is the capacity to uplift and encourage others. Setting high standards, articulating a compelling vision, and acknowledging and applauding accomplishments are all ways that inspirational leaders enliven their staff. They encourage staff members to pursue greatness and take responsibility for their work by creating a feeling of purpose and

community. Higher levels of dedication, positive employee experience, and general performance follow from this approach (Bass & Riggio 2006b).

Adaptability

Adaptability is a critical quality for leaders in the quickly evolving business world of today. To overcome obstacles and grab opportunities, effective leaders must be adaptable and receptive to fresh perspectives. They must also be able to modify their plans and tactics as necessary. These demands being resilient in the face of failures and proactive in spotting possible problems. Throughout uncertainty and change, adaptive leaders can guide their companies to preserve stability and promote ongoing development (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky 2009).

Good leadership requires a foundation of vision, communication, empathy, inspiration and motivation, and adaptability. Leaders may have a good effect on the work experience by exhibiting these qualities and promoting a culture of high performance, engagement, and trust.

2.2.2 Literature on leadership

Literature on leadership includes a vast range of theories and models that offer profound insights into the factors determining effective leadership and its effect on employee experience. In order to assist organisations in creating strategies that improve both employee well-being and leadership effectiveness, this body of research examines a variety of leadership styles, behaviours, and their results.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

The motivation-hygiene theory, or Herzberg's two-factor theory, makes a distinction between motivators and hygiene factors. Although they don't intrinsically inspire workers, external issues like pay, workplace policies, and working conditions can cause discontent if they aren't handled well. Intrinsic elements that support positive employee experience and higher motivation include possibilities for personal development, accountability, and acknowledgment. Herzberg claims that while motivators can greatly increase employee engagement and satisfaction, hygienic issues can stop dissatisfaction. To create a balanced work atmosphere where employees feel appreciated and secure, it is imperative that a dual strategy be taken (Herzberg & Jason 1968).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Avolio and Bass created the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) which is one of the instruments for evaluating various leadership philosophies and how they affect employee outcomes (Bass & Avolio 2004). Leadership behaviours that are transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire are

measured by the MLQ. It has been demonstrated that transformational leadership, which is typified by qualities like idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and inspirational motivation, is especially successful in improving the employee experience. Employees under the direction of transformational leaders are inspired and motivated to go above and beyond their own goals and attain greater levels of commitment, satisfaction, and performance. On the other hand, transactional leadership—which relies on a system of incentives and penalties—may not promote intrinsic motivation or long-term positive employee experience, but it may be useful in preserving routine operations (Avolio & al. 2004; Bass & Riggio 2006). Similarly, laissez-faire leadership is hands-off style of leadership where leaders avoid making decision, giving up the responsibilities and provide little or no direction to their team, allowing them to make mistakes and learn from them (Bass & Riggio 2006a).

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf originated the idea of servant leadership, which has since been expanded upon other scholars such as Spears (Greenleaf 2002; Spears 2010). It highlights the leader's responsibility to serve others. A culture of empathy, listening, stewardship, and personal development is fostered by servant leaders, who place a high priority on the welfare and development of their staff members. Higher levels of staff engagement, satisfaction, and good organizational behaviour have all been associated with this leadership style. According to Spears (2010) and Van Dierendonck (2011), servant leaders foster an atmosphere where workers feel appreciated and empowered, which results in a more dedicated and effective staff.

Emotional Intelligence in leadership

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a prominent topic of study in leadership. The capacity to identify, comprehend, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others is referred to as emotional intelligence (Goleman 1995; Mayer, Roberts & Barsade 2008). Emotionally intelligent leaders know how to manage connections with others sensibly and sympathetically, which improves their leadership effectiveness. Studies have indicated that emotionally intelligent leaders enhance team cohesion and performance, lower stress levels, and foster a happy work atmosphere. Building solid, supportive work cultures and promoting inclusive work environments require the ability to regulate emotions and demonstrate empathy (Goleman 1995; Mayer & al. 2008).

Recent trends and Integrations

To offer a more thorough knowledge of good leadership, recent leadership literature has placed an increasing emphasis on synthesising these diverse perspectives. For instance, leaders can effectively manage emotions and motivate their staff by combining transformational leadership and

emotional intelligence. Likewise, integrating Herzberg's motivators with the concepts of servant leadership might result in a leadership strategy that attends to the practical as well as emotional requirements of staff members. In today's dynamic work contexts, where demands on leaders are always changing, this integrative approach is crucial (Northouse 2021; Yukl 2020).

The wealth of research on leadership offers insightful information about the qualities, conduct, and approaches that make for effective leadership as well as how these factors affect the employee experience. Organisations can create strong strategies to improve leadership effectiveness by combining traditional ideas, such as Herzberg's two-factor theory, with modern insights on emotional intelligence and servant leadership, as well as instruments like the MLQ. Improved employee engagement, experience, and overall organisational success are the results of this comprehensive approach.

The success of an organization is viewed as being largely dependent on its leadership capabilities. According to (Yukl 2020), it is "the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members." Effective communication, inspiring and motivating others, delegation of tasks, problem-solving, decision-making, and relationship-building are just a few of the talents and attributes that make up leadership.

In-depth research has been done on leadership abilities in organizational literature. Researchers have looked at how leadership affects employee outcomes including loyalty to the business, employee experience, and desire to leave. Additionally, they have investigated the relation between leadership and organizational success, including growth and innovation. Researchers have also looked at how leadership affects employer culture, climate, and transformation.

Trait theory, behavioral theory, contingency theory, transformational leadership theory, and genuine leadership theory are just a few of the several theories of leadership that exist. According to the characteristic hypothesis, a person can be an excellent leader if they possess certain inborn qualities like intellect, charm, and confidence. According to behavioral theory, developing certain characteristics can help develop leaders. According to contingency theory, a leader's effectiveness depends on contextual elements including their leadership style, their followers' personalities, and the needs of the work at hand. According to the principle of transformational leadership, leaders may encourage and inspire their teams to accomplish remarkable achievements. According to the authentic leadership idea, leaders who are self-aware, sincere, and open may foster a productive workplace and encourage follower wellbeing.

It is impossible to exaggerate the value of leadership abilities in the workplace. Increased organizational performance, better employee outcomes, and a healthy work environment may all result from

effective leadership. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to foster and encourage leadership among their staff.

2.2.3 Signs of a good and bad leadership

To influence employee experience and shape the work environment, effective leadership is essential. The traits and actions of leaders have a big influence on whether subordinates succeed in their jobs. Organisations may foster an environment that encourages positive outcomes and resolve problems that may arise from ineffective leadership by being aware of the indicators of both good and bad leadership. Table 1 below highlights major differences in characteristics found in literature which categorize good and bad leaders.

Good leadership	Bad leadership
Empathy	Lack of Mentorship
Emotional Intelligence	Insensitive to Needs
Transparency and Clarity	Lack of clarity
Active Listening	Poor Listening Skills
Vision and Direction	No Clear Vision
Encouragement and Recognition	Lack of Recognition
Delegation and Trust	Over-Control
Personal and Professional Development	No Delegation
Inclusivity	Toxic Culture
Support	Lack of Support

Table 1: Signs of good and bad leadership

Effective managers show a sincere comprehension of the needs, feelings, and viewpoints of their staff members. They foster a climate of trust and support by acknowledging and validating feelings (Goleman 1995). Similarly, navigating interpersonal interactions and managing one's own emotions are attributes of effective leaders. This skill enables individuals to create a productive work atmosphere and react properly to a variety of events (Goleman 1995). Ineffective leaders may fail to offer sufficient direction and assistance, leaving staff members feeling hopeless or unguided. Employees may find it difficult to fulfil goals and advance their careers without the right mentoring (Bass & Avolio 2004). They could reject or overlook workers' requests for assistance, which leads to annoyance and disengagement (Yukl 2020).

Effective leaders communicate with openness and clarity. They make sure that information is shared effectively and that staff members are aware of expectations, changes, and organisational goals (Hackman & Johnson 2013). They actively hear the ideas, opinions, and concerns of the staff and work to address them. Engagement and trust are fostered by this two-way communication (Brownell 2023). On the contrary, ineffective leaders frequently give ambiguous or insufficient information, which causes misunderstandings and misalignment among the group. Employee performance may suffer because of this ambiguity (Hackman & Johnson 2013). They might not respond to criticism or concerns, disregarding them or failing to take appropriate action. This may lead to a breakdown in communication and a decline in trust (Brownell 2023).

Similarly, motivating leaders establish a distinct vision and purpose, coordinating group endeavours with employer objectives. They effectively communicate this vision, inspiring staff to strive towards common goals (Bass & Riggio 2006). They systematically recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of their staff members, offering inspiration and uplifting feedback. Acknowledging the contributions of both individuals and teams raises spirits and promotes sustained excellence (Bass & Avolio 2004). Without a clear vision, a leader may be unable to motivate their group or provide guidance. Employees may therefore experience a lack of motivation and confusion regarding their responsibilities and objectives within the company (Bass & Riggio 2006a). Undervaluing and demotivating workers can result from a failure to recognise or compensate their efforts, which can affect morale and output generally (Bass & Avolio 2004).

Skilled leaders assign tasks to their subordinates, demonstrating faith in their talents. They encourage a sense of autonomy and accountability by giving team members the freedom to decide for themselves and accept responsibility for their work (Yukl 2020). They place a high priority on the training and development of their staff members. Facilitating the professional development of employees enhances their positive employee experience and loyalty to the company (Noe 2018). Incompetent managers tend to micromanage, imposing undue control over every aspect of their employee's work. This undermines employee's confidence and inhibits their ability to be creative and proactive (Noe 2018). If they don't assign work well, it might negatively affect employee trust and limit their ability to take on new tasks and responsibilities (Yukl 2020).

Effective leaders foster an environment that values and respects a range of viewpoints. They uphold equity and justice, making certain that each worker feels valued and involved (Robbins & Judge 2018). They give workers the tools and resources they need to thrive, such as mentorship, direction, and a secure space where they may voice problems and ideas (Greenleaf 2002). Incompetent leaders neglect and they have conflicts. Similarly, favouritism is one of the characteristics of a toxic workplace. These kinds of settings are detrimental to employee wellbeing and teamwork (Robbins &

Judge 2018). Such leaders could foster an environment in which workers feel undervalued, underappreciated, or unsupported. Negative employee experience and high turnover rates may result from this (Greenleaf 2002).

Balancing Leadership Styles

Success in the workplace depends on an understanding of the crucial indicators of both bad and effective leadership. Leaders ought to make an effort to live up to their ideals and always focus on filling in the gaps in their leadership abilities. Organisations may improve employee experience, increase engagement, and boost performance by cultivating an atmosphere of empathy, effective communication, and support.

2.3 Examining how employee experience and employer's leadership skills are related

Recently, there has been attention in the connection between employer branding and employee experience. The two factors have a positive association, as demonstrated by several research (e.g., Berthon & al. 2005; Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

One reason for this connection is that positive workplace culture, which in turn raises employee positive experience, is facilitated by employer branding. Employer branding may also be used to draw in and keep top talent, which can improve positive employee experience among current staff members ((Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Furthermore, employer branding may foster a sense of loyalty and pride among staff members, which can enhance employee experience (Berthon & al. 2005).

The correlation between employee experience and employer branding, however, has been the subject of conflicting findings in various research. For instance, research conducted by Lievens & Highhouse (2003) discovered no connection between the two factors.

Similarly, the importance of leadership abilities in determining employee experience has been acknowledged (Limsila & Ogunlana 2008; Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg & Boerner 2008). Employees who believe their managers are successful leaders have greater levels of positive employee experience, according to Limsila & Ogunlana (2008). Employees who believe their supervisors lack effective leadership abilities, on the other hand, often have lower levels of employee experience (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that having strong leadership abilities has a favorable effect on how positive employees experience are at work. According to Limsila & Ogunlana (2008) and Bass & Avolio (2004), leaders with strong communication skills and the ability to clearly communicate expectations and directives tend to help employees better understand their roles within the company.

This, in turn, increases employee experience. Similarly, supportive leaders who can give constructive criticism and acknowledge employees' accomplishments tend to generate a happy workplace that encourages positive employee experience (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer 1996).

Additionally, transformative leadership has been shown to have a favorable effect on positive employee experience (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008; Judge & Bono 2000). Setting high expectations, offering support and encouragement, and fostering a shared vision are all ways that transformational leaders inspire and drive their teams (Judge & Bono 2000). Due to its capacity to increase employees' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, this form of leadership has been linked to greater levels of employee experience (Limsila & Ogunlana 2008; Eisenbeiss & al. 2008).

Therefore, having strong leadership abilities has a big impact on how happy workers are at work. According to Bass & Avolio (2004) and (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008), leaders who can successfully communicate, give feedback and acknowledgment, and inspire and encourage staff members tend to increase positive employee experience. The potential of transformational leadership to foster a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among employees has also been proven to have a favorable influence on employee experience (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008; Judge & Bono 2000).

2.4 Literature review summary

This chapter examined the employee experience, leadership skills and styles. It also investigated the crucial connection between leadership abilities and employee experience, emphasising how successful leadership raises employee positive experience and organisational success. The first definition of employee experience is the entire spectrum of contacts that workers have with their employer, from the time of hire to the time of leave. Negative employee experiences can result in disengagement and high turnover, while positive experiences are linked to higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and organisational performance. The chapter emphasised how job design, goal setting, and fostering a positive work atmosphere are just a few of the ways that leadership shapes the employee experience. Good leadership attends to the needs of the person, creates a sense of community, and advances career development. The focus of the debate is on how leadership impacts employee experience, integrating contemporary research with influential ideologies. The chapter examined several variables that affect employee experience, such as leadership style, organisational culture and work environment. It highlights the importance of employer's values and culture on employee experience by citing seminal works like Locke's value-percept theory and modern theories on employer branding. The self-determination theory's role in intrinsic motivation is also covered,

emphasising how leaders who foster relatedness, competence, and autonomy can raise employee engagement. The leadership literature is analysed from a number of angles. The positive influence that transformational leadership has on employee experience is well-known. It centres on inspiring and motivating employees. On the other hand, transactional leadership is said to be better at handling repetitive duties than it is at promoting long-term contentment. Successful leaders are known to possess important characteristics like emotional intelligence and empathy, which they utilise to forge meaningful connections and foster a supportive work atmosphere. A comprehensive approach to leadership was created by integrating many ideas and models, while the chapter also examined current trends in leadership. This entailed merging the concepts of servant leadership with Herzberg's motivators and transformational leadership with emotional intelligence to meet the practical as well as emotional demands of staff members. In conclusion, good leadership greatly affects employee experience by fostering a positive and stimulating work environment. Organisations can enhance worker motivation, contentment, and productivity by utilising several leadership theories and traits.

3 Study Design and Data Collection in Research

3.1 Research Strategy

This study's research methodology is blend of both quantitative and qualitative nature. This case study was performed with survey questionnaires as part of quantitative approach while the study also followed semi-structured method to proceed with interviews conducted on focus group. Therefore, in addition to survey, interviews with open ended questions were also conducted.

This study utilized a survey instrument to evaluate the leadership abilities and employee experience within the case study organization ABB. The survey instrument was created to assess leadership abilities and employee experience using standard scales and measurements. On a Likert scale, participants were asked to score how much they were satisfied, agree or disagree with numerous statements connected to these topics.

Figure 3 Figure 3: Detailed view of research process below presents the framework for the case study. Based on the theoretical framework, questions for both survey and interview were made carefully which was the major part of the study. Assessment was carried out at every phase of the study process and results and observations were collected to offer suggestions for reflective learnings.

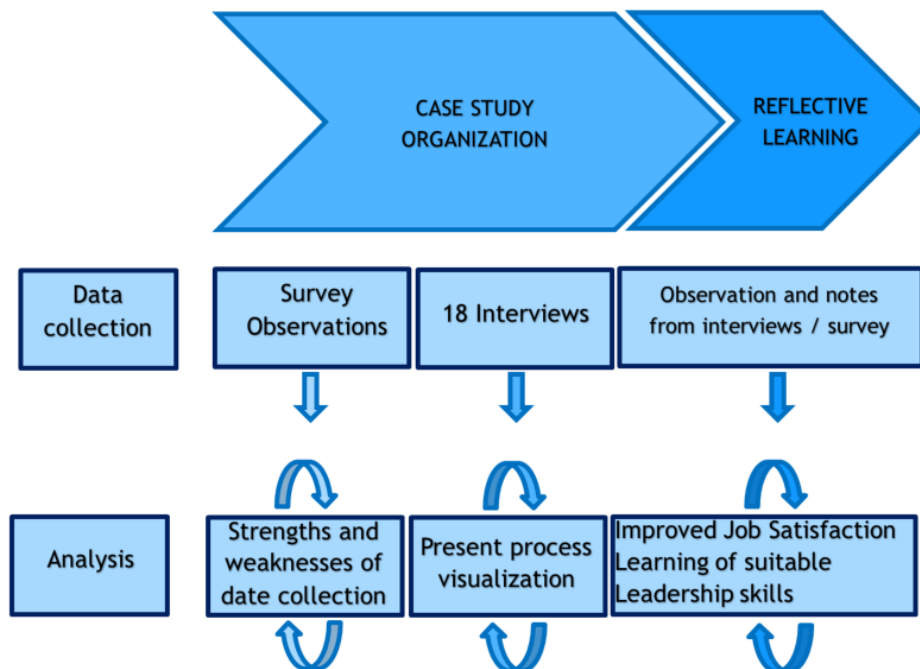


Figure 3: Detailed view of research process

3.2 Research design

This study's research design is cross-sectional in nature. The goal of a cross-sectional design is to describe the connections between variables at a certain moment in time by gathering data at that point in time (Bryman 2016). A sample of employees from different teams in the organization was given the survey questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used to choose the sample. According to availability and desire to participate, individuals were chosen for convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling approach (Bryman 2016).

A secure survey platform was used to administer the survey online. The survey was accessible to participants through a link and invitations were sent via email. Participants had a certain amount of time to complete it. It took about 10 minutes to finish the survey. Similarly, open ended questions were organized which were asked in interviews. These questions for both survey and interviews were made based on the intensive literature review done. At the end of the survey, there was a question for participants if they would like to participate in the interviews as well and only interested candidates were invited for interviews. Utilizing descriptive statistics, the survey and interview data was examined.

3.3 Data Gathering Techniques

A survey tool and interviews with open ended questions were used to gather the data for this investigation. The survey instrument was created to assess leadership abilities and employee experience using validated scales and metrics. On an extended Likert scale, participants were asked to score how much they agree or disagree with various statements connected to research topics. Also, organized open ended questions explained more about the research topic in depth.

A secure survey platform was used to administer the survey. Email lists from several professional teams was used to find and reach participants. The sample was made up of professionals from different teams but performing similar roles and responsibilities.

The survey instrument in the form of email went through a pilot testing phase with a limited sample of respondents to guarantee the integrity of the data gathered. Before the survey was given to the whole sample, the pilot testing phase was assisted to uncover any problems with the survey instrument, such as unclear or confusing questions. Adjustments were done accordingly in order to start the final complete survey.

Open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews were intended to elicit more in-depth and complex responses from survey respondents, which could be useful for understanding their views and experiences more thoroughly. Each participant was asked for informed consent before the start of

interview. The goal of the study was voluntary nature of participation, and the steps taken to maintain the confidentiality of the data was explained in the consent form.

Open-ended questions sometimes took longer to evaluate than survey questions with pre-defined response alternatives, which was a vital part of the study. The following list of close ended questions in Table 2 below which were summarized for survey were sent to selected participants and response were collected anonymously,

Survey questions	
1	How pleased are you with your current employment, on a scale of 1 to 10?
2	Do you believe that your professional obligations fit with your abilities and interests?
3	Are you confident that your present job allows you to maintain a healthy work-life balance?
4	Would you suggest your employer to a friend or member of your family?
5	Do you believe you receive a fair wage for the work you do?
6	Do you think your immediate supervisor has effective leadership qualities?
7	Does your management frequently give you constructive criticism and feedback about how you're doing?
8	How do you think your leaders handle employee feedback and open communication?
9	Are you happy with your organization's prospects for leadership development as part of professional growth?
10	Do you think your team leader/s provide example for others to follow?
11	Do you take pride in representing the brand of your employer?
12	Are you certain that the branding of your business appropriately reflects its culture and values?
13	Do you believe that your work experience is influenced favourably by the brand reputation of your employer?
14	Do you believe that your employer branding helps potential workers form a favourable opinion of your business?
15	Did the reputation of your firm influence your decision to engage with organization?
16	Are you willing to participate in interview? Interview will be confidential and its voluntary.

Table 2: Survey questions selected for this case research based on literature review

Open ended interview questions which were composed after thorough theoretical framework and were asked from selected employees to gather data are listed in Table 3 below,

Interview questions	
1	Could you give an example of a period when you were very happy with your work? What gave you that feeling?
2	What, in your view, are some of the most important elements of a great employer brand?
3	What attributes do you believe a leader has to have in order to foster a productive workplace?
4	Can you recall an instance when your interaction with a manager or supervisor negatively affected you? What took place, and how did it make you feel?
5	What alterations or enhancements do you believe your company may do to better support with positive employee experience and general well-being?
6	What do you think of the current initiatives your company is doing to support employee's positive experience and wellbeing? What, in your opinion, is effective and what needs improvement?
7	Can you provide an example of a period when you were really unhappy with your work? What elements played a part in your dissatisfaction?
8	Can you identify specific activities or traits that you associate with effective leadership in the workplace? What, in your opinion, makes a leader successful in fostering a positive work environment and employee experience?
9	What part, in your view, does employer branding play in determining the nature of the employee experience? How does it affect overall employee engagement?
10	What are some of the biggest obstacles you perceive in your organization's efforts to foster employee wellbeing and employee experience? What solutions come to mind as you consider them?

Table 3: Interview questions selected for this case research based on literature review

These inquiries were intended to generate a variety of viewpoints and experiences about leadership, employee experience and overall wellbeing in order to produce rich data for the study.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The target population, sample size, and techniques for participant selection were all determined by the sampling strategy, which is a crucial feature of every research project. A stratified random sample

strategy was utilized for this study to ensure that participants are chosen from a variety of teams and work positions.

According to Mills, Durepos & Wiebe (2009), stratified random sampling is a technique that divides the population into several subgroups based on distinct criteria, such as job function or industry, and then randomly selects participants from each category. By lowering the possibility of bias, this method helped to ensure that the sample is representative of the entire population.

Employees from various teams and job roles was the study's target audience. To maximize the generalizability of the results, participants were chosen from a variety of teams. The idea of saturation was used to establish the sample size, which contends that data collecting should continue until no new data or themes are discovered.

Individuals who were currently employed and have held their current employment for at least six months met the inclusion requirements for participation. People who just joined the organization or who intend to depart soon were excluded from consideration.

An online survey was used to gather data, and it was made available to potential participants through email. Participants were free to leave the survey at any moment, and it was anonymous and voluntary.

3.4.1 Survey phase

The survey was sent via email to all fifty randomly selected participants from various teams after sending a generic email, and 39 informants replied to all the sixteen questions before the deadline. The survey was done anonymously in order to collect as many truthful answers as possible. The survey questions and answers can be found in **Appendices**. The objective of the survey was to gain deeper insight, to know about their employee experience related to their job, roles and responsibilities, working methods, work experience, influence of employee branding and their level of satisfaction with leadership abilities of their line managers which can be later studied and evaluation in depth in interview phase.

3.4.2 Interview phase

The major and final study after survey in this study procedure was interview phase, and 17 relevant people were interviewed who showed willingness in survey questionnaire. In addition to knowing about the employee experience of employees at ABB, understanding leadership skills and styles used by leaders at ABB, visualizing the ABB current employee branding and working procedure including leadership demands was the goal of these conversations. Interviews were conducted with

in Marine and ports (MP) unit, the Electrical Solutions (ES) sales support department, engineering department, project management department, R&D, and the machine factory, all of which are involved in marine and port business growth.

The interview sequence is adhered to as shown in Figure 4. To develop a better understanding of the employee experience and leadership skills, relevant departments were first consulted for information regarding the leadership qualities they expect, and overall employee value in the MP unit. Interviews with representatives from the MP unit's various teams were conducted for this reason to gain knowledge of employee overall wellbeing and employee experience and how it was affected by leadership abilities (Project management, R&D, Engineering, Design). Following the completion of data collection, members of the ES sales and sales support team who were involved at leadership roles were questioned to learn more about their role in the process of developing solutions.

Later, interviews were conducted with personnel from Machine Factory to gain insight into their perspective who are more closely involved with products and with the customer to extent.

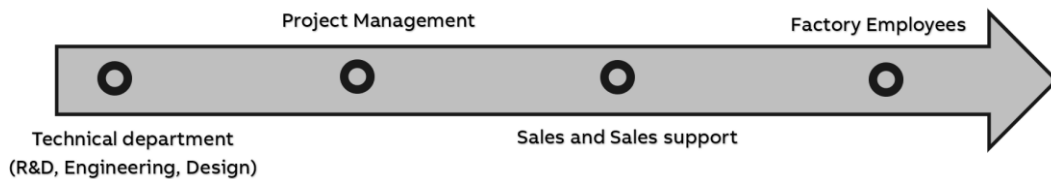


Figure 4: Interviewing process order

The primary goal of the interviews was to gain better understanding to confirm the survey results and how leadership abilities vary from higher roles to the bottom. Notes and observations were made while conducting interviews. These were semi-structured interviews, and the blueprint was created using the interview notes.

Department	No of persons	Designation	Experience in Organization (years)
Project management	2	Project manager	10-18
Design	1	Design engineer	3-6
R&D	2	R&D engineer	6
Engineering department	2	Lead engineer	9
Engineering department	2	Product responsible	2-5
Project Execution	1	Commissioning engineer	6-9
ES Sales support	3	Technical Bid manager	8
ES Sales support	1	Sales support engineer	2
Sales department	2	Sales manager	9
Factory employees	1	Blue-collar employee	17-25

Figure 5: Details of interviewed employees

A list of interview questions was produced; however, it was fully adhered to and has been significantly modified in accordance with needs. After a few interviews, these questions were refined and included in section 3.3. These questions were not disclosed to interview subjects in advance to extract profound insights; however, a general outline of the interview procedure and schedule was included in the meeting invitation. Since the researcher is interviewing its own colleagues, the "getting to know" portion of the interview was not necessary in some cases, and the average interview lasted 30- 45 minutes.

Seventeen employees participated in the interview before the given deadline. All the employees who participate in the interviews were currently living in Finland. Each interview started with a generic open-ended question, such as how their day was, how was their summer holiday or how has their week started. Later, open ended questions listed in section 3.3 were asked. Interview durations lasted between 40-60 minutes. Interviews were conducted in October and November 2023.

3.5 Data Evaluation

To investigate about leadership, leadership skills and employer experience within the case study organization ABB, the collected data was subjected majorly to descriptive analysis. It is worth mentioning that survey data was kept more at the surface level as more descriptive data was available from intensive interview sessions.

To investigate the influence of leadership qualities, employee experience and their relation, pie charts were made to present survey results while descriptive analysis was used to conclude interviews.

4 Data Analysis: Findings and Results

This chapter presents the results of the two different research methods. The first stage of the research was a survey with close-ended questions. The second phase was interviews conducted based on the results of survey and open-ended questions were asked in these interviews. The results include findings based on the researcher's personal knowledge, theory and experience of the topic.

4.1 Survey findings and results

The survey was based on answering each question between 1 to 10, data was gathered anonymously, and personal information was not collected. The response 1 meant to be strongly disagree/not satisfied while 10 meant strongly agree/satisfied. Moreover, for the sake of keeping organizational confidentiality, results for each question displaced in this research is only presented as satisfied/agreed (response between 6-10) and unsatisfied/disagree (response between 1-5). Survey was conducted in September 2023. The following are the findings based on the survey responses.

4.1.1 Overall employee experience

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 represents the greatest degree of positive experience, respondents were asked to assess their overall level of employee experience in the first question of survey. Participants' average score was 7.5, which suggests a generally good attitude. A closer look at the scores shows that 52% of participants gave their experience an 8 to 10, indicating that a sizeable percentage of workers are very happy in their present positions. Furthermore, only 26% of participants rated their experience below 5, showing a comparatively lower degree of positive employee experience for this sample of respondents. Meanwhile, 23% of participants ranked their score between 6 and 7, indicating a moderate level of contentment. These differences in answers demonstrate the range of employee experience levels among employees and provide the way for more research into the variables affecting various employee's assessments of employee experience.

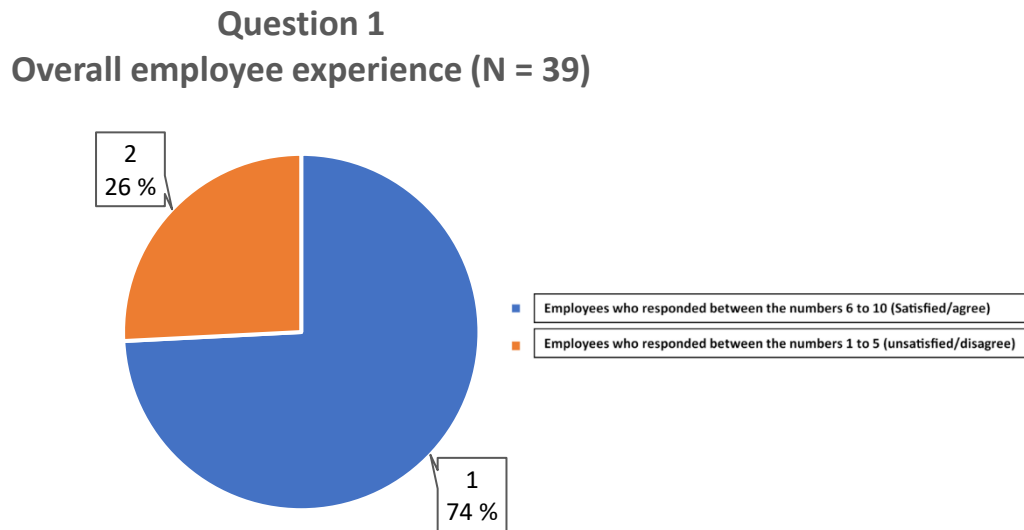


Figure 6: Survey response to question 1, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.2 Work-life balance and profession fit

A noteworthy 65% (score with 6 or above) of participants said, in answer to Question 2, that they felt their professional responsibilities were in line with their skills and interests. This implies that a significant proportion of workers perceive a feeling of consistency and congruence between their abilities, passions, and the duties assigned to them in their positions. Fostering a feeling of purpose and engagement in the workplace requires this kind of synergy.

Question 3, which dealt with work-life balance, 81% of participants expressed confidence that their current employment enables them to maintain a good work-life balance. This result suggests that workers have a favorable opinion of the company's efforts to assist them in striking a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives.

The responses show that most participants feel satisfied with their jobs since they align with their interests and skill set. Furthermore, the assurance in preserving a positive work-life balance raises the possibility that the company's procedures and policies are successful in fostering employee well-being. To have a better knowledge of employee experiences, further research into certain factors impacting this alignment and balance would be helpful.

Question 2
Work-life balance and profession fit (I) / (N = 39)

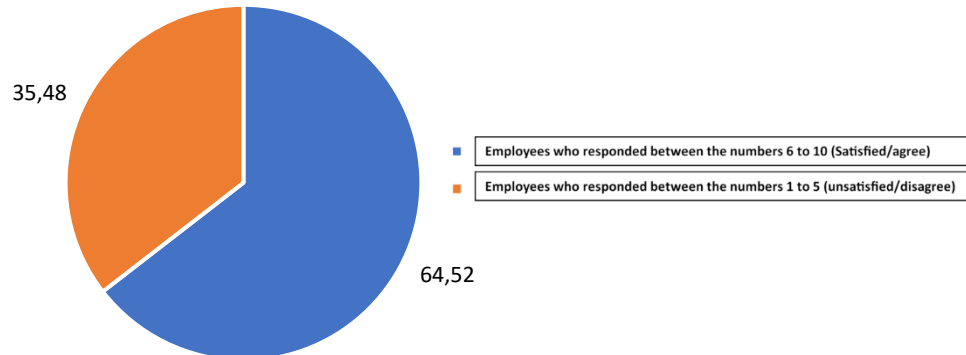


Figure 7: Survey response to question 2, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

Question 3
Work-life balance and profession fit (II) / (N = 39)

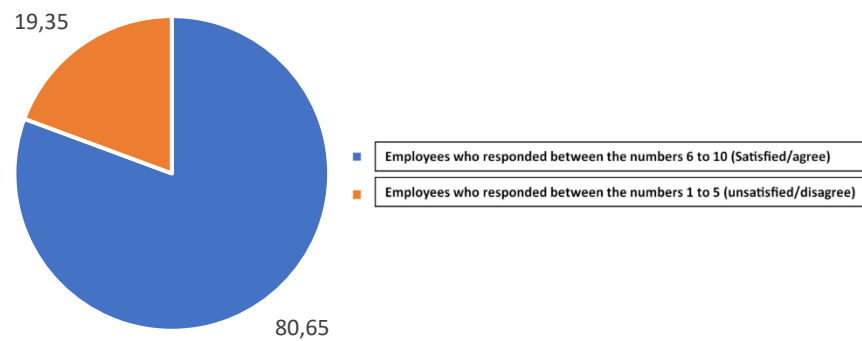


Figure 8: Survey response to question 3, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.3 Positive employee experience and referral potential

When asked whether employees would recommend their present job to friends or family, a strong 61% of respondents said that they would recommend it. This positive attitude points to a high degree of employee happiness and contentment since people tend to promote organizations where they feel fulfilled and have good working circumstances. Examining the elements that lead to this

recommendation's potential might provide important information about the parts of the organization that employees find appealing.

Question 4
Positive employee experience and referral potential (N = 39)

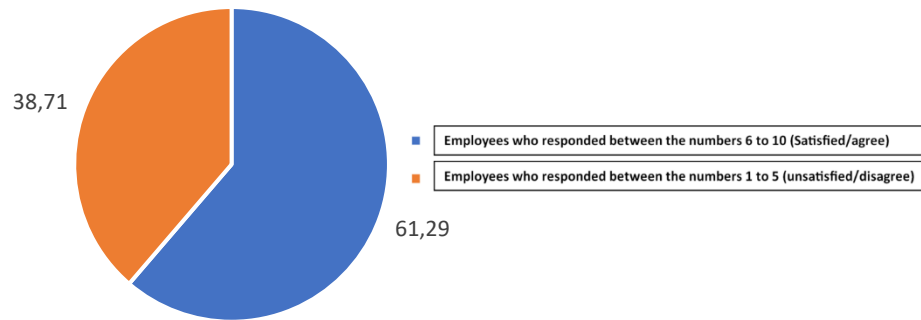


Figure 9: Survey response to question 4, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.4 Fair Wage Perception and Compensation satisfaction

Examining participants' attitudes of fair remuneration, this question revealed that 71% of respondents were confident they are paid fairly for their services. This result clarifies the connection between total employee positive experience and pay satisfaction. Organizations looking to improve employee satisfaction via competitive and equitable pay systems might benefit from more research on the aspects impacting workers' views of fair compensation, such as internal equity and market standards.

Question 5
Fair wage perception and compensation
satisfaction (N = 39)

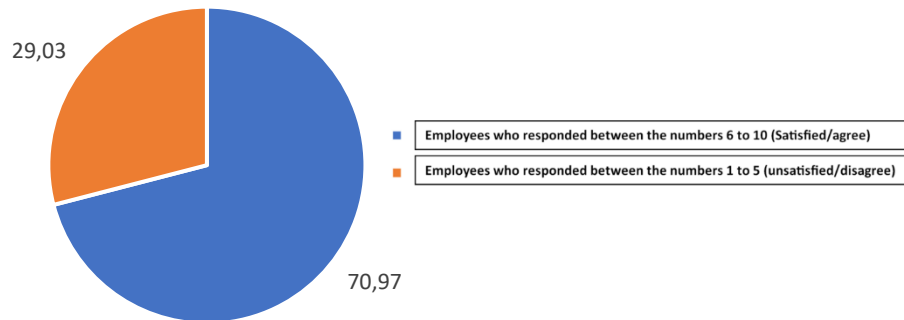


Figure 10: Survey response to question 5, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.5 Leadership of line-managers and Feedback

In response to Question 6 about immediate supervisors, 71% of participants said they saw effective leadership traits in their immediate supervisors. This favorable opinion shows that a sizable segment of the workforce believes their direct supervisors encourage and mentor them. This degree of effective leadership is critical in determining overall workplace morale and positive employee experience.

Regarding Question 7, which examines the feedback culture within the company, it's interesting to observe that 65% of participants said they routinely get helpful criticism and feedback. This data indicates that a sizable portion of workers believe they get frequent updates regarding their performance, underscoring an open communication culture at work. Frequent feedback fosters a feeling of continual progress, which may have a good influence on an employee's positive experience and is essential for professional advancement. The sum of the answers to these questions highlights the significance of constructive criticism in creating a good work environment and the need of strong supervisory leadership. Additional research on certain leadership attributes that staff members find beneficial as well as the kind of feedback that is given may provide important information about how best to optimize leadership practices within the company.

Question 6
Leadership of line-managers and Feedback (I)
 /(N = 39)

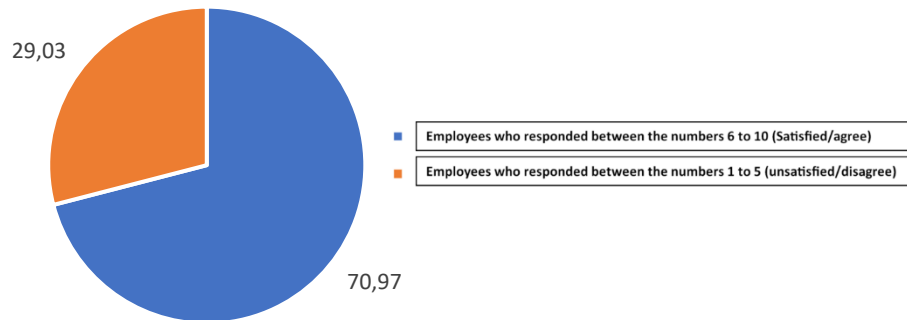


Figure 11: Survey response to question 6, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

Question 7
Leadership of line-managers and Feedback (II)
 /(N = 39)

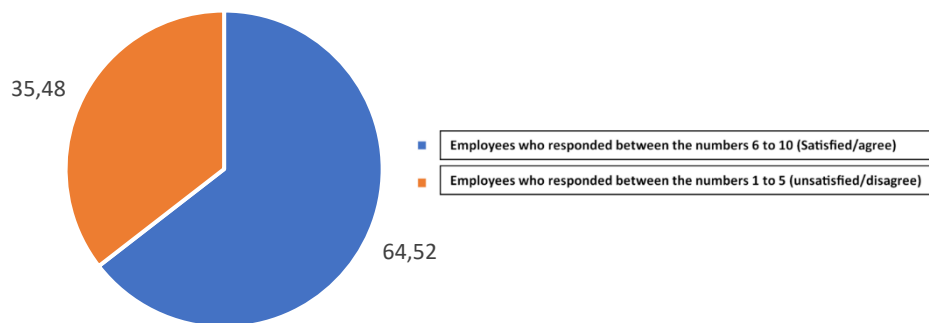


Figure 12: Survey response to question 7, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.6 Staff Input and Honest Communication

The survey findings show a good trend in relation to response to this question, which asks about organizational leaders' management of employee feedback and open communication. Of those surveyed, almost 65% expressed satisfaction with the way their leaders manage staff criticism and promote candid communication inside the company. According to this research, a sizable segment

of the workforce believes that they work in a transparently communicative and encouraging workplace where their perspectives are appreciated.

This aspect's positive emotion fosters a feeling of inclusion and cooperation, which in turn adds to overall positive employee experience. However, the poll also showed that 35% of respondents had reservations or displeasure with the way their leaders handled communication and employee input. To strengthen leadership practices and foster a more welcoming and open workplace culture, additional research into the particular issues and opportunities for development mentioned by this subgroup of respondents was needed.

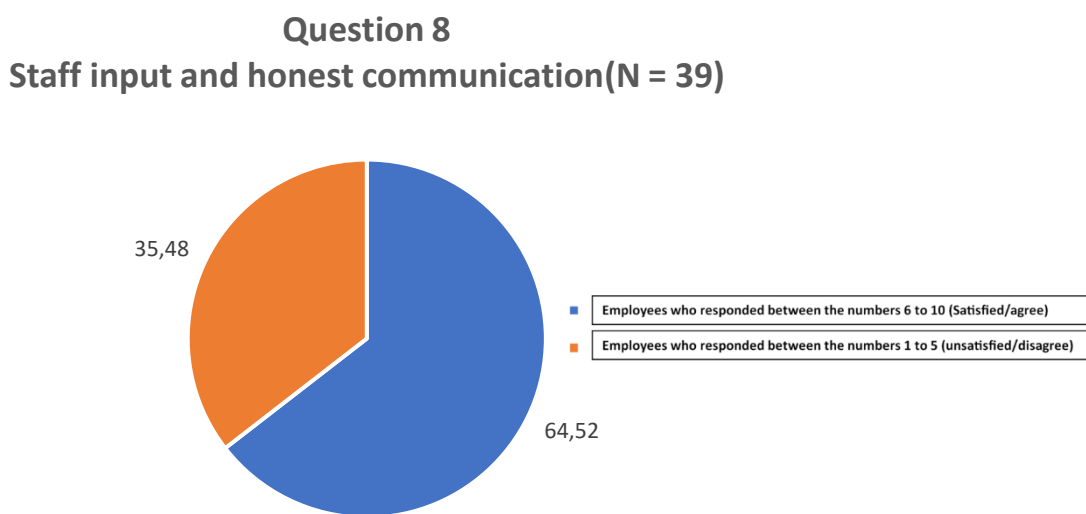


Figure 13: Survey response to question 8, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.7 Organizational Prospects and Leadership Development

Of those who answered Question 9, which explores professional and leadership development, 61% said they were happy with the opportunities for leadership development in their business. This implies that a considerable segment of the employees has a favorable opinion of the prospects for career progression offered by the company. Employers that make leadership development investments often see an increase in their workforce's motivation and engagement.

In response to Question 10, which asked respondents whether they thought that the leaders of their organizations set a good example for others to follow, 65% of respondents said that they did. This view is important because leaders who exhibit the attitudes and conduct expected of them inside the company or organization may have a good impact on the work culture, which raises positive employee experience. These results demonstrate the importance of leadership development programs

in affecting workers' views of their company's dedication to supporting professional development as well as their level of employee experience. Examining certain facets of leadership development initiatives and the characteristics that staff members find excellent in leaders would provide practical knowledge for improving leadership practices inside organizations.

Question 9
Organizational prospects and Leadership development (I) / (N = 39)

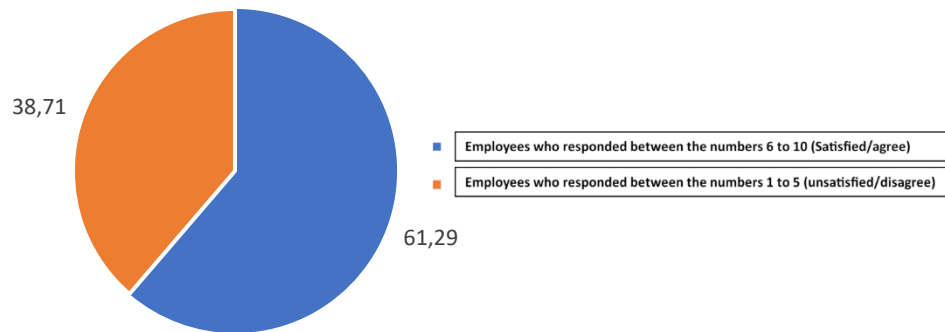


Figure 14: Survey response to question 9, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

Question 10
Organizational prospects and Leadership development (II) / (N = 39)

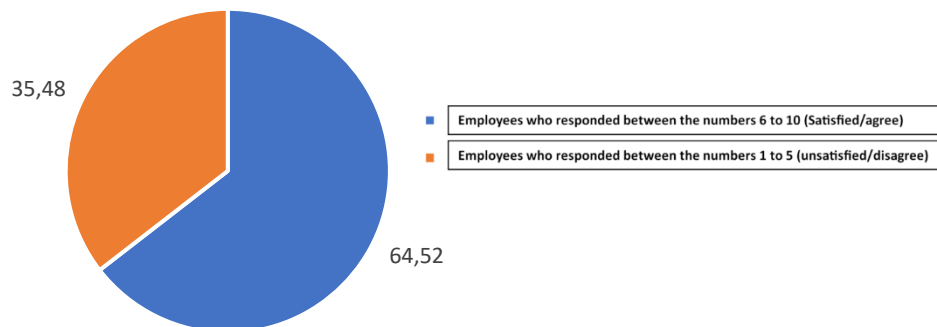


Figure 15: Survey response to question 10, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.8 Employee Pride and Brand Representation

In reference to brand representation, the survey revealed that 58% of respondents said they were proud of the way they represented their company's brand. This encouraging recognition shows that there is a strong connection between workers and the company brand, which has a beneficial impact on workplace engagement and culture. Organizations may improve overall employee happiness and commitment by harnessing the components of their brand that generate pride and reinforcing them. Especially in the case of organization in study has a lot of room to develop in this area.

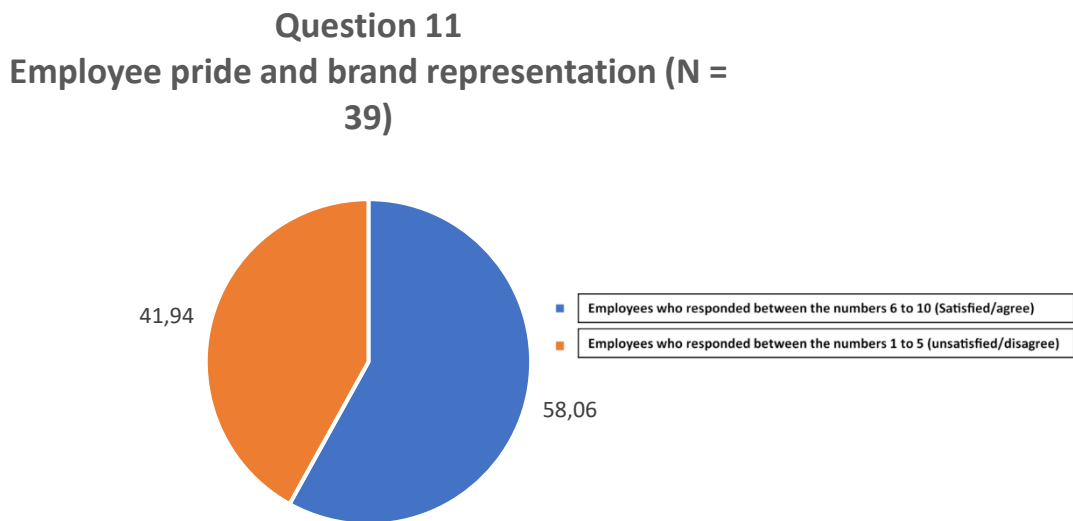


Figure 16: Survey response to question 11, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.9 Branding in Harmony with Values and Culture

In response to this question, which addressed how branding should be in line with employer culture and values, 68% of participants favored that they were satisfied that their company's branding was suitable. This view emphasizes how crucial it is for internal employer identity and outward brand portrayal to match. Organizations may refine their branding strategy to create a genuine and appealing image that reflects employee views and promotes a good work environment by examining certain components of the brand that workers feel truly represent the culture and values.

Question 12
Branding in Harmony with values and culture (N = 39)

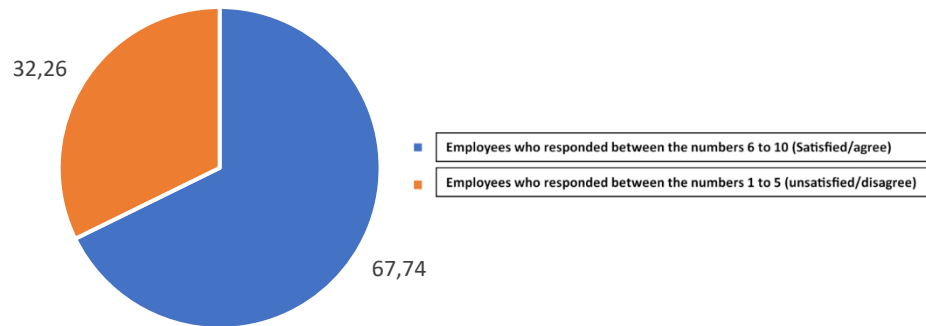


Figure 17: Survey response to question 12, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.10 Employee experience and employer branding

Question 13 examined the relationship between employer branding and employee experience, finding that 65% of respondents thought their firm's reputation had a positive effect on their level of overall work experience. This result emphasizes how the public perception and standing of the company influence the psychological health and employee experience of its staff. A strong employer brand may foster a feeling of community and pride among employees.

Regarding Question 14, which asks about the impact of employer branding on prospective employees, 68% of participants said that their employer branding contributes to potential employees developing a positive impression of the company. This impression implies that staff members have a favorable opinion of employer branding initiatives and are aware of their potential to draw in and retain talent. The afore mentioned comments highlight the mutual dependence between organization's branding, employee contentment, and talent acquisition. Companies that have a strong and favorable brand image make themselves seem like desirable employers to potential talent as well as improve work satisfaction among current employees. Organizations may refine their branding strategy for optimal effect by delving further into certain components of employer branding that workers find significant.

Question 13
Job satisfaction and employer branding (I) / (N = 39)

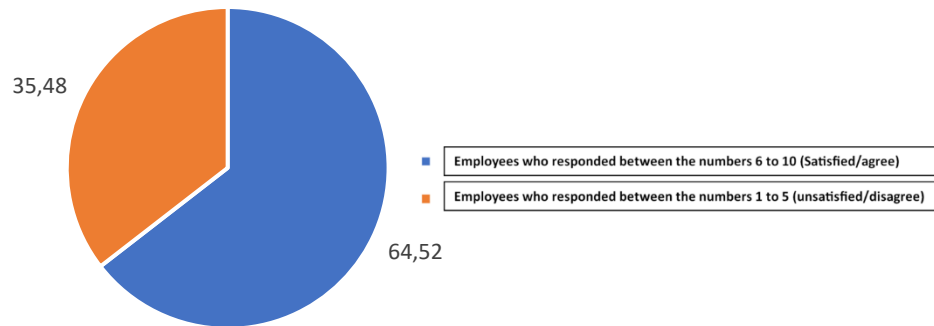


Figure 18: Survey response to question 13, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

Question 14
Job satisfaction and employer branding (II) / (N = 39)

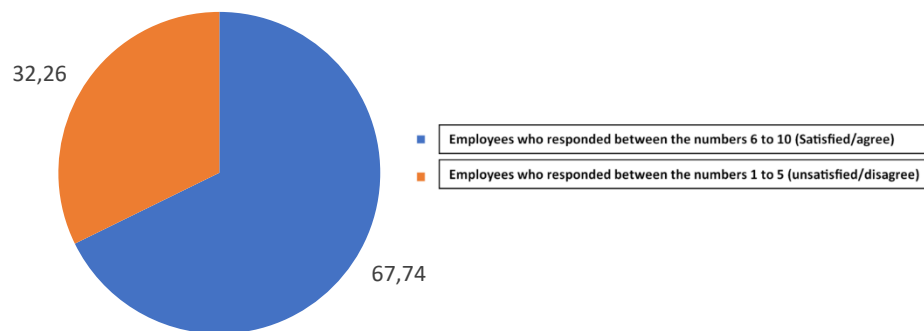


Figure 19: Survey response to question 14, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.11 Influence of Reputation

The question examined the impact of an organization's reputation on employee retention by looking for worker's choice to stay with the business was influenced by the firm's reputation. Based on their

answers, 61% of participants said that the company's reputation affected their decision to remain employed in the current organization. This indicates that a sizeable segment of the workforce bases their choice to stay employed on the organization's overall reputation and image. Companies with a good and solid reputation draw in fresh talent and help hold on to current staff members who appreciate working for a respectable company.

Analyzing the particular facets of the company's image—such as reliability, moral behavior, or prominence in the field—that affected the choice to remain provided insightful information for businesses looking to improve their staff retention tactics. Having a solid understanding of the elements that make up a great company reputation helps direct initiatives to raise employee commitment and overall positive employee experience.

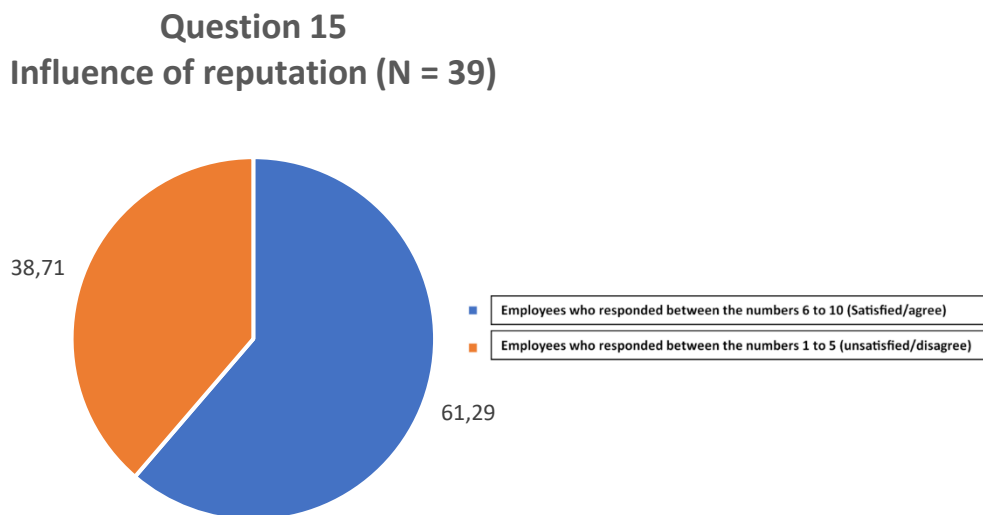


Figure 20: Survey response to question 15, blue area representing survey response between 6-10 while orange colour represents response between 1-5.

4.1.12 Desirability to Take Part in an Interview

The poll findings showed a mixed answer to Question 16, which asks participants whether they would be willing to participate in an interview. About 55% of participants said that they would be willing to take part in an interview, indicating that workers are generally prepared to discuss their experiences and viewpoints in a private situation. This openness to participate in interviews may provide insightful qualitative information and a more comprehensive comprehension of people's experiences inside the company.

It's interesting to note, however, that 45% of participants expressed hesitation or a lack of desire to take part in interviews. Comprehending the underlying causes of this hesitancy might be essential in managing any issues pertaining to trust, secrecy, or other elements that could influence workers' openness in sharing their opinions. Companies could think about stepping up their communication to reassure staff members of the interviews' voluntary nature and secrecy. This will help to create a more favorable atmosphere for collecting insightful qualitative data. All the respondents who showed their willingness to interview were interviewed later.

Question 16
Response of participants interested in interviews
(N = 39)

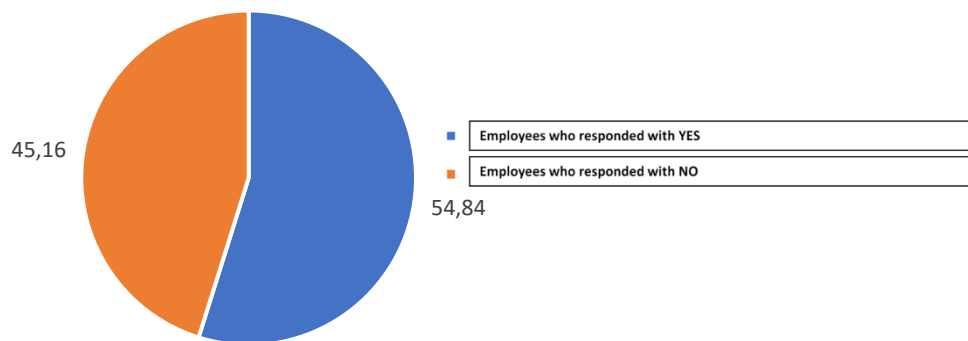


Figure 21: Survey response to question 16, blue area representing survey response with YES while orange colour represents response With NO.

4.2 Findings from Interviews

Interviews were very crucial part of study after getting useful information from survey feedback. Following were the findings from the interviews,

4.2.1 Employee Experience at Work

In answer to Question 1, participants gave a variety of instances of times when they felt very happy with their jobs. These incidents often included noteworthy achievements, praise, and harmonious team chemistry. Following were some of the sample reactions from the respondents in interviews,

Receiving rewards: One participant mentioned that

“My line manager offers small bonus and certificate of appreciation for my excellent achievements and that makes me not only feel good but improves my daily motivation to work hard and come up with better results.”

Project Achievement: A lot of employees mentioned reaching certain goals or successfully finishing projects made them feel very happy. There were recurring themes in the accomplishments: achieving deadlines, exceeding performance standards, and getting good feedback from customers. One of the employees mentioned that

“it’s a special feeling when you achieve certain deadline and my expectations of getting the positive feedback is received.”

Appreciation and Recognition: Some employees emphasized the significance of acknowledgment in promoting work happiness. Their favorable work experiences were mostly attributed to receiving recognition for their efforts, creativity, and willingness to go above and beyond in their professions.

Teamwork: It was found that having a positive team chemistry was another important component. Efforts to collaborate, efficient cooperation, and a positive work atmosphere were highlighted as elements of a happy workplace. The discussion shed light on the elements that go into having a great work experience, highlighting the importance of accomplishment, acknowledgment, and a supportive team atmosphere in raising positive employee experience. The components help to understand that strategies to establish a work environment that promotes employee engagement and employee experience are major areas for employers to target. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that

“I love the way whole team works together, of course, it’s not that easy to physically sit together and go through the projects together like we used do before covid-19, however, I would say that the work I do is not possible without team effort. My team is not only supporting, but we also celebrate the achievements together.”

4.2.2 Components of an Excellent Employer Brand

Participants were asked to discuss what they believed to be the key components of a strong employer brand. The answers, which represented the expectations and priorities of the participants, emphasized a several crucial elements that support a strong employer brand, some of the major ones are as follows,

Positive Work Culture: The significance of a positive work culture was a recurring issue. Workers appreciated working in a welcoming, encouraging, and cooperative atmosphere where they had a feeling of community and common purpose.

“It just feels great to work in an organization where everyone is encouraging, and it really feels like I am growing personally and professionally every day.”

Progress chances: It was often claimed that there were chances for career development and progress. Employees like companies that support their professional development by providing mentoring opportunities, training, and obvious career paths. ABB has always been a reputable organization for offering continuous training and regular growth opportunities. One of the employees mentioned that

“We have continuous development trainings on regular basis which are not only arranged within ABB premises, but we also have reservations at a nice hotels and resort where we can forget about daily workload and task and spend quality time with our colleagues and share knowledge together.”

Work-Life Balance: Emphasis was placed on finding a balance between one's personal and professional lives. Employers that put a high priority on employee's well-being, provide flexibility, and encourage work-life balance enhance their employer image.

“I have been moving to Finland based on work assignment some years ago and I decided to continue my work life here as I can really spend my time with family without thinking about the work as soon as I end my day. This has not been the case when I worked outside Finland.”

Transparent Communication: It became clear that open and honest communication was essential. Employees like companies that keep them informed about employer's objectives, updates, and advancements and they communicate with them in an honest and transparent manner. One of the employees stated that

“For me, the best part is that I am not judged based on my work. If I am not following the expectations, there is clear communication and feedback, which is more than a mentoring process I would say.”

Ethical Practices: The significance of ethical business practices was emphasized by the participants. Employees see organizations positively that exhibit integrity, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility. Employees believe that these are essential parameters to a strong employer brand. Organizations may shape their employer branding strategy to recruit and retain top talent by recognizing and prioritizing these characteristics.

“We have integrity trainings every week. These are short one minutes videos to educate all of us about integrity issues. We get reminders for a few of these trainings every week.”

4.2.3 Characteristics of Successful Leadership

Participants discussed the qualities that they thought leaders needed to foster a thriving workplace while responding to third questions in interview sessions. The answers emphasized important traits and actions that go into good leadership. Some of the major areas are discussed as follows,

Active listening and communication Skills: One of the employees responded that

“We have one to one meeting with our line manager at least once a month where we communicate opening and exchange feedback. My line manager tries to resolve if there are any issues or areas where I want to improve.”

It has become clear that having effective communication skills is essential. The significance of leaders communicating in a clear, open, and accessible manner was underlined by the participants. Important components were seen to include the capacity to communicate expectations, provide criticism, and listen intently.

Empathy: A lot of employees spoke about how important empathy is in leadership. Leaders that exhibit empathy, understanding, and a genuine care for their team's welfare were seen to be cultivating a happy and encouraging work atmosphere.

Dedication to Employee Development: One of the most important leadership traits was found to be a dedication to supporting team members' professional development. Leaders that provide chances for learning and growth to their staff members are seen as making a positive impact on a productive workplace. One of the responses from the employee was as follows,

“I have always got suggestions for trainings and development opportunities based on what I have communicated which is special as my line manager is aware of what are my future plans as a professional.”

Implications for Leadership Practices: Organizations have developed successful leadership by learning a lot from an understanding of these qualities. Building a leadership team that has a good impact on workplace productivity and employee happiness is facilitated by placing an emphasis on leadership training that improves communication skills, empathy, and a dedication to employee development.

“Although I am not leading any actual team in my current job role, ABB has always offered trainings that has improved my leadership skills significantly. It has not only helped in my professional life, but I grew personally.”

4.2.4 Managerial Interaction's Adverse Effect

Answering question number four, most of the participants discussed situations which could have been done differently but none of the employees could relate to a situation where the conversation with their leaders or managers negatively affected them. However, some of the areas which could have been better are as follows,

Poor Communication: Managerial examples of poor communication were emphasized. Confusion and dissatisfaction were caused by imprecise instructions.

Unsupportive Behavior: A few participants spoke about instances when leaders acted not supportively to them at some moments. For example, one of the employees mentioned that,

“I have been asking for an opinion regarding some work tasks where I could not get much help. However, once it was completed, I really felt that this might have been intentional move to let me push myself beyond limits and learn from my own mistakes. My line manager knew that if the task was not completed in due time, there was less harm to the overall project.”

Frustration and unhappy: After unfavorable encounters, participants often reported feeling unhappy and demotivated. However, having an open culture, they discussed the situation, and their line managers understood them well.

Effect on Performance: It was noted that unfavorable interactions have a detrimental effect on performance. Participants who encountered unsupportive or disengaged supervisory interactions reported feeling less motivated and committed to their task. Therefore, recognizing these adverse events gave important information about areas where management practices may need to be improved. To establish a better and healthy work environment and raise positive employee experience overall, it is essential that managers prioritize communication, emphasize feedback and recognition, and adopt a helpful and empathic attitude.

4.2.5 Suggestions for Improving overall employee experience and well-being

Participants offered ideas and proposals for organizational modifications targeted at enhancing the general well-being and positive employee experience. Some of the major areas discussed are as follows,

Offer Flexible Work Arrangements: A lot of people stressed how important it is to provide flexible work arrangements. To address a range of demands and enhance work-life balance, suggestions included reduced workweeks and flexible scheduling.

Well-Being Programs: ABB’s current well-being programs are very useful. However, it should also include additional stress management tools and mental health assistance. One of the employees mentioned that,

“ABB has excellent wellbeing program which offers stress management and mental health related coaching. However, these can be more frequent to improve its effectiveness.”

Clear Communication lines: It was noted that having better lines of communication was crucial. The staff was encouraged to be more educated and involved by encouraging honest communication about expectations, rules, and organizational changes. This helps to reduce ambiguity.

Positive work experience and better wellbeing: Employees believed that putting into practice suggestions like giving workers the flexibility and assistance they need, will positively contribute to employee positive experience. It was anticipated that the recommended changes would enhance general well-being on both a professional and personal level. Managing stress at work and further developing a nurturing atmosphere may have a good effect on workers' mental and emotional well-being.

In short, putting these suggestions into practice is consistent with the company's dedication to the welfare and contentment of its workforce. Offering flexibility, wellness initiatives, and open lines of communication are examples of proactive approaches to fostering a happy workplace. These observations may direct organizational actions to improve worker experiences and foster a more positive and productive work environment.

4.2.6 Assessment of Present Workplace Well-Being and Happiness Programs

Participants shared their opinions on current programs designed to promote employee's positive experience and well-being inside the company. Some of the sample reactions are as follows,

Wellness Programs: Fitness courses and campaigns encouraging a healthy lifestyle were among the wellness programs that participants often expressed appreciation for. These were thought to be useful in treating physical health. For example, one of the responses from the interviewees was as follows,

“As ABB encourages, I use cultural sports benefits for my gym memberships which is offered by ABB to each of its employees.”

Rewards and Recognition: Efforts to acknowledge the accomplishments and hard work of employees were often thought to be successful. Programs that honored exceptional achievement, significant service anniversaries, or creative contributions raised positive employee experience. One employee mentioned that,

“I get regular appreciation certificates and small bonus for every time I perform exceptional or achieve certain deadlines.”

Discussion of efforts: Several participants pointed out that there is room for improvement in the way that current efforts are communicated. It was to ensure via clear and consistent communication that the staff members are aware of various programs so that they may participate actively in them.

Mental Health Support: Although wellness programs were recognized, more attention should be paid to mental health support programs. The need for tools, counseling, and stress management courses was raised by the participants. One of the employees stated that,

“I have not realized a need for such trainings, but I am sure having the awareness of these issues is very important.”

One participant suggested the creation of individualized well-being plans, which would let staff members choose projects that suit their unique requirements and interests.

Benefits Personalization: A few participants voiced the need for more tailored benefits related to well-being. Adapting programs to each person's requirements and preferences would increase their efficacy.

Organizational Considerations: Based on employee input, an organization may choose to expand projects and improve communication tactics. Improving mental health assistance and providing customized well-being choices correspond with the changing demands and anticipations of the labor force, so fostering a more all-encompassing and efficient framework for well-being.

4.2.7 Unfavorable Work Experience

By sharing stories of times when they were unhappy with their jobs while responding to question number 7, participants were able to identify certain elements that had a detrimental effect on their level of overall employee experience. Some of the major highlights are as follows,

Lack of Recognition: There were only a few participants who conveyed their discontent due to feeling as if they were not given enough credit. A decrease in employee experience was caused by employees feeling that their contributions and efforts were devalued or unrecognized. One of them stated that,

“I was expecting a lot of appreciation for the work I did as it had bigger value, and it was also completed well before the deadline. However, I did not get much of the appreciation as I expected. Of course, I have been discussing this in my followed one to one meeting where my line manager apologized for not being very appreciative.”

Ineffective Communication: It became evident that one of the main contributing factors was the absence of clear expectations, feedback, or transparency from the leadership and one of the employees mentioned that

“I am very sure that my manager has very much trust in me but at the same time I don't get feedback very often which is very important sometimes to know how I am and how can I improve further.”

Participants gave examples of times when ambiguous instructions caused uncertainty and annoyance.

Unaddressed problems: This is somewhat related to the discussion that employees did not receive feedback. Employee experience was influenced by situations in which workers' problems or difficulties were not addressed or handled. The whole job experience was badly influenced by the sense of not being supported or heard. Recognizing these unfavorable experiences offers important information about potential areas for development. A happier and fulfilling work environment may be achieved by addressing difficulties with recognition, communication, and attention to employee concerns. Improving overall employee experience may depend on putting in place systems for getting frequent feedback and handling employee complaints.

4.2.8 Successful Leadership in the Workplace

By sharing their opinions on the behaviors and characteristics which they think define good leadership in the workplace, participants highlighted important components that support a happy workplace and increased employee experience while responding to the questions number 8 in interview process. Some of the important takeaways are as follows,

Excellence in Communication: Successful leadership has been shown to be largely dependent on effective communication. The significance of leaders having open, honest, and transparent communication was stressed by the participants. The need to have clear expectations, regular updates, and the capacity for attentive listening was emphasized.

Acknowledgment and gratitude: Participants recurrently connected proficient leadership to the capacity to acknowledge and value the contributions of team members. Fostering a healthy work culture and improving employee experience were shown to be significantly aided by leaders that celebrate accomplishments, provide constructive comments, and recognize contributions. One of the employees commented that,

“I have been working in different roles here in ABB. However, my current line manager always acknowledges my good work which I think has significantly increased by employee experience at ABB.”

Empathy and Support: It was determined that qualities like empathy and helpful conduct were necessary for successful leadership. The significance of leaders exhibiting empathy, understanding, and a readiness to assist staff members through both work and personal difficulties was underlined by the participants. For example, one of the respondents mentioned that,

“Having a clear communication with my line manager, I always ask for help when needed. I am very grateful that my line manager always helps and guides.”

Establishing Clear Expectations: It was found that leaders who established clear expectations and objectives were better able to guide their staff. One key to fostering a healthy work

atmosphere and reducing misunderstanding which was found is being clear about goals, expectations, and performance criteria.

Making Decisions Transparency: It was noted that one essential quality of successful leaders is transparent decision-making procedures. Participants valued leaders who, appropriate, include team members in decision-making, promoting diversity and trust in the workplace. One of the responses from employees was as follows,

“When there is a new idea to introduce within team, our line manager always shares it with the whole team, and we mutually agree on whether to consider it or not.”

Organizations may get important insights into areas that can contribute to a healthy work environment and increase employee experience by knowing the characteristics and behaviors linked with successful leadership. Organizations may boost overall leadership effectiveness and favorably affect workplace culture by concentrating on training leaders who excel in communication, recognition, empathy, goal-setting, and transparent decision-making.

4.2.9 Employee Experience and Employer Branding

Employees discussed how they saw employer branding's influence on employee experience and overall engagement. Some of the important takeaways are as follows,

Sense of identification and Pride: A lot of participants stressed the connection between an effective employer brand and employee's feelings of pride and identification. Their entire experience is significantly impacted when they feel a part of a respected and well-branded firm. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that,

“ABB is a top multinational organization and one of the top attractive organizations for engineering students. It's always special to have a feeling that I am working for an organization which has a global reputation.”

Talent Attraction and Retention: Participants recognized the influence of branding on talent attraction and retention. A strong brand image was considered essential for both recruiting new workers and fostering an environment that makes existing employees want to work there. ABB as brand is sufficient attraction to stay at the organization in addition to other support received for personal and professional development where ABB always excels. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that,

“I have been working in ABB for more than five years and I never thought about changing my workplace. ABB is now part of my family.”

Alignment with Values: It has been observed that employer branding affects how well workers align with the organization's values and purpose. Coherent alignment increases engagement and cultivates a pleasant work environment. For example, one of the employees mentioned that,

“ABB stick to its values which is very important as employees join organizations based on their values.”

By recognizing how employee experience and employer branding are related, ABB may get insight into the components of a happy workplace. ABB is already concentrating on developing a robust and genuine employer brand, tying it in with their guiding principles, and highlighting it in internal communication and recruiting campaigns. Consequently, this has increased workers' general involvement.

4.2.10 Problems and Their Fixes

Following were the key areas which were found while interviewees responded to last question of the interview session,

Communication Gaps: Several participants mentioned this as a major source of difficulty. Uncertainty and discontent were caused by leadership's inadequate communication on organizational changes, policies, or expectations.

Limited Work-Life Balance efforts: Participants emphasized the need for further work-life balance-promoting efforts although many of the employees were very much satisfied with the current measures. ABB is now offering well-being initiatives to improve flexibility in work arrangements.

Here is one of the sample responses from employees,

“The good thing about my work is that it offers good work-life balance. When I talk to my family friends, they always complaint about their daily work as it is always disturbed and sometime, they must work late hours to achieve deadlines. They have limited work-life balance which effects their overall performance. Work at ABB is different, and I am lucky to be a part of this family.”

Practices for Recognition and Feedback: It was found that there are difficulties with these practices or in other words, it varies from leader to leader. Certain participants believed that the current mechanisms for recognizing contributions and offering feedback were varied, which influenced employee experience.

Enhanced Communication Channels: Participants recommended creating enhanced communication channels to solve communication gaps. Proposed remedies included regular updates from the leadership, honest and unambiguous communication regarding organizational changes, and enhanced feedback systems. One of the employees commented that,

“I think one area that can be further improved is communication. Regardless of what kind of update it is, whether related to the product or employees themselves, there should be clear communication. For example, updates regarding the product from research team on regular basis.”

Well-Being Programs: To promote work-life balance, participants suggested introducing more well-being programs and initiatives. Potential remedies included additional wellness initiatives and further improving mental health assistance.

Better Recognition Procedures: Improving feedback systems and recognition procedures was shown to be a crucial remedy. To improve morale and employee experience, participants suggested providing constructive criticism more often and individually. By providing helpful information, these insights into difficulties and suggested solutions will help organizations to improve their approaches to employee well-being and positive employee experience. Enhancing communication, putting more and more well-being initiatives into action, and enhancing recognition procedures may all help create a more pleasant work atmosphere and increase employee experience.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 Reactions to Survey

A thorough investigation of workers' opinions on leadership and employee experience in the survey replies yielded insightful information on the culture of the company. A total of 39 survey items were analyzed, and the results showed a range of overall employee experience; most respondents expressed happiness, but a significant portion pointed out areas that needed work. Notably, elements like paying fairly, having leadership that is competent, and matching professional responsibilities to talents were shown to be important predictors of happiness.

The results of the study on leadership, in particular the efficacy of supervisors and feedback systems, highlighted the value of open communication and helpful criticism in creating a productive workplace. Furthermore, how staff members see organizational prospects, employer branding, and leadership development clarifies how these factors affect commitment and work happiness.

The relationship between brand reputation, employee experience, and talent attractiveness was emphasized. Strong employer identity is crucial, as shown by the correlation between elevated employee experience and positive evaluations of employer branding.

The survey data has yielded a comprehensive comprehension of the variables affecting employee experience and leadership efficacy inside the company. These observations provide the basis for

focused interventions and calculated improvements aimed at establishing an environment in the workplace that promotes positive employee experience and well-being.

4.3.2 Summary of interviews

Rich narratives that supplemented the survey results were provided by the interview replies, which went deeper into the experiences of the workers and employees. By sharing stories of their successful work experiences, participants helped to highlight the importance of accomplishments, acknowledgment, and healthy team dynamics in promoting employee experience. A comprehensive understanding of the employee journey was provided by the exploration of the qualities of successful leadership, unfavorable work experiences, and the influence of employer branding on employee engagement.

The interviews provided significant insights into the difficulties that workers encounter, such as problems with acknowledgment, communication, and leadership assistance under trying circumstances. The significance of flexible work schedules, all-inclusive well-being initiatives, and open communication was stressed in recommendations for improving overall well-being.

Additionally, participants assessed current programs that promote employee experience and well-being, identifying both successful programs and areas in need of development. The results emphasized how crucial it is to communicate adequately about wellbeing initiatives, how important it is to provide mental health assistance more attention, and how benefits should be tailored to each person's requirements.

Finally, the narrative layer that the interview replies added to the quantitative survey data allowed for a better understanding of the sensory and emotional components of employee experience. The organization gains a thorough grasp of the existing work environment via the combination of survey and interview results, which paves the way for strategic enhancements and focused interventions aimed at improving overall employee experience and well-being.

It is worth mentioning that employer stated that the activity broadened their knowledge of everyone's preferences and emphasized the need to reconstruct the way the management team works and communicates with other stakeholders which was also noted in the survey results.

5 Discussion

5.1 Key Findings on employee experience

Both the employee and the employer must be satisfied with their jobs. The causes of positive employee experience have been the subject of a great deal of research in the past. According to a review of the research, characteristics including compensation, work environment, work-life balance, job security, and leadership style all have an impact on employee experience (Sekaran & Bougie 2016).

It was found that factors such as job diversity, task relevance, autonomy and feedback have impact on how employee experience which follows job characteristics model (JCM) by Hackman & Oldham (1976). Organizational success within ABB has direct effect from higher level of dedication and motivation which comes from the positive experience of employees agreeing to the study by Kahn & Kahn (2010). These findings confirmed that employees are individuals with particular needs, goals, and challenges. Similarly, various advantageous results including customer satisfaction, creativity and engagement are associated with positive employee experience which confirms the studies by Harter & al. (2002). Many employees confirmed in the interviews that when their work is appreciated, they want to work hard and go above and beyond their roles which ultimately supported ABB. On the other hand, employees who receive a lower level of appreciation affected their engagement. These findings are in line with the study by Cameron & Quinn (2011).

Employee experience has a correlation with leadership. Good leaders when attend to employee's needs and encouraging career advancement result in enhancing employee experience, confirming to the study by Goleman & al. (2002). Similarly, as highlighted in studies by Fondas & Denison (1991), leaders at ABB encourage, support and recognize staff members fosters positive work experience. Agreeing to the study by Hackman & Oldham (1976), it was found that favorable overall employee experience is correlated with supportive work environment where employees can see their personal and professional development. Employees feel pride and sense of belonging at ABB due to effective leadership of their line managers which increases employee positive experience and loyalty of employees to ABB as an organization. These findings also acknowledge the study by Parker (2001) that leaders who encourage individual autonomy improve staff performance and innovation.

This study also found that happy work environment at ABB has further improved ABB's reputation in engineering organizations which will surely facilitate recruitment and retention of top employees (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Employees at ABB consider their teams as their family, and they get identity from the teams they belong. These strong social identities at workplace have impact on

higher levels of motivation, loyalty and positive employee experience, agreeing to the social identity theory by Tajfel & Turner (2019).

Numerous studies have examined the connection between leadership style, organization's culture, and work-life balance, as well as employee experience. For instance, (Alrasheedi, Alrashaidi & Shahin 2022) looked at how leadership style affected employee experience among Saudi Arabian nurses. According to the study, having a transformational leadership style improved employee experience. Similar to this, a study by Abbas, Raja, Darr & Bouckennooghe (2014) discovered that workers' levels of work experience were greater when they believed their employer had a favorable work-life balance.

This research has looked into how positive employee experience affects employee outcomes including intentions to leave the organization and organizational commitment. As an illustration, research by Judge & al. (2001) found a link between employee positive experience and productivity. On the contrary Mobley (1977) also found negative correlations between work satisfaction and employee turnover in different research.

Overall, these findings indicate that employee experience is affected by a variety of variables and has a big impact on employee outcomes.

This study used an extended Likert scale questionnaire to assess employee experience, and it was found that participants' (employees at ABB) average employee experience score was 7.28, which suggests a good degree of positive employee experience.

5.2 Key Findings on Leadership

Based on the survey and interviews done with ABB employees, it was found that leadership skills varied within various teams. Leaders use blend or combination of various styles by customizing their approach that meets the requirements of their team member and ABB in general. This finding matches with the study done by Avolio & Yammarino (2013). This approach is very useful as such adaptive leaders can guide their organization to preserve stability and promote ongoing developments especially at the time of uncertainty and change (Heifetz & al. 2009). Similarly, leaders at ABB are emotionally intelligent which helps to not only to control their own emotions, but also their teammates. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that his line manager apologized for not appreciating him. These simple skills are very basic to make the work environment supporting and

healthy. This also shows that leaders at ABB comprehend and experience their team member's emotions which aligns with the finding by Goleman (2013). It can also be concluded that leaders at ABB also follow servant leadership style in their blend of various leadership styles which can have higher level of staff engagement and overall good organizational behavior (Greenleaf 2002; Spears 2010).

Leaders at ABB keep their team members on the same page about any suggestions and updates recommended by the team as they all are working towards the same goals. This develops trust in employees, and it is one of the effective ways of communication in addition to offering motivation and enabling the employees to contribute towards the success of ABB. This was also the finding in study by Yukl (2020) and (Bass & Riggio 2006a). Compelling vision of leaders at ABB inspire and motivate their teams by showcasing a desirable future and showing how each employee's contributions are essential to achieving that future (Kotter 2012).

Another major finding was the exchange of feedback within ABB teams. Good leaders give constructive feedback and acknowledge employee's accomplishments which not only make the happy work environment but encourages positive employee experience (Eisenbeiss & al. 2008; Podsakoff & al. 1996).

This study's findings also showed that leadership abilities and positive employee experience had a favorable link as discussed in section 5.1. When respondents were compared to respondents who gave their immediate supervisor's leadership qualities a low rating, it was discovered that the former group of respondents had a greater degree of employee experience. This conclusion is in line with studies on the subject (Judge & al. 2001; Bass & Avolio 2004).

According to the study's findings, it was also found that leadership abilities and employee branding are both significant determinants of positive employee experience and both are very much linked to each other. Also, as confirmed by employees at ABB during interviews, most of the leaders are using diverse and blend of various leadership styles which were effective in enhancing positive employee experience.

6 Further discussion: Practical Significance, Development Proposals, Reliability of study and Own Learning

6.1 Recommendation for ABB based on this case study

Leadership abilities and employee experience have been examined in this thesis. Important ramifications for organizational practice resulted from the findings. To increase employees' experience, ABB should keep investing in the development of strong leadership qualities. This might entail offering mentoring and training in leadership, fostering a welcoming and inclusive culture, and identifying and rewarding leadership behaviors that increase positive employee experience.

Similarly, leadership abilities have a direct influence on employee experience, according to Cable & Turban (2003). ABB can gain from investing in programs that help managers develop their leadership abilities. These initiatives can promote positive employee experience and develop a good work environment.

Overall, the studies by Ambler & Barrow (1996), Cable & Turban (2003) and Lievens & Highhouse (2003) suggest that organizations should concentrate on building strong leadership skills and employer brand to improve employee experience. Similarly, the results of this investigation have important practical ramifications. The findings clearly imply that there is a significant component in the association between leadership abilities and positive employee experience. This research also emphasizes how crucial it is for businesses to concentrate on creating and sustaining a strong employer brand in order to increase employee experience. The findings from Cable & Turban (2003) show a clear relationship between leadership abilities and employee experience. ABB can gain from investing in programs that help managers develop their leadership abilities. These initiatives can promote employee experiences and develop a good work environment.

The study's conclusions have several consequences for organizational practice. First and foremost, ABB should spend money on helping their managers become more successful leaders. Offering training and development courses with communication, feedback, recognition, and motivational focus is part of this. Managers may improve employee experience and, in turn, increase productivity, engagement, and retention by developing effective leadership abilities (Limsila & Ogunlana 2008).

Secondly, ABB also needs to frequently assess and quantify employee experience. Employee surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one conversations can all be used for this. ABB may discover areas for development and create tailored interventions that address issues by knowing the requirements, interests, and concerns of their workforce (Spector 1997).

Furthermore, ABB and businesses in general should understand the significance of the connection between leadership abilities and positive employee experience. ABB can further improve employees' experience, which in turn can result in improved organizational performance, by creating a positive work environment that is in line with the organization's values and vision and by developing effective leaders who can inspire and motivate employees.

According to this study's findings, businesses should make investments in effective leadership development, strong employer branding, and employee experience monitoring. It is worth mentioning that although it was not the main goal of this thesis research to study about employer branding, however, it was useful diagnosis of this research work that it plays vital role in employee experience. For businesses to recruit and keep skilled workers, employer branding is essential (Theurer, Tumasjan, Welppe & Lievens 2018). It builds a strong employer brand equity and fosters a favorable view of the company as an employer. ABB stands out in the employment market and draws applicants as it shares its values and culture by developing a strong employer brand. It distinguishes the company and promotes employee loyalty, trust, and pride. The retention, engagement, and productivity of employees are also influenced by an effective employer brand. Additional advantages of investing in workplace branding techniques include higher morale, more recommendations, greater reputation, and stronger competitiveness (Theurer & al. 2018).

The effect of employer branding on employee outcomes including recruitment, retention, engagement, and loyalty has been the subject of several research in recent years (Sun, Aryee & Law 2007). According to this research, it was found that a strong employer brand can boost workers' loyalty to the company, employee experience, and general well-being (Davies 2008).

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) looked at the connection between employer branding and job searchers' interest in companies in one research. Berthon & al. (2005) looked at the effect of company branding on loyalty inside the firm and employee experience in different research. Similar to this, Ambler & Barrow (1996) study looked at the effect of employer branding on staff members' opinions of their company.

According to the survey, employer branding significantly increased the appeal of businesses to job searchers. The study discovered that job searchers with high degrees of individuality and low levels of collectivism were more affected by employer branding on attractiveness. According to the study, employer branding significantly improved both employee experience and organizational commitment. Many of the respondents mentioned that ABB as brand is a valuable asset and employees consider it as one of the major satisfactions about their work life that they are working for a well reputed organization. Comparing respondents who gave their organization's employer branding a favorable rating to those who gave it a bad rating, it was discovered that the former had greater

levels of positive employee experience. This result agrees with other studies on the subject (Cable & Turban 2003; Berthon & al. 2005).

Therefore, ABB needs to be mindful of its employer branding. A strong employer brand can draw in, keep talent, improve work happiness, and increase loyalty to the business. By promoting their values, culture, and workplace, as well as by giving employees chances for growth and development, organizations may create a great employer brand.

Also, businesses should understand how employer branding influences the relation between leadership abilities and employee experience. Leaders may cultivate a work environment that promotes positive employee experience by working to build a great employer brand. Additionally, a strong employer brand could improve how workers see their managers, which might boost their confidence in them and their sense of positive experience.

ABB may engage in initiatives that foster a favorable perception of the business and its culture in order to promote employer branding (Ambler & Barrow 1996). This could entail fostering work-life balance, offering chances for employee growth and development, and presenting the company's vision and values. The study results by Lievens & Highhouse (2003) further emphasize the significance of routinely gauging employee experience and perceptions of employer branding. Organizations may build their employer brand and raise employee experience by keeping an eye on these aspects and identifying opportunities for improvement (Lievens & Highhouse 2003). ABB should also invest further a lot of effort into creating a solid employer brand that accurately represents their culture, values, and reputation. This may be accomplished through fostering an environment at work that encourages employee involvement, creativity, and innovation. Talented personnel who share the organization's values and vision can be attracted and kept by a strong employer brand (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

6.2 Future recommendations

This study's scope is as follows,

- The study concentrated majorly on the employee experience, leadership skills and styles and connection between leadership abilities and employee experience in case study organization ABB marine and ports division.
- Only full-time employees were included in the research.
- Employers' perspectives were not considered in the survey; it was solely concentrated on employee impressions.

There are several areas where this study can be utilized for future studies. For example, future studies can make use of more impartial indicators of leadership abilities, employer branding, and employee experience, such as independent ratings or organizational performance measurements.

Similarly, bigger samples from a variety of organizations and sectors can further strengthen the generalizability of the results. Third, in addition to parameters studied, employee experience may also be greatly influenced by other variables, including business culture, work-life balance, and employee involvement. Future studies can look at how these characteristics interact to affect employee experience.

This study sheds light on employee experience, leadership abilities, and to what extent they are related. Importance of employer branding was a key finding in this study and future studies might also look at the connection between certain aspects of employer branding and employee experience, such as work-life balance, perceived organizational support, and job security. Research may also examine further the effects of various leadership philosophies on employer branding and employee experience.

Due to the nature of work evolving so quickly, it is necessary to look into how new trends, including remote work affect leadership abilities, employer branding, and employee experience. Future studies might also look at how these new developments affect these constructs and what it means for businesses and employees.

6.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the consistency of the measurement through time and in many contexts, whereas validity is the amount to which research measures what it claims to measure (DeVellis & Thorpe 2021; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson 2019; Paul Kline 2013). Any research study must include validity and reliability.

Several steps were taken to assure the validity and reliability of this study. To assure validity, a pilot study was carried out to test the survey questions and required adjustments were done before the real data collection. The reliability of this study was therefore proved by this pilot research.

Additionally, the sample size was sufficient to guarantee the accuracy and dependability of the findings. To get statistically significant and generalizable results, an adequate sample size is crucial (Hair & al. 2019).

To further confirm the validity of the findings, established metrics for employee experience and leadership skills were applied. The reliability and validity of the study were improved by the inclusion of validated measures (Kline 2023).

Overall, this study strived to assure both the validity and reliability of its findings through a careful design, expert review, pilot testing, a suitable sample size, statistical analysis, and the use of known measurements.

6.4 Considerations for Ethics

The credibility and dependability of the research findings are critically reliant on ethical concerns in every research project (American Psychological Association 2002; Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. 2017; Saunders & Townsend 2016). The rights and privacy of the participants must be maintained, and the study must be performed in an ethical and responsible manner.

The following actions were made to uphold ethical considerations:

1. Before taking part in the study, participants got information about its goals, methods, potential drawbacks, and advantages. Participants were given the chance to give informed permission.
2. Data collection was done anonymously and with the utmost confidentiality. The only usage of the participants' personal data was for research; it was not disclosed to any other party.
3. Voluntary Participation: Study participants were free to leave at any moment with no repercussions if they choose not to participate in the study.
4. Keeping Harm to a Minimum: The study was carried out in a way that keeps any possible harm to the participants to a minimum.
5. Recognition: The researcher thanked everyone who contributed to the study and, upon request, will provide them access to the findings.

To preserve the legitimacy and dependability of the research project, these ethical issues were adhered to throughout.

6.5 Conclusion

For employee well-being and organizational performance, the theoretical framework emphasized the significance of employee experience and leadership abilities which acts as glue for employers and employees. The empirical study discovered that employer branding modulates the association between leadership abilities and employee experience. The findings imply that in order to raise employee commitment and employee experience, firms should engage in cultivating strong leadership abilities and a great employer brand.

In addition to knowing the significance of leadership abilities and employee experience, useful findings on employer branding have been addressed in this thesis. According to the research, effective leadership abilities and a strong company reputation are crucial for boosting employees' organizational commitment and positive employee experience. These conclusions offer various directions for future study and have significant consequences for organizational practice and for ABB which was the case study organization.

6.6 Thesis process and own learning

The whole thesis process started from the first day of master's studies. Idea about the thesis topic was very clear from the first day of studies as ABB is globally recognized multinational organization and I/researcher wanted to know how/which theories and studies are practically followed in such big organizations. During the course work, relevant topics were studied in detail and sources were kept for late phase of degree studies which majorly was this thesis work. With the background in engineering, theoretical and hypothetical approaches were very different compared to how they are expressed and used in Engineering fields, which was very challenging to grasp in the beginning, but it became very exciting with the time.

Theoretical framework was very challenging earlier on too as the topic was very wide initially and I had a lot of material which I wanted to discuss and include in the thesis work. In addition to saved research work, additional material during theoretical framework resulted with information in abundance and it was one of the challenges to filter out the relevant material.

This study has been full of learning especially learning about leadership theories and topics like employee experience and employer branding. Interview process was another exciting learning journey as it further helped to understand how these theories are practically utilized in everyday work by employers and organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample email with instructions for the informants to fill in the survey response

Content removed due to confidentiality

Appendix 2. Sample interview invitation and instructions

Content removed due to confidentiality

Appendix 3. Survey results

Content removed due to confidentiality