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**THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND SERVANT  
LEADERSHIP ON WORK ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIATING  
EFFECT OF MOTIVATING LANGUAGE**

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints, and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.

The document length is 12007 words from the introduction to the end of the conclusion.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Motivating language is a skill that enables managers to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings in a way that, on the one hand, conveys the desired concept to employees and, on the other hand, motivates them. Thus, business conversations are conveyed properly. Due to the created motivation, employees become more engaged in what they do and consequently, the organization achieves its goals more successfully.

Therefore, in this survey, to investigate the impact of leader's motivating language on employees' work engagement, the author used structural equation modelling to present a suggested model of direct and indirect relationships between leadership, motivating language and work engagement as independent, mediating and dependent variables respectively. 225 employees of travel agency companies in Tehran, Iran evaluated their managers' motivating language skills by online questionnaire. Smart pls software was employed to analyse gathered data.

The results confirmed only the indirect relationship between leadership and work engagement by mediatory of motivating language. Lastly, suggestion was presented based on the research results.

**Keywords:** Motivating language, work engagement, transformational leadership, servant leadership

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ML	Motivating language
TL	Transformational leadership
SL	Servant Leadership
WE	Work engagement
EI	Employee's involvement
AVE	Average variance extraction,
CR	Composite reliability
$\alpha$	Cronbach's alpha
PLS-SEM	partial least square structure equation modelling or
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
SRMR	standard root mean residual
R square	coefficient of determination
Q square	Cross-validated redundancies
CMB	common method bias

## **INTRODUCTION**

For many years, tourism has been a major source of income and employment for countries around the globe (Sofronov 2021). This industry has become increasingly significant in countries such as Iran due to its economic and social implications. Iran is one of the countries with low per capita income and its main export is oil and petroleum products. Iran has a number of practical ways to break free from its oil-based economy, including growth and development of its entire tourism industry. (Khosroabadi 2017) Therefore, tourism has a considerable influence on Iran's economy as a third world country.

Due to the nature of this industry, which is service-oriented, human resources play an important role in tourism. Because travel agencies plan and implement a large part of the tourism experience and activities, they also have a unique place as a sensitive and critical sector within the tourism industry.(Baum 2016) Companies working in the tourism industry will be able to fulfil their responsibilities well if their employees are motivated and engaged in their work. Employee disengagement can be viewed as an indicator of the lack of motivation among employees, which is why companies are aware of the importance of employee engagement. (Soni 2013) Employees without motivation are less likely to be engaged in their work. Ultimately, this can result in a decrease in the quality of services provided by the company. In a service-oriented industry, customers can become dissatisfied if they receive low-quality service (Oh, Kim 2017). If appropriate steps are not taken to resolve this issue in a timely manner, the tourism company may be dissolved.

The topic of work disengagement has been the subject of interest for many researchers over the last few decades. A number of reasons lead to individuals becoming disengaged from their careers. Afrahi et al. (2022) conducted a survey to review the literature on disengagement at work in order to investigate the factors that contribute to disengagement. In their survey, poor communication with employees was identified as one of the factors that lead to disengagement at work. Poor communication leads to a loss of employee trust and reliability. Additionally, employees who experience poor communication have a higher risk of experiencing fear in the workplace. As a result, these employees face the possibility of losing their self-image and careers.



It would appear that leadership plays a critical role in engaging and motivating employees. In more service-oriented industries, it is the responsibility of the leadership to motivate employees and foster a sense of contribution and responsibility among them. Nowadays, playing the role of a leader is much more difficult than it used to be. Employees' diverse thoughts and expectations have made leadership more challenging than ever before. Therefore, it is imperative to select the appropriate leadership style and train leaders to perform this essential task. (Humphrey et al. 2016)

In this century, leaders are expected to possess a variety of skills, each of which can affect the success of an organisation. Communication skills and the ability to build relationships are among the most significant of these. Communication is among the most crucial leadership skills one can possess which determines the effectiveness of a leader in an organisation and it can affect employee's motivation (Hargie et al. 2017). Effective communication allows leaders to establish and maintain relationships between individuals. Leaders cannot perform their duties effectively without effective communication skills.

Leaders' ability to motivate subordinates can be defined by motivating language theory. Three categories are explained by this theory: Direction-giving language, Meaning making language and Empathic language. By Direction giving a leader can reduce uncertainty about tasks, goals, and vision. Meaning making empowers leader to explain the cultural norms and values and lastly, by empathic language, leader can express emotional support to the followers and encourage their progress (Mayfield, Mayfield 2017).

Leaders among tourism companies, through proper and effective communication with their human resources, can succeed in designing an efficient organisational system (Mahmoudzade et al. 2020). In the tourism and hospitality context, two types of leadership are most common. According to Jung and Yoon (2015), transformational leadership is effective in the labour-intensive hospitality industry. Moreover, servant leadership is a proper leadership style for service-oriented industries which relies on engaged employees (Chen, Peng 2019).

Tourism faces many challenges especially in Iran. After enduring years of sanctions and exchange rate fluctuations, as well as tourism recession arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic, a high percentage of travel agency companies that made a significant contribution to the development of sustainable tourism are closed and the rest of them are on the verge of collapse (Akhondzade 2013; Nikfal, Mansouri 2021; Tamizi, Shahbazi 2019). In the meantime, inattention to the human resources' engagement and motivation can lead to employees' dissatisfaction. As a result, lower

service quality decreases the customer satisfaction and consequently the success of travel agency companies which can cause further decline in this industry (Naseem et al. 2011).

Many scholars indicated the relationship of these two leadership styles with employee's work engagement (Eva et al. 2019; Hoch et al. 2016; Huertas-Valdivia et al. 2019). As a result, it is expected that leader's appropriate verbal skill or the motivational language during the communication process with employees, effectively affect the employee work engagement. There is little empirical work that articulates how leader's motivating language effect on subordinate's work engagement. Since engaged employees can provide many positive individual and organisational outcomes and employee engagement has been found to be very vital in enhancing organisational performance (Mufeed 2018), it is necessary to investigate the impact of leader's motivating language on employee's work engagement. Therefore, current research aimed to determine if the motivating language used by servant and transformational leaders can lead to increased employee engagement among the employees of tourism agencies in Tehran city, Iran. Accordingly, in this study the impact of servant and transformational leadership style on work engagement were investigated with mediatory of motivating language among tourism companies located in Tehran, Iran. For this reason, following hypotheses were examined:

- H1. Transformational leadership is positively associated with work engagement.
- H2. Servant leadership is positively associated with work engagement.
- H3. Transformational leadership is positively associated with motivating language.
- H4. Servant leadership is positively associated with Motivating language.
- H5. Motivating language is positively associated with work engagement.

There are five sections in this research. The researcher provided explanations of the research variables such as motivational language, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and work ethic after the introduction. Moreover, a conceptual model of research was presented and a review of research conducted in this direction was conducted. The researcher discussed the research hypotheses in the methodology section after reviewing the study's method. Her next section outlined how to collect data, the tools she used to collect data, how to analyse data, as well as the research period. Using tables in the results section, the researcher displays and interprets the results along with presenting the results of hypothesis testing and the validity of the research model. After summarizing the contents of the previous sections, the limitations of research and suggestions for future research are discussed in the conclusion.

# **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MOTIVATING LANGUAGE, SERVANT LEADERSHIP, TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND WORK ENGAGEMENT**

This chapter discusses motivating language, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and engagement at work. In this study, transformational and servant leadership were considered independent variables, motivating language as the mediating variable, and work engagement as the dependent variable. The relationship between variables was also demonstrated by means of a model in order to clarify the direct and indirect effects of Leadership styles on work engagement.

## **1.1. Motivating language Theory, definition, and Background**

Zorn and Ruccio indicated that communication is one of the key skills required by leaders to motivate others (Zorn , Ruccio 1998, 468). The study of MacLeod et.al (2009) revealed that leaders' communication skills can influence employee engagement. As defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, communication is the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, whether by speech, signals, writing, or behavior. Therefore, speech is one of the communication tools that leaders can rely upon to convey their intentions to their followers.

Motivating language, previously named "motivational language," is a theory of organizational behavior that has been introduced by Sullivan to explain the significance of a leader's spoken language and the impact it has on subordinates (Sullivan 1988). In fact, this scholar developed the Austin speech act theory (Austin 1962) and presented his own motivational language model.

In comparison to other motivating language dimensions, Sullivan believed that uncertainty-reducing language was the only motivating factor being discussed and taken into account by motivational theorists. Moreover, he was of the opinion that managers usually cannot make full use of their language potential in order to motivate their followers and because of a lack of this skill they are unable to deliver a powerful motivational speech. Motivating language theory is composed of three components. It is therefore necessary to explain these three elements. Direction-

giving is the first component of motivating language that leaders need to use to motivate their followers. This dimension of motivating language explains that "the leader elucidates all the information necessary for the actual accomplishment of one's job" or, in other words, "the process of giving direction ensures that the right things are done in the right manner". In fact, when a leader attempts to convey a clear understanding of objectives, goals, and tasks, the needed information will be conveyed in order to reduce uncertainty (Mayfield , Mayfield 2017).

Motivating language involves showing concern and consideration for the emotional state of subordinates through empathic language (Mayfield , Mayfield 2009). As well as encouraging progress and giving hope in positive and negative situations, empathic language can also be used in order to make up for setbacks (Mayfield , Mayfield 2017).

The last component of motivating language is meaning-making language, which empowers the leader to describe the values, norms, and behaviors unique to their culture (Mayfield , Mayfield 2002) most often by means of stories and metaphors used to convey the unique culture of the organization (Mayfield , Mayfield 2009). Table 3-1 presents a summary of the components of motivating language.

Table 1-1. Summary of motivating language components in literature review

	Components	Focus area
MOTIVATING LANGUAGE	direction-giving	objectives, goals, and tasks and all information in order to reduce uncertainty in this regard.
	Empathic-language	paying attention to emotional state of subordinates, in both positive and negative situations.
	meaning-making language	values, norms, and organizational culture

Source: Faghihi (2022)

It has been reported that oral communication skills of leaders have a positive impact on followers in a number of studies. In Mayfield et al. 's study, motivating language by a leader reduces an employee's absence from work (Mayfield , Mayfield 2009). Another study conducted by this scholar demonstrated that a high level of effective leadership communication can increase employee loyalty (Mayfield et al. 2002). Also, when Kunie et al investigated the relationship between motivating language and work engagement as applied to hospital nurses, they found that all three dimensions of managers' motivating language were positively associated with nurses' work engagement and psychological distress (Kunie et al. 2017).

Further, Wińska reviewed the effects of superior-subordinate relationships on employee satisfaction, and the positive relationship between communication and employee satisfaction was found to be significant (Wińska 2010).

An additional study, this time conducted in Mexico and the United States, found that supervisors' motivating language is generally associated with organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction. Madlock et al. reported differences in supervisors' motivations for implementing language strategies in two countries in their study. According to the findings, empathic communication skills for Mexican supervisors and direction giving for American supervisors are the most important supervisor communication skills that will lead to their followers' job satisfaction (Madlock , Sexton 2015).

According to Mayfield, a leader's verbal communication significantly contributes to an employee's ability to make sound decisions (Mayfield , Mayfield 2016) which can ultimately result in enhanced employee engagement (Bhatti et al. 2018). Thus, employees will be better able to make quality decisions, as they will receive their leaders' feedback and have a better understanding of their tasks, organizational norms and the culture of the company they work for (Mayfield , Mayfield 2016).

The level of work engagement of employees who communicate emotionally with their organizations has been found to be higher (Rees et al. 2013). Motivational language pays special attention to the emotional needs of individuals as a three-dimensional language. Leaders who communicate with and treat their followers emotionally create a safer work environment and are better at engaging their followers (Mayfield , Mayfield 2010).

Furthermore, motivational language can aid leaders in communicating the vision of an organization and providing the necessary transparency for removing organizational ambiguities. Leaders will be able to use motivational language to communicate all of the information related to employees' jobs and to reduce confusion as much as possible in the workplace . (Kunie et al. 2017) An overview of the positive effects of motivating language on work engagement is presented in Table 3-1.

As a consequence, the following hypothesis has been proposed in light of this:

**H1.** Motivating language is positively associated with work engagement.

Table 1-2. Summary of motivating language and work engagement association

	Author(s)	year	Findings
MOTIVATING LANGUAGE	MacLeod et al.	2009	communication skills as a basis of motivating language can influence employee engagement.
	Kunie et al.	2017	motivating language were positively associated with nurses' work engagement and psychological distress.
	Bhatti et al.	2018	leader's communication improves work engagement.
	Rees et al.	2013	Work engagement and communication are associated.

Source: Faghihi (2022)

## 1.2. Servant leadership

Serving their followers first is what makes a servant leader (SL) prioritize the needs of others over their own, and thus builds trust with them (Greenleaf 2002). “Servant leaders transcend personal self-interest and aspire to fulfil the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of others” (Birkenmeier et al. 2003). The role of a servant leader is to encourage employees' personal change and to have them emulate the desired behaviors and qualities (Lord, Brown 2003). Several different interpretations of SL have been developed by prominent scholars (Gutierrez-Wirsching et al. 2015) which transformed SL into a multidimensional construct composed of seven dimensions (Liden et al. 2008).

It has been suggested by Liden and colleagues that emotional healing is one component of servant leadership which enables leaders to help their subordinates emotionally and to care for their emotional health and well-being by creating not only mentally, but also emotionally healthy work environments (Black 2010). According to Wheeler, servant leaders' emotional support empowers followers and increases their professional and personal development (Wheeler 2012).

Commitment and communication among the followers, as well as addressing the issues, can raise the organization's potential to become a community. The concept of building community, which was introduced by Spears first, is referred to as the leader's capacity to instill a sense of community spirit within an organization (Barbuto , Wheeler 2006). Additionally, a strong community is an essential component of followers' commitment to their leader, and leads to an organizational

identity (Goffee , Jones 2017). In other words, followers that are committed to each other and communicate with each other are communities, and they give this potential to the organization.

As a third SL dimension, conceptual skills refer to a leader's ability to solve unexpected problems with the help of followers (Hu , Liden 2011). Servant leaders direction giving and guidance is essential for effective team work (Van Dierendonck 2011) and give accurate understanding of changing environment and help subordinates by facilitating the development of shared mental model (Zaccaro et al. 2001).

A servant leader can influence their followers by satisfying their autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Chiniara , Bentein 2016) and boost their sense of self-worth (Stansberry-Brusnahan, Neilsen-Gatti 2009). High level of autonomy helps employees exhibit their best performance and facilitates their work engagement (Demerouti 2014). Follower's involvement in goal-setting process leads to more commitment to goals (Arnold , Drasgow 2000).

In contrast to other leadership styles, SL emphasizes the importance of serving followers' interests and facilitating their growth by creating organizational opportunities (Luthans, Avolio 2003). Leaders who are servants encourage and facilitate the growth of their followers (Chan 2016). Considering the importance of follower's personal growth, servant leaders provide development training and also devolve decision making to their followers ( Sipe 2015; Patterson 2003). The SL distinguishes itself from other leadership styles by prioritizing the needs of subordinates and by emphasizing ethical conduct (Ehrhart 2004). Thus, servant leadership will continue to be promoted.

Ethical leaders are honest, caring, and principled and they can make balanced decision who is a proactive role model and communicate with subordinate about standard ethics (Brown , Treviño 2006) which they follow themselves (Johnson 2012). Table 1-3 summarizes the seven components of servant leadership.

Employees become more engaged to their work when their spiritual development, wellbeing, and work outcomes is promoted by servant leaders (Chen et al. 2011). Servant leaders are humble and this humility has a positive influence on employees 'engagement and give them more sense of responsibility and accountability (Owens , Hekman 2012). SL has this potential to boost the organizational motivation in different fields like commitment (Ambali et al. 2011), trust (Senjaya, Pekerti 2010) and organizational effectiveness (Barbuto , Wheeler 2006), as well as loyalty (Van Dierendonck 2011).

The stewardship of servant leaders helps their followers to understand the requirements of their roles and, as a result, creates a bigger picture regarding their jobs, which generates increased work and organizational pride (Coetzer et al. 2017; R. C. Liden et al. 2008). As a result, servant leaders plan work distribution based on individual abilities and ensure equality and fairness in this regard (Greenleaf 2002; Gregory Stone et al. 2004).

Table 1-3. Summary of servant leadership seven components

	Components	Focus area
SERVANT LEADERSHIP	emotional healing	creating mentally and also emotionally healthy work environments.
	creating value for community	creating sense of community spirit within an organization.
	conceptual skills	solving unexpected problems with the help of followers.
	putting subordinate first	employees need is in the first priority.
	Helping subordinate grow and succeed	Providing opportunities to help employee's growth and progress.
	Empowering	In order to increase employee's sense of self-worth and involving them in goal-setting process which leads to more commitment to goals.
	Behaving Ethically	Promoting standard ethics and treat as a role model for employees.

Source: Faghihi (2022)

As it pertains to servant leadership, work engagement is strengthened when servant leaders take care of their followers' needs and place them as the top priority (Baghurst 2013). Leaders like these create a psychologically safe and meaningful environment for their followers and facilitate high-quality knowledge sharing. (Smith et al. 2004) By first serving followers, the servant leadership style increases work engagement (Khan et al. 2021). Through social exchange relationships with followers, servant leaders create two-way interactions that are valuable enough to continue. Moreover, these leaders foster a serving culture in the workplace and improve work engagement. (R. C. Liden et al. 2013) Table 3-1 summarizes the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement.

Based on this, the following hypothesis can be put forward:

H2. Servant leadership is positively related to the work engagement.

Their active awareness of the team's wishes and needs allows them to listen carefully to team members. In order to persuade others, these leaders first meet the needs of others and, rather than



forcing or considering hierarchy, employ empathetic communication (Spears, Lawrence 2016). Moreover, they serve instead of commanding, use humility instead of authority, and always delegate authority in order to increase the progress and empowerment of their employees (Eva et al. 2019). In this respect, instead of keeping work-related information to themselves, these leaders divulge it to their followers (Elche et al. 2020).

Table 1-4. Summary of servant leadership and work engagement association

	Author(s)	year	Findings
SERVANT LEADERSHIP	Baghurst	2013	there is a positive relationship between servant leadership and work engagement.
	Khan et al.	2021	servant leadership style increases work engagement by serving others first.
	Liden et al.	2013	servant leader fosters a serving culture and increase work engagement.

Source: Faghihi (2022)

A servant leader creates a culture that fosters employee commitment to the organization. They care for and develop their followers (Setyaningrum 2017), and because they are so altruistic, they display the culture of helping others in their speech (Bao et al. 2018). Thus, it is likely that servant leaders use three-dimensional motivating language. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that:

H3. Servant leadership is positively related to the motivating language.

### 1.3. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership (TL) can be categorized into seven behaviours (Carless et al. 2000). An effective transformational leader creates an ideal goal or vision (Jha , Malviya 2017). The vision which means the ideal future of the company is frequently stated and communicated by transformational leader with followers and aligned with this communication, a set of values is conveyed by leaders in order to motivate and guiding the subordinates (Carless et al. 2000). Clarity of the vision is the most important organizational variable which leads to the organization success for achieving the goals (Hamdan et al. 2020). Positive vision of the future helps leaders to leading a successful team (Boyatzis et al. 2015). A summary of transformational leadership components is also provided in Table 1-5.

By recruiting the self-concept of followers, transformational leaders can engage them. Increasing the salience of certain identities and values, linked behaviours and goals to those identities and

values and to a mission that reflects them helps transformational leaders to motivate followers and create personal commitments (Kark, Shamir 2013). When employees received intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration from their leader (Kelloway , Barling 2000), they aware of problems and motivate to use their ability and think in new way to solve the problems, which boost their ability to conceptualize, understand and analyse problems and the quality of their solutions. Under this circumstance, followers feel obligated engaging at work. (Tims et al. 2011)

Table 1-5. Summary of transformational leadership components

	Components	Focus area
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP	Vision	clarifying the organizational goals and ideal future of the company to the subordinates.
	Staff Development	Encourage employee to participate in decision making and giving them authority.
	Supportive Leadership	pay attention to subordinate and respect to followers' feelings and needs.
	Empowerment	improve employee's self-management and self-development as well as their autonomy empowering them.
	Innovative Thinking	Encourage innovation to motivate creativity among employees.
	Lead by Example	Guiding followers through actions.
	Charisma	personal quality which helps leaders to have a great influence on employees.

Source: Faghihi (2022)

On the other hand, transformational leadership makes organizational goals and values more attractive rather than individuals' in order to motivate followers. A transformational leader is able to commit their followers preferring the organizational goals to their own et al. (Chaturvedi et al. 2019) and encourage them by increasing their optimism and decreasing their frustration (Sivanathan, Fekken 2002). Optimism can be defined as the tendency to believe, expect or hope that things will turn out well despite current excruciating experience and it has been proven that it positively associated with work engagement. (Ugwu 2012)

It is important to individuals to attain meaning and it has direct relation to engagement .In fact, meaningful work is one of the workplace characteristics which can increase employee's work engagement (Fairlie 2011) and with knowledge the truth, transformational leaders provide meaningful work to boost their followers' work engagement (Tims et al. 2011).

Transformational leaders are mature in moral reasoning (Turner et al. 2002) and they can create higher level of moral reasoning in their followers (Sivanathan, Fekken 2002). Transformational

leader is able to create value congruence between followers and organization and convince their followers to recognize the values of the organization as superior to their own values. (Kark, Shamir 2013)

According to this style of leadership, the leader's primary goal is to enhance followers' self-management and self-development as well as their autonomy and empowerment, which allows them to come up with their own ideas, create new ones, and increase followers' independence (Dvir et al. 2002).

Individual attention toward staff makes transformational leaders to be supportive and help them to respond their follower's needs properly. Transformational leaders have developmental orientation and they respect to their followers' feelings and needs (Udin 2020). According to path-goal theory, supportive leadership play an important role in effective leadership. Supportive leader provides a friendly and psychologically supportive work environment and display concern for subordinate's welfare. (Khalili 2016)

Moreover, transformational leadership is essential for employee's involvement (EI) (Richardson, Vandenberg 2005). In order to promote employee's involvement and commitment, businesses need to find a way. The optimum situation for EI is when they participating in decision making, teamwork and communication. EI occurs when information regarding the organization's performance is shared with employees to give them knowledge in regards to organization's performance in addition to the ability of cooperating in decision making that has an effect on organizational performance. (Appelbaum et al. 2015)

Transformational leaders encourage subordinates to be innovative and creative and also welcome new solutions and approaches to old problems (Barbutto 2005). It has been argued that TL is positively associated with innovation and transformational leaders who display creativity can be considered as the role model for innovation. (García-Morales et al. 2008) By intellectual stimulation, TL encourages the employees using their critical thinking to identify and solve problems creatively (Jung et al. 2003).

Charisma (idealized influence) is one of the transformational leadership characteristics and the most important component of it (Rok 2009). It would be more likely to find charismatic leadership in a new and struggling organization or an old one that is failing Charisma is a personal quality which enables leaders to have a great power and influence on their followers and enhance their trust which is the foundation of all positive human interactions. (Owens , Hekman 2012).

Studies have shown that transformational leadership and engagement at work are positively correlated (Amor et al. 2019; Breevaart et al. 2014; Zhu et al. 2016). Transformational leaders improve employee engagement by creating a conducive work environment (Mufeed 2018). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers by encouraging them toward a common goal (Sivanathan , Cynthia 2002).

This type of leadership plays a considerable role in stablishing commitment which leads to more work engagement among workforce (Northouse 2021). Besides, transformational leaders provide necessary emotional support which help their subordinates’ felling trust which leads to more work engagement and organizational outcome (Zhu et al. 2016). A brief summary of the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement is shown in Tables 1-6.

Table 1-6. Summary of transformational leadership and work engagement association

	Author(s)	year	Findings
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP	Sivanathan and Cynthia	2002	Work engagement increases when a conducive work environment is created.
	Zhu et al.	2016	supporting followers emotionally in order to earn their trust.
	Northouse	2021	stablishing commitment in order to increase the work engagement.

Source: Faghihi (2022)

Due to the aforementioned reasons, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4. Transformational leadership is positively associated with work engagement.

On the other hand, successful organization as a social institution creates a kind of organizational communication among employees (Nazari 2013) and it need leaders who delve into the future direction of the organization and motivate employees to make changes. As a result, transformational leaders can shape a vision of a bright and needed future in today's turbulent environment and motivate employees to implement the transformational process (Salehnasab 2016). Moreover, transformational leaders not only explain the duties of employees, but also strengthen and encourage cooperation, trust, and innovation between them (Eisenberg et al. 2019).

On the other hand, due to their high emotional intelligence, these leaders understand the emotions of their employees. Transformational leaders empathize with their employees and are there to help them accomplish their projects. Despite being team leaders, they can make a positive impact by

communicating well with their team. They accompany their team members and address their concerns. (Barling et al. 2000)

In addition, transformational leaders lead the existing culture in the organization towards a suitable and strong culture in line with the organization's vision. They convey their strong values by inspirational communication and their great verbal skills. (K. A. Arnold 2017) Therefore, it is likely that transformational leaders use three-dimensional motivating language. Thus, this hypothesis was proposed:

H5. Transformational leadership is positively associated with motivating language.

#### **1.4. Work Engagement**

Before emerging the concept of work engagement, burnout was the main concept which used to explained employee's mental fatigue or emotional exhaustion and it was mostly focusing on negative side of employee's work experience. In 2000, Seligman spoke about positive psychology in American psychology Journal for the first time and tried to emphasize on human strength and positive attributes. This was an important beginning for scholars to concentrate on positive aspects of people while studying them. 2 years after generating this positive movement, this phenomenon was applied and measured in order to performance improvement in workplaces. (Luthans 2002) Following this trend, the word "work engagement" also used to act as an antipode against "burnout" (Schaufeli et al. 2016).

The concept of work engagement that was presented by Kahn for the first time as multidimensional motivational concept. In other words, "in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally during role performances" (Kahn 2017, 694). In fact, work engagement describes the degree of employees' relatedness to their jobs and is most often defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". The first component, vigor, refers to high level of energy, motivation and mental resilience inclining individuals to work for others. Second component, Dedication, is defined by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge and finally the last component, absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated at work while the passage of time is not felt at all. (Schaufeli et al. 2002, 74) Table 1-7 summarizes the components of work engagement.

Table 1-7. Summary of work engagement components in literature review

	Components	Focus area
WORK ENGAGEMENT	dedication	passion, pride, inspiration, and a sense of significance introduce dedication
	vigor	In addition to energy, enthusiasm, and motivation, vigor refers to a persistent tendency to work hard for the benefit of others
	absorption	being totally focused on work without noticing the passing of time

Source: Faghihi (2022)

As far as employee work engagement has significant impact on organizational outcomes consist of task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour (voluntary commitment to the organization) and consequently client satisfaction, contemporary public and private organizations are highly desired to have engaged employees (Bakker et al. 2014). It has been proven that more engaged employees will deliver higher task and contextual performance and superior customer service (Christian et.al 2014).

Additionally, an organization's capacity to manage employee engagement is closely related to its ability to achieve high performance levels and superior business results (Soni 2013). Therefore, “work engagement is an important indicator of occupational well-being for both employees and organizations” (Bakker , Demerouti 2008, 219).

It has been surveyed that leadership styles are underlying factors in employee’s work engagement (MacLeod , Clarke 2009). Servant and transformational leaderships are two leadership styles which are considerably associated with work engagement (Huertas-Valdivia et al. 2019). In addition, leaders’ communication is one factor influencing employee engagement at work (MacLeod , Clarke 2009). The author inspired from conceptual model presented by Rabiul and his colleague (Rabiul , Yean 2021, 4) to demonstrate the relationship between motivating language used by two leadership styles and employee’s work engagement. Hence, the present study examined the impact of transformational and servant leadership styles on work engagement with a mediated effect of motivating language.

## 1.5. Recommended model for the study

Rabiul and Yean model was used to investigate the mediating role of motivating language in two leadership styles on work participation (Rabiul , Yean 2021). As illustrated in Figure 1-1, the

recommended model showed the relationship between transformational leadership and servant leadership as independent variables, work engagement as a dependent variable, and motivating language as a mediator variable. In this model each arrow represented a hypothesis.

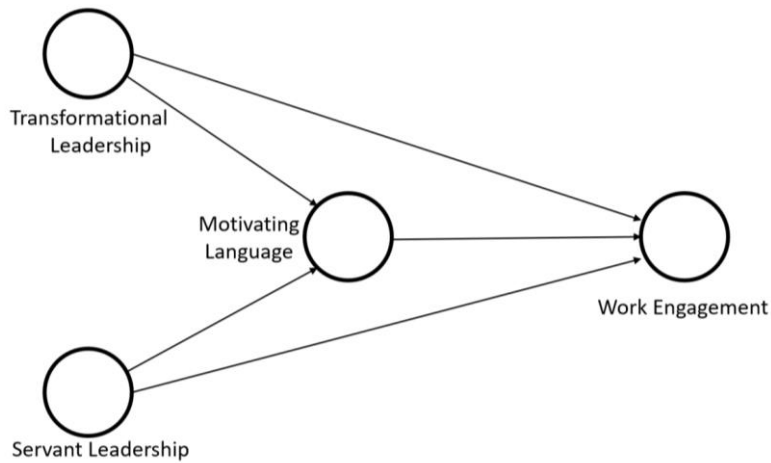


Figure 1-1: Graphical representation of concept

The hypothesis will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Additionally, there will be a detailed explanation of how the research methodology was applied.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodology employed in current study. The study aim and the hypotheses were discussed first. Afterwards, the population, sampling method, research tool, and the pilot study were explained completely, in addition to the data collection procedure, which is described in depth. Furthermore, the author explained the process of data analysis and the factors that led her to choose the method of data analysis that she did. Additionally, before discussing the aforementioned subjects, an overview of the research methodology was presented in the form of a flowchart that described the procedure in much greater detail.

### 2.1. Research method process flowchart

An overview of the research method was presented in Figure 2-1 before moving onto the main discussion in this chapter. As can be seen, the main steps of the research have been visualized in order to provide a deeper understanding of the logic behind the present study.

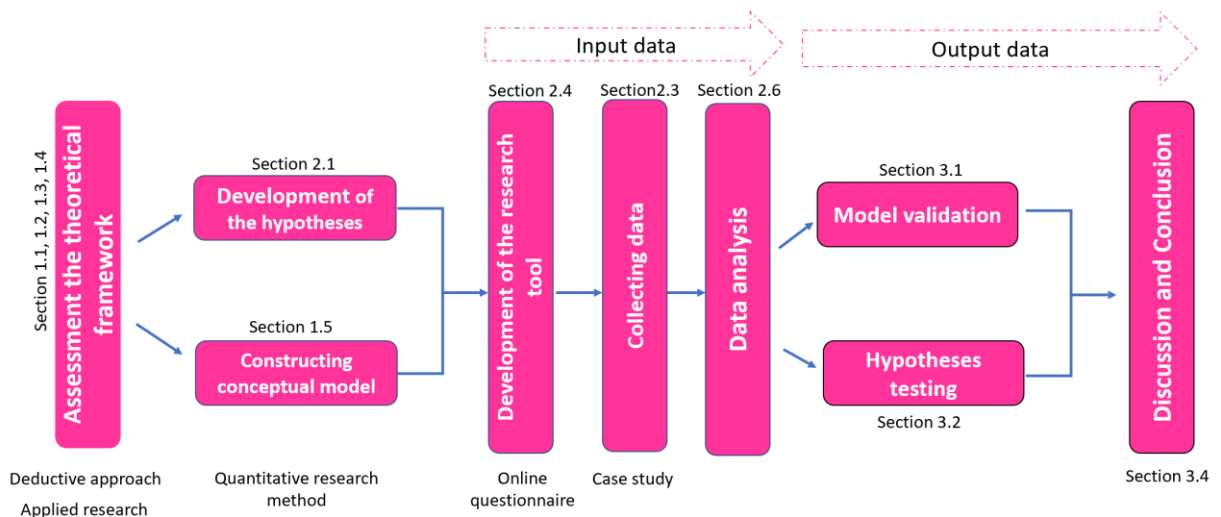


Figure 2-1: Research method process flowchart

The research stages, from choosing the research approach to collecting and analyzing data, are dependent on a researcher's worldview and attitude. Accordingly, researchers must clearly



delineate the philosophical basis of the work as well as the type of attitude or worldview at the beginning of any research project.

Considering the aim of this study, which is to examine the impact of leaders' oral communication on work engagement among tourism agencies and to provide practical implications to these businesses, this study can be classified as a case study in terms of its purpose. Research in general involves a number of layers, each of which is influenced by its counterparts at a higher level (Saunders et al. 2019). As a result, this multi-layered pattern illustrates the research process. Layers include philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons, and techniques and procedures. According to Saunders and his colleague, research is based upon the philosophy and worldview of the researcher. The next stages of research, from selecting the research approach to collecting and analyzing data, are all influenced by the worldview and attitude of the researcher. For this reason, any research should begin with the description of the philosophical foundation of the work, as well as the types of attitudes and worldviews to be used.

Research philosophy represents the type of researcher's view of the world, helping researchers to become aware of the paradigm they use implicitly when they formulate their research questions. One of the philosophical paradigms, positivism refers to the use of the empirical scientific method as a means of acquiring knowledge. The positivist philosophy is founded on the principles of experimental sciences and objective reasoning. According to positivism, reality is something that can be experienced by a person's senses. For instance, it is something which can be observed or measured. Accordingly, the positivism paradigm was applied to this study (Howell 2013).

Moreover, the research approach is determined by the researcher's paradigm of the world. Deductive reasoning was used in this study as the research approach. A deductive approach relies on general information and accepted facts which reveal partial unknowns and lead to an outcome. Using this method of reasoning, the researcher can predict the phenomena that occur based on the existing theories. Theories are found, predictions are made, and hypotheses are constructed through deductive reasoning. (Bryman 2016)

## 2.2. Study aim and hypotheses

In context with the problem that we discussed earlier, the purpose of this study was to determine whether the motivating language used by servant and transformational leaders could increase employee engagement among employees of tourism agency companies in Tehran city, Iran.

According to the model and also literature review which were presented in chapter one, current study had five hypotheses. As it mentioned before, in order to implementing the transformational process, employees needed to be guided, motivated, encouraged, and inspired through their leader's well communication (K. A. Arnold 2017; Barling et al. 2000; Eisenberg et al. 2019). Therefore, the bellow hypothesis was suggested:

**Null hypothesis (H0):** There is a positive association between transformational leadership and motivation language.

**Alternative hypothesis (H1):** There is no positive association between transformational leadership and motivating language.

Moreover, servant leaders served the needs of employees first , care their followers' development, and promote the culture of helping others by means of their empathic speech (Bao et al. 2018; Setyaningrum 2017; Spears, L. C., & Lawrence 2016). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed:

**Null hypothesis (H0):** There is a positive association between servant leadership and motivation language.

**Alternative hypothesis (H1):** There is no positive association between servant leadership and motivating language.

Moreover, leader's verbal skill can contribute to emotional and constructive relationship with understandable feedbacks and ultimately lead to employee's effective decision making and also more work engagement (Bhatti et al. 2018; Mayfield , Mayfield 2016). Then, this hypothesis was proposed:

**Null hypothesis (H0):** There is a positive association between motivation language and work engagement.

**Alternative hypothesis (H1):** There is no positive association between motivating language and work engagement.

Several studies investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement (Amor et al. 2019; Breevaart et al. 2014; Mufeed 2018; Zhu et al. 2016). Thus, it seemed likely that transformational leadership has a positive impact on engagement at work. Accordingly, this hypothesis was presented:

**Null hypothesis (H0):** There is a positive association between transformational leadership and work engagement.

**Alternative hypothesis (H1):** There is no positive association between transformational leadership and work engagement.

The servant leadership style establishes a serving culture that improves work engagement and increases employee engagement by serving followers first and creating two-way interactions that are worth continuing (Khan et al. 2021; R. C. Liden et al. 2013). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was put forth:

**Null hypothesis (H0):** There is a positive association between servant leadership and work engagement.

**Alternative hypothesis (H1):** There is no positive association between servant leadership and work engagement.

The next section discusses the data collection process. Collecting data is a critical step in testing hypotheses and achieving the research goal. This section discusses how the population and sample size were chosen and how the data was collected.

### **2.3. Population and sample size**

To test the research hypotheses, the researcher needed to collect data. In order to accomplish this, the population and research sample must first be carefully determined. A case study is a form of research that discusses how current facts are viewed in a specific situation. In other words, the case study is a scientific research method that focuses on a specific case. In this type of study, each social unit is considered as a whole. This unit could be an organization, a family, or even a community. In the current study, the case study strategy was employed.

According to the current study, the population is composed of all employees of tourism private companies in Tehran, Iran. According to the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of Iran,

following the outbreak of the Corona virus and the severe recession in the Iranian tourism industry, the number of active tourism companies that specifically sell and hold tours had decreased significantly. However, the companies on the list of this organization had not announced their closure and, while having a license, they are carrying out other activities. For this reason, the researcher had to have a brief interview with three experts in the field to estimate the number of authorized and active companies in the field of tourism.

By means of interview which was performed with tourism experts in Iran, tourism companies could be categorized in four groups:

1. Authorized executing companies
2. Semi-authorized performing groups
3. Unauthorized performing groups
4. Semi-authorized executors

Only the “Authorized executing companies” which could be identified as a company with licence are included in the study population and there are only 21 companies with this condition in Tehran city. Following the interview with some of the companies, the author realized that it seemed the real number of employees were not revealed. Therefore, the estimated population was 546 (21x25, This number 25 considered as the average number of employees in each company) and consequently, based on Cochran formula, the statistical sample size of 225 people is considered as a representative of this population (Bougie 2016). In order to collecting data from targeted respondents, a simple random sampling technique was used. Senior and junior employees rated their supervisor’s leadership styles and motivating language in addition to their own level of engagement.

#### **2.4. Pilot study**

One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that the researcher identifies defects in the research tool as much as possible before starting the main survey. It mostly can prevent the occurrence of consequence problems or repeating the distribution of questionnaires. A pilot study is a small-scale study which enable the researcher to perform a pre-test for a specific tool such as a questionnaire or interview. In current study, before the main distribution of questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted to identify any potential problems with the study tool and measure the potential time of filling the questionnaire.

The pilot study was conducted during the first week on January and the feedbacks of the respondents were collected. The number of eight people participated and revealed their feedbacks. There was a misunderstanding and unclarity about the word “My leader”. Generally, the word “leader” used in the questionnaire was not normally used in the study population. In order to eliminate the potential confusion of this challenging word, the author decided to explain more the word “Leader” in the bracket.

## **2.5. Data collection method and data collection time period**

In accordance with the approach, strategy, and method selected before starting each research, data may be collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and etc. On the other hand, in some studies, several methods may be employed simultaneously to collect data, depending on the worldview and philosophy of the researcher, which forms the basis for the study. In this study, the questionnaire method was used to collect data. A questionnaire survey was conducted online. The author used Google Form to create the questionnaire and distributed it online to respondents. Through HR managers, the survey was announced to the targeted agencies. In cooperation with human resource managers, the questionnaire link was sent to employees' email addresses following approval.

Forty-six questions were included in this research tool to collect and record information which was illustrated in Appendix 2. The author created the questionnaire by using four different standard questionnaires to measure four research latent variables. As mentioned, both leadership styles in addition to motivating language and work engagement were latent variables that could not be determined with one single question. Thus, each latent variable needed to be measured with several questions.

To this regard, Carless developed short form TL questionnaire to investigate the TL style (Carless et al. 2000). In this standard questionnaire, seven questions were selected to measure seven TL factors such as vision, staff development, innovative thinking, and charisma. Questions like “My leader encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions” or “My leader instils pride and respect in others and inspires me by being highly competent” were asked for evaluating the TL style.

For measurement of the second leadership style, the standard short form SL questionnaire was used. A short version of the SL questionnaire was developed by Liden and included seven

questions that examined items such as Emotional Healing, Putting Subordinates First, and Behaving Ethically (R. Liden et al. 2014). This standard questionnaire consisted of statements such as "I would seek help from my leader if I had a personal problem" or "My leader would not compromise ethical principles to achieve success".

Motivational language is also a latent variable that played the role of a mediating variable in this study. The Mayfield standard questionnaire was used to examine this hidden variable (Mayfield et al. 1995). The focus of this questionnaire was on the three categories: Direction giving language, Meaning making language and empathic language. Questions such "My leader gives me good explanations of what needs to be done in my work", "My Leader offers me advice about how to fit in with other members of this organization" and "My leader shows concern about my job satisfaction" were applied in this standard questionnaire to assess the leadership motivating language.

Lastly, in order to measurement of work engagement as the dependent variable of this study, the standard short form WE questionnaire was employed (Schaufeli et al. 2016). Dedication, absorption, and vigor are three criteria with which work engagement was investigated. "My job inspires me", "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work" and "I feel happy when I am working intensely" were some examples of this questionnaire five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was employed for designing the questionnaire.

Due to low employee participation during the early stages of the questionnaire distribution, the author became a temporary member of the social media's groups upon negotiation with HR managers. With continuous follow-up and regular reminders, plus polite and friendly encouragement, the author encouraged staff to complete a questionnaire during a month of membership in these WhatsApp and Telegram groups. Considering the feedback received from employees and checking their tolerance capacity, the author continued to encourage staff to complete the questionnaire. Moreover, since the questionnaires were distributed online, the risk of unfilled cases could be prevented by star questions.

The data collection process was performed from the middle of January to the end of February. In this study, the cross-sectional method was utilized since it was conducted over a certain period of time. As a result of cross-sectional methods, one or more attributes are collected over a period of time. By sampling a population, cross-sectional data is collected over a period of time (e.g., one day, one week, one month) to gather data on one or more traits.

## 2.6. Method of data analysis

A quantitative data analysis method was used in the current study. With the quantitative method, the relevant data are converted into numerical and quantitative quantities. Researchers use different spectrums to translate their sentences and questions into numbers by using questionnaires, such as Likert scales, which was also employed in the current study. In response to questionnaires, respondents provide researchers with numerical information by selecting the desired options. Researcher conclusions can be drawn by using these numerical data.

The partial least square structure equation modelling or PLS-SEM was used in this study. This type of model is called variance-based because it considers the total variance and uses it to estimate parameters (J. Hair et al. 2017). Generally, Smart-PLS is suitable software for research with small sample size and non-normal distributions of data that contain complex models and mediating variables (do Valle , Assaker 2016). In fact, PLS-SEM is a statistical method for validating a conceptual research model. For this reason, there are three steps in PLS-SEM: model specification, structural model evaluation, and measurement model evaluation. In this process, first, the measurement model is evaluated by PLS-SEM, and then the structural models. (Risher 2020)

This method is widely used in social science especially organizational management (Sosik et al. 2009) and hospitality management (Ali et al. 2018). The researcher must first identify the various factors (factors are the main variables of the research, even independent, dependent, or mediated variables) that shaped the phenomenon under study. Then, based on the existing theoretical foundations, guessed the relationships between the factors and make hypotheses. It must also identify several items (or indicators) to measure for each factor (or latent variable). After hypothesizing and drawing the initial conceptual model which was presented earlier in Figure 1-1, this model could be implemented in the two software environments Smart PLS (Ringle et al. 2015) or PLS-Graph (Chin 2003). Finally, using the structural equation modelling method, the conceptual model can be validated.

The structure equation modelling is divided to two models. The reflective model and the formative. In the reflective model indicators are caused by the latent variable, while in the formative model, indicators cause the latent construct. Therefore, in reflective model, the arrows point from the hidden variable to the indicators. In this research the reflective model was used since all indicators were caused by their latent variables.

Prior to testing the model, data had to be collected. Once the data had been collected, the data had to be checked for normality test and common method bias/variance (CMB). In order to test the normality, the Amos software was employed. This software is suitable to create a model for latent variables and test the normality for them. For normality, skewness between 1 and -1 and kurtosis between 3 and -3 are needed. As it illustrated in Appendix 7, the results showed that skewness and kurtosis were out of the acceptance criteria and consequently, data did not follow a normal distribution.

Moreover, for checking CMB, Harman's single-factor test was employed by means of SPSS software. This phenomenon occurs when variations in responses are attributed to the instrument and not to predispositions of the respondents. As far as the result was below than 0.50 (45.554), it could be argued that there was no CMB.

As it mentioned data was not normal. Therefore, in order to performing model, fit, SmartPLS was used. Before assessing model fit the multicollinearity was also assessed and there was no multicollinearity issue (Sulaiman et al. 2021). This phenomenon was investigated because it is difficult to distinguish among the individual effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable when there is multicollinearity in a model.

In order to test the model, a two-step procedure was followed (Henseler et al. 2015). In the first step construct validity was evaluated. Construct validity describes how well the measurement tool measures the desired factor. Convergent and discriminant validity were used to evaluate construct validity. Convergent validity refers to the degree of internal correlation and alignment of the items of measurement in a factor and it includes Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), composite reliability (CR), and average extracted variance (AVE).

Afterward, discriminant validity was assessed to show how different the questions of one factor are from those of other factors. Discriminant validity has also three criteria to check: cross loading, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion.

Having explained the methodology, we will describe the results in the following chapters.



### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dissertation findings can be drafted and presented after the research data has been collected and analyzed. The research results can then be compared with the research hypothesis. As a result, the researcher presents her findings in this chapter. Therefore in the following chapter, the author discussed first the results related to construct validity and then discussed hypotheses.

#### 3.1. Convergent and discriminant validity

Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient is one of the methods for measuring the questionnaire's internal consistency. Using this coefficient, positive values higher than 0.70 are considered appropriate which is demonstrated in Appendix 3. Additionally, the information related to average extracted variance (which is also available on Appendix 5) showed the correlation between a factor and its items. The higher the correlation, the better the model fit. Convergent validity requires an AVE greater than 0.50. When it comes to composite reliability (CR), it can be argued that convergent validity exists when the CR is greater than 0.70 (Also can see Appendix 4). In current study, convergent validity was met. Table 3-1 provided the amount of all three components of convergent validity for the whole variables.

Table 3-1: Convergent Validity with AVE, CR, and  $\alpha$  (note: AVE=Average variance extraction, CR=composite reliability,  $\alpha$ = Cronbach’s alpha, ML= motivating language, TL= transformational leadership, SL= servant leadership, WE= work engagement.)

Variables	Convergent validity		
	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
ML	0.949	0.955	0.587
SL	0.896	0.918	0.617
TL	0.946	0.956	0.756
WE	0.935	0.946	0.659

On the other hand, discriminant validity indicates how different the questions of one factor are from those of other factors and it consists of cross loading, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion. Each item of each factor had to have cross loading over than the other items of other factors. In addition, based on Fornell-Larcker Criterion, each variable had to be higher than the other variables which is demonstrated in Table 3-2. Therefore,

the item ML8 was deleted due to lower loading and problematic Fornell-Larcker criterion condition. The cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criterion may suggest false discriminant validity when used alone, thus the preferred method is Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) (Risher 2020).

Table 3-2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variables	ML	SL	TL	WE
ML	0.766			
SL	0.691	0.785		
TL	0.82	0.731	0.87	
WE	0.571	0.358	0.485	0.812

The acceptance HTMT considered below than 0.90 which as it showed in Table 3-3, this criterion was met by all items (Henseler et al. 2015). Acceptable discriminant validity of a measurement model indicates that a factor in the model interacts more with its items (indicators) rather than with other items. In the partial least square method and structural equation modelling, this is done by a matrix in which the cells of this matrix contain the values of the correlation coefficients between the factors and the general diameter, is the square root of the AVE values of each factor. As it demonstrated in Table 3-3, the HTMT acceptance criterion was met.

Table 3-3: Heterotrait-Monotrait

Variables	ML	SL	TL	WE
ML				
SL	0.735			
TL	0.859	0.789		
WE	0.597	0.380	0.509	

Structural measurement and the quality of model fit were assessed by means of the standard root mean residual (SRMR), Cross-validated redundancies (Q square), and coefficient of determination (R square). According to Hair et al. a good model fit has standard root mean residual (SRMR) less than 0.08. In this study, SRMR was 0.066 which showed the good model fit. Q square results also showed that model has predictive relevance as all were above than zero. R square explains how much change in the dependent variables can be accounted by mediate and also independent variable. Therefore, 0.688 and 0.323 change in servant and transformational leadership can explained by ML and WE respectively. According to Hair et al. R square for ML is substantial while WE were weak in terms of R square (Hair et al. 2014). Table 3-4 demonstrated all the information in this regard.

Table 3-4: Quality of the model fit

Variables	R square (adjusted)	Q square	SRMR
ML	0.688 (substantial))	0.397	0.066
WE	0.323 (weak)	0.208	

### 3.2. Hypotheses testing

In step two, for investigating hypotheses, consistent bootstrapping with the 5000 sample was performed to assess the reflective model. In this assessment, the effect of control variables (Age, Gender, Education, Years of work, years of under supervision and position) on work engagement and motivating language were also estimated. Accordingly, gender (code, female=1, male=2) of respondents had significant impact on work engagement and motivating language. Results, presented in Table 3-5, indicated that age and education had impact on motivating language and work engagement respectively. Additionally, years of under supervision had impact on work engagement.

Table 3-5: Control-Variables

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Age -> ML	-0.085	0.043	1.958	0.025
Age -> WE	0.102	0.064	1.593	0.056
Education -> ML	-0.05	0.045	1.109	0.134
Education -> WE	-0.104	0.061	1.71	0.044
Gender -> ML	0.062	0.037	1.677	0.047
Gender -> WE	-0.174	0.056	3.126	0.001
Position -> ML	-0.036	0.038	0.946	0.172
Position -> WE	0.036	0.056	0.638	0.262
Years of under supervision -> ML	0.038	0.042	0.893	0.186
Years of under supervision -> WE	0.15	0.076	1.972	0.024
Years of work -> ML	0.083	0.05	1.645	0.05

Finally, through investigation on path coefficients, hypotheses were checked. In this analysis, those hypotheses which contain P value less than 0.05 and T value above than 1.90 will be accepted. According to the table 6, three hypotheses were supported, however two of them were rejected. As it demonstrated in

Table 3-6, it could be argued that:

H1. Transformational leadership is not positively associated with work engagement.

H2. Servant leadership is not positively associated with work engagement.

H3. Transformational leadership is positively associated with motivating language.

H4. Servant leadership is positively associated with Motivating language.

H5. Motivating language is positively associated with work engagement.

Table 3-6: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesises	Original Sample	SD	T statistics	P value
TL -> WE	0.064	0.131	0.489	0.313
SL -> WE	-0.16	0.132	1.211	0.113
TL -> ML	0.73	0.096	7.641	0
SL -> ML	0.168	0.101	1.657	0.049
ML -> WE	0.668	0.132	5.07	0

### 3.3. Descriptive statistics

The main goal of descriptive statistics is to calculate the parameters of a community using a census of all members of that community. In most cases, it is necessary to examine the general knowledge and how quantities are distributed in a statistical community. In this case, descriptive statistics would be the best option to summarize the information and descriptions. Occasionally, the amount of information gathered by a researcher can be very large, so it is necessary to summarize and organize them using statistical methods in order to make them meaningful and understandable. A descriptive statistical approach can help to organize quantitative information of high volume. In the descriptive statistical method, frequency distribution tables, frequency percentages, and averages are used. These statistical methods are performed using software that has been developed specifically for this purpose. The SPSS software, one of these software applications that allows fast, accurate and reliable data analysis, was used in the current study as well to reveal the descriptive statistics.

According to descriptive statistics, this survey had 225 respondents. Following the collection of the answers between January and February and the arrangement of them, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed. There were more male respondents than female respondents, with 56% being male and 44% being female. 43% of respondents were between the

ages of 30 and 35 who were the majority and people between 35 and 40 years old, allocated the second rank to themselves. Moreover, 49% of participants of this research had the master education level and only 8% were PhD.

Based on the responses, five fields of work were identified. Around 32% of employees are involved in planning and selling agency packages. Additionally, tour guides and IT specialists constituted 14% and 11% of the staff, respectively. Most respondents also have less than 5 years of tourism experience, and the majority have collaborated with their leaders for less than 5 years. Table 3-7 demonstrated demographic data. The respondents' demographic charts are also provided in Appendix 1.

Table 3-7: Demographic Data

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	Category	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE	20-25	16	7.1%
	25-30	28	12.4%
	30-35	96	42.7%
	35-40	80	35.6%
	>40	5	2.2%
GENDER	female	98	43.6%
	male	127	53.4%
EDUCATION	diploma	17	7.6%
	bachelor	83	36.9%
	master	110	48.9%
	PhD	15	6.7%
DEPARTMENT	financial	16	7.1%
	executive	32	14.2%
	advertisement	18	8%
	sale and planning	71	31.6%
	software and IT	25	11.1%

### 3.4. Discussion

In this chapter, the author interprets the findings and results of the research and makes a conclusion. Correct conclusions and acceptable recommendations are therefore a vital aspect of research that may truly be a means to transform ideas into practical solutions for future success. In other words, conclusions that are offered based on good analysis may help to overcome current difficulties that are getting in the way of the organization's objectives.

Despite previous studies, the direct link between transformational and servant leadership with work engagement has not been established, however, previous studies were reached to other

results. As an instance, findings of research done on nurses at Tehran's public hospitals indicated that there is a favourable and substantial link between transformational leadership and work engagement (Ebrahimi et al. 2019). Homayeni et al. (2018) revealed the positive impact of this leadership style on work engagement among the employees of social science faculty at Tehran university. Other results of study samples outside of Iran also confirmed this relationship, where the transforming leaders have a significant impact on their subordinates' work engagement (Muhammad et al. 2013).

As well, although servant leadership has been proven to positively impact work engagement by many scholars, the results of this study did not conform to previous research. A survey was conducted in New Zealand that investigated the direct and indirect paths between servant leadership and work engagement, while the work life balance acted as the mediator between the two variables, and the results showed a positive and significant correlation, either directly or indirectly (Haar et al. 2017). Kaya and Karatepe (2020) showed that servant leadership, in comparison to another leadership style, had a stronger indirect impact to employee satisfaction by mediatory of work engagement.

Generally, in the mediation model describes how or why the two dependent and independent variables are also related by means of the mediator variable. In this model, it is assumed that the mediating variable affects the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Therefore, an indirect effect is introduced by entering a mediator variable in the model. Thus, direct, indirect, and total effects should be discussed more precisely. The total effect of the dependent variable (X) and the independent variable (Y) with the mediator (M) is demonstrated in the following equation:

$$c = c' + ab$$

In this equation, **c** is the total effect of **X** on **Y**, **c'** and **ab** are the direct and indirect effect of **X** on **Y** respectively. Additionally, **a** is the effect of **X** on **M** and **b** is the effect of **M** on **Y** (Hayes 2017). Based on the results of the study, we have accepted that there is no direct relationship (**c'**) between transformational and servant leadership as independent variables and work engagement as the dependent variable and for this reason, the total effect is equal to indirect effect.

Furthermore, it appeared in this study that transformational and servant leadership styles with the help of motivational language as a mediating variable had significant effect on the dependent variable. Several previous studies had also confirmed these results. A study that examined the

relationship between a leader's communication skills and self-efficacy concluded that this skill plays a crucial role in the development of self-efficacy among female health care professionals. Therefore, self-efficacy increased 34% when the motivating language usage level was raised (Mayfield , Mayfield 2012).

In addition, Gutierrez-Wirsching (2019) investigated the servant leader's motivating language impact on several organizational outcomes in two different countries. This scholar examined the relationship between servant leadership and organizational outcomes, including performance, employee turnover, job satisfaction and absenteeism and used different model to investigate the mediation, moderation, and direct effect of motivating language through this study. Lastly, mediation model of motivating language was chosen as the best model which means that the use of motivating language influences all employee outcomes, even though there are strong links between servant leadership and employee outcomes.

Rabiul and Yean (2021) also indicated that motivating language had direct impact on work engagement. These scholars conducted a survey among lower and mid-level employees of three to five-star hotels in Bangladesh and investigated the impact of transformational and servant leadership styles on employees' work engagement with mediating effect of motivating language. In this research, direct effect of two leadership styles on work engagement in addition their indirect effect with mediation effect of motivating language. Through this investigation, motivating language and work engagement also presented with their factors in the model which enabled the scholars to investigate the relationship more precisely.

The researcher attempted to explain her findings and the reasons for achieving them in this chapter. As such, according to the results and tests conducted in the study, the model presented in the study has been validated and the hypotheses examined, and a discussion of why a hypothesis has been confirmed or rejected has been provided. To integrate and put all the previous chapters together, it is time to summarize the findings of this research. Therefore, the next section summarizes the research findings.

## CONCLUSION

Motivating language is a skill in which a leaders can establish a high-quality relationship with their subordinates, both men and women. The leader's motivating language refers to the fact that leadership speech can be used as a tool to motivate employees by guiding followers and reduce uncertainty about employee's task in addition to clarifying organization goals and vison. By means of this skill, leaders also have this ability to explain cultural norms and values in order to guide and direct the actions of employees and lastly leaders with motivational language skills can support their employees more logically and emotionally and also encourage their progress.

On the other hand, employees who are professional and motivated constitute a significant part of an organization's competitive advantage and as far as it is crucial to gain a competitive advantage in nowadays severely competitive environment, keeping and increasing employee engagement are key concerns of any organizations that helps employees to be physically, mentally, and emotionally engaged when they are doing their jobs which ultimately leads to gaining organizatinal goals.

As transformational and servant leadership are two leadership styles which were more related to the work engagement and as it has been proven that employees who are communicate emotionally with their organizations has shown greater level of work engagement, the aim of this study was to investigate the impact of these two leaderships' motivating language on work engagement among the employees of twenty-one travel agency companies in Tehran, Iran. This study is also valuable for travel agency companies' leaders as it gives employees' opinion about the importance of motivating language and also type of leadership which they can employ in order to increase their employee's engagement.

In order to investigate this relationship, five hypotheses were designed to be tested in the next stages of the research. Based on these five hypotheses, a direct and indirect effects were described for transformational and servant leadership styles on employee engagement, where direct effect was produced by the absence of motivating language and indirect effect was produced when leaders used motivating language in interactions with employees. Before testing the hypotheses, data was collected from twenty-one travel agency companies. Due to the lack of access to the exact number of tourism companies employees, which was not updated by the Iran's Ministry of Cultural



Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts and also it was not revealed by these twenty-one companies, the author used the average number of employees in these twenty-one companies and considered the number twenty-five as the average number for each company. After estimating the number of population, the sample size was estimated and necessary coordination was made before connecting to the companies' social medias. Questionnaire was used as the research tool which constructed by four standard questionnaire to measure transformational and servant leadership style in addition to the motivating language used by the leaders of travel agency companies for engaging the employees. After applying pilot study, the questionnaires were distributed among the companies from the half of January to the end week of February.

After data collection, the data got prepared for analysing. Descriptive statistics findings which was presented in chapter three showed that participants mostly were between 30 to 35 years old. More males than females participated in the study. Additionally, people with master degree were the majority of respondents.

In order to validating the constructed model of current study, Smart-PLS software was used. This software was also appropriate as the data and the sample size was non-normal and small respectively. Convergent validity of a model were also evaluated in order to assess the correlation between a factor and its items. As it was demonstrated in table 3-1, for this validity, three criteria including average variance extraction, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha were assessed. Discriminant validity also explored by means of cross-loading, Fornell-Larcker, and Heterotrait-Monotrait criteria to be assure that each factor interacts more with its items than with others in the model. According to the findings of chapter three, both of these validity criteria were met in this study.

After assessing the convergent and discriminant validity which were essential steps, the hypotheses were tested. Results indicated that hypotheses with P values less than 0.05 were accepted, and consequently, only three hypotheses were accepted. This results indicated that transformational and servant leadership styles had only indirect effect on subordinates among Tehran travel agencies.

The effect of control variables such as age, gender, years of working and years of being under supervision on motivating language and work engagement was also examined. According to the obtained results in chapter three, a significant impact of gender on work engagement and also motivating language was found in this study. Interestingly, age and education both influenced

motivation for language and work engagement, according to findings from chapter three. The study also found that years of supervision had an impact on work engagement.

Every scientific research has its own limitations. Most researchers even encounter limitation at the beginning of in their research Thus, in the next section, the limitation of this study will be discussed.

## **Limitation and future research**

A major limitation of this study was the lack of access to information and statistics from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. The ministry has published an outdated list of many businesses licensed for tourism activities on its website. However, for the reasons outlined in the introduction to the study, most of these businesses have been shut down. Since they are no longer active, it was not possible to include them in the research population.

Additionally, the data were collected over a specific period of time, which reflects the cross-sectional nature of the data. This implies that the subjects were observed at a particular point in time and that the results are not representative of other times, past or future. As a result, it is suggested that more research be conducted in this area.

Furthermore, since every study is conducted within a specific timeframe, the author only surveyed employees of tourism agencies in Tehran. Accordingly, the results of the study are applicable only to these agencies. Moreover, further research could be conducted to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between leaders' communication skills and their employees' motivation to work in tourism agencies in other cities or provinces.

Moreover, the concept of motivational language is a relatively new concept that requires further study. To investigate the impact of leadership motivating language skill on work engagement, this study examined the tourism industry (and exclusively tourism companies). It is recommended that this subject be considered in other industries as well.

A quantitative methodology was used in this study, as previously described. In order to investigate other influential factors, a qualitative approach is also recommended. In other words, a qualitative method can also be used to measure other mediators which influence work engagement.

## **Practical implication**

Research recommendation which presented by the researcher is one of the main outcomes of each research. In this section, researcher proposes some suggestions based on what was gained from the research result. These suggestions should be directly related to the findings and results of the research. In current research, based on the hypotheses presented at the beginning of the research, some suggestions were made. As a result of this study, tourism agency company leaders are well advised to employ transformational and servant leadership styles using motivational spoken language. This study revealed the importance of motivating language in boosting employee work engagement. For this reason, tourism companies also can train those leaders who are not intrinsically proficient in this skill and encourage leaders with strong communicational capabilities to use motivating language properly for engaging their subordinates.

In addition to training managers in communication skills, it is important that these skills are also evaluated regularly and at specified intervals, and this should be done through a questionnaire that is given to all employees. In this way, managers will be able to observe the changes in their skills, and if there are any shortcomings, they will be realistically aware of their weakness, and will be able to take the appropriate corrective action. In other words, managers, given the need to use motivational language, develop this skill in themselves and, through employee evaluation, understand the extent of this ability in themselves.

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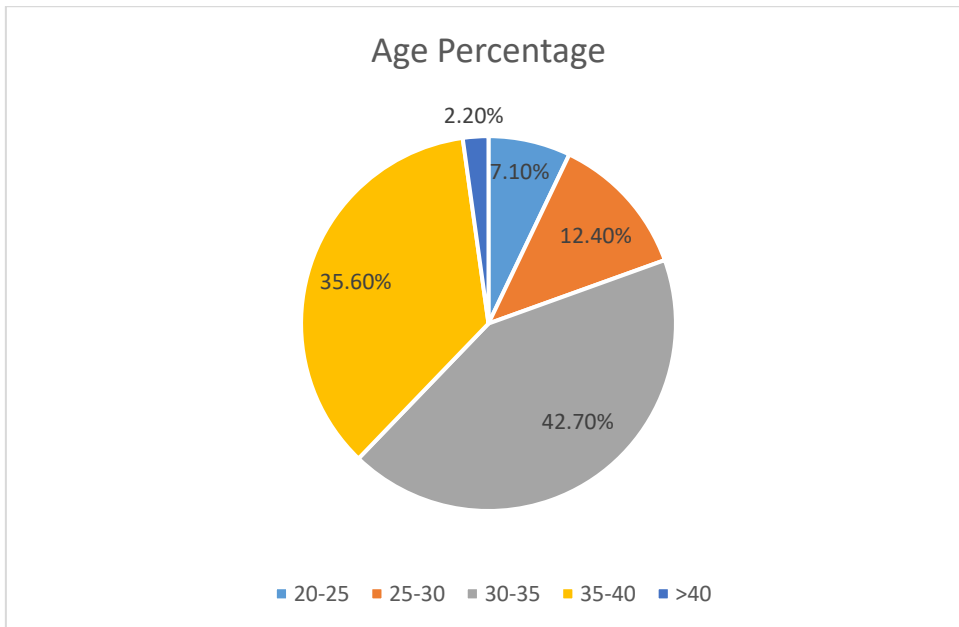
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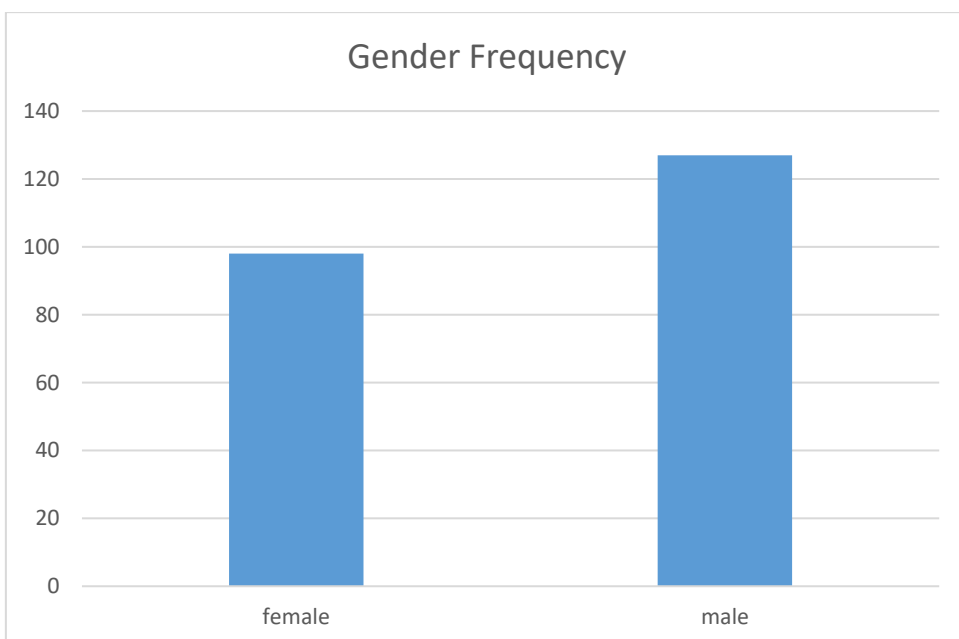


# APPENDICED

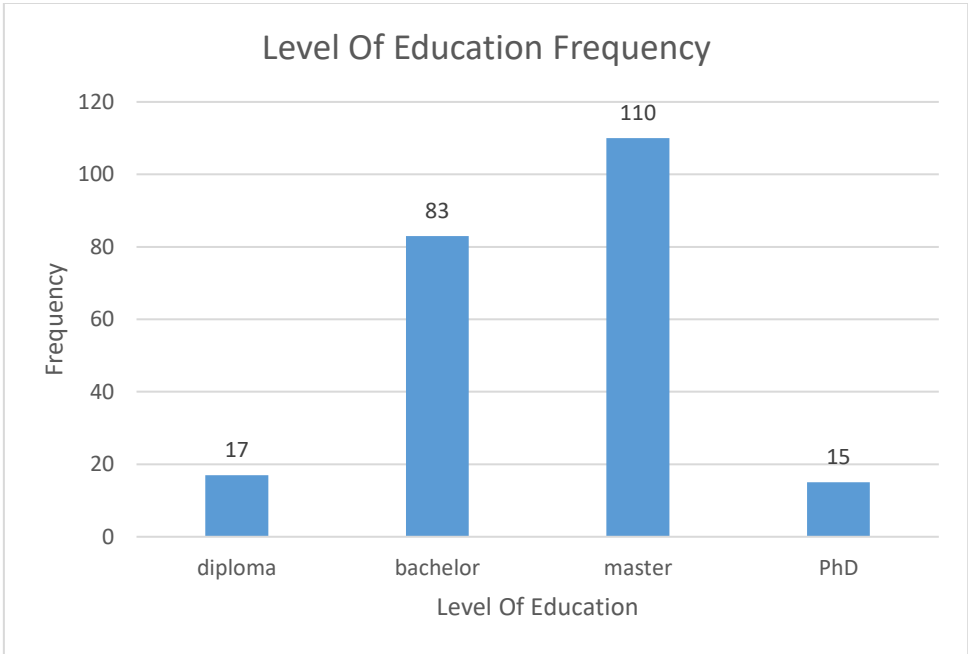
## Appendix 1: Respondents demographic charts



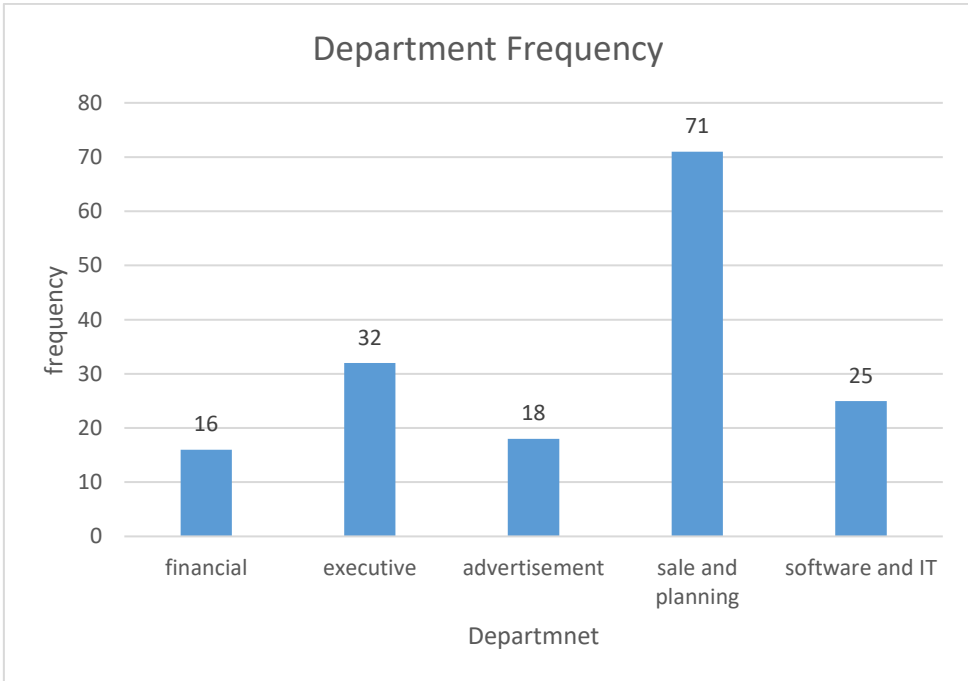
Source: Faghihi (2022, 27), author's calculations



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Motivating language is a skill that enables managers to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings in a way that, on the one hand, conveys the desired concept to employees and, on the other hand, motivates them. Thus, business conversations are conveyed properly, and due to the created motivation, employees become enthusiastic about what they are doing. Therefore, the organization achieves its goals more successfully. For this reason, it is recommended that employees evaluate their managers' motivating language skills.

Dear participant

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the impact of your current supervisor 'motivating language on employee's work engagement through 38 questions. Please rate your supervisor' by choosing from one of the 1-5 scale. (5="completely agree", 4="agree", 3="neutral", 2="disagree", 1="completely disagree").

By filling out this questionnaire, you will help a lot in doing this research. In advance, it is appreciated for your time and consideration.

Question No		Strongly disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
1	My job inspires me.				
2	I am enthusiastic about my job.				
3	I am proud on the work that I do.				
4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.				
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.				
6	At my work, I feel bursting with energy.				

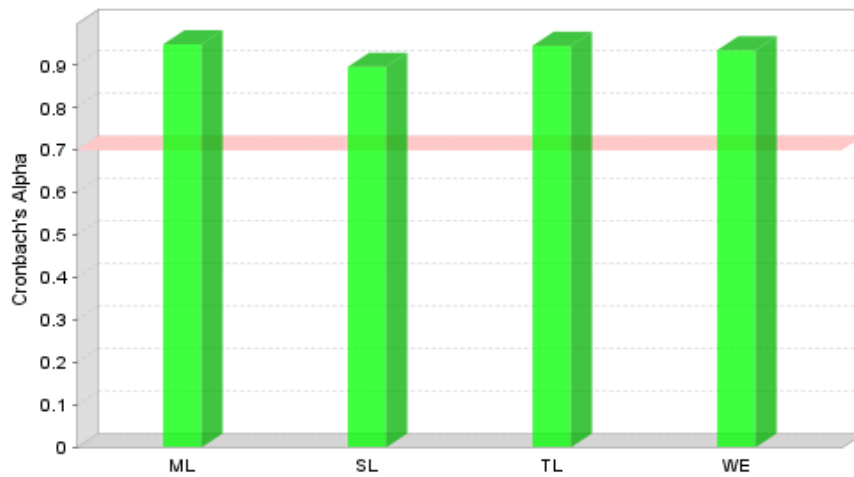
7	I am immersed in my work.					
8	I get carried away when I am working.					
9	I feel happy when I am working intensely.					
If you need to explain more about each of the questions, please leave me a message in this section						
10	My leader provides me with helpful information about forth coming changes affecting my work.					
11	My leader gives me good explanations of what needs to be done in my work.					
12	My leader provides me with helpful information about past changes affecting my work.					
13	My leader gives me clear instructions about solving job-related problems.					
14	My leader provides me with easily understandable instructions about my work.					
15	My leader offers me advice about how to behave at the organizations social gathering.					
16	My Leader offers me advice about how to “fit in” with other members of this organization.					
17	My leader tells me stories about people who have left the organization.					
18	My leader tells me stories about people who have been rewarded by this organization.					

19	My leader tells me stories about people who have been admired by this organization.					
20	My leader tells me stories about people who have worked hard in this organization.					
21	My leader shows me encouragement for my work efforts.					
22	My leader shows concern about my job satisfaction.					
23	My leader gives me praise for my good work.					
24	My leader expresses his/her support for my professional development.					
25	My leader asks me about my professional well-being.					
If you need to explain more about each of the questions, please leave me a message in this section						
26	My leader communicates a clear and positive vision of the future					
27	My leader treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development.					
29	My leader gives encouragement and recognition to staff.					
30	My leader fosters trust, involvement and cooperation among team members					
31	My leader encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions					

32	My leader is clear about his/her values and practices what he/she preaches					
33	My leader instills pride and respect in others and inspires me by being					
If you need to explain more about each of the questions, please leave me a message in this section						
34	My leader can tell if something work-related is going wrong.					
35	My leader makes my career development a priority					
36	I would seek help from my leader if I had a personal problem					
37	My leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community					
38	My leader puts my best interests ahead of his/her own					
39	My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.					
40	My leader would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.					
If you need to explain more about each of the questions, please leave me a message in this section						
41	Your age					
42	Gender					

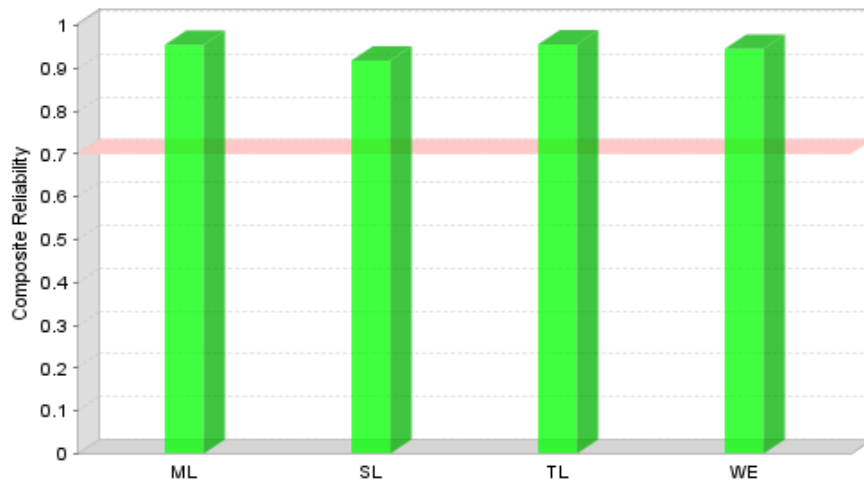
43	Level of education					
44	How long have you been working for this company (or in this field of work)?					
45	How many years have you been under your manager?					
46	If you wish, state the title of your job					

### Appendix 3: Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient



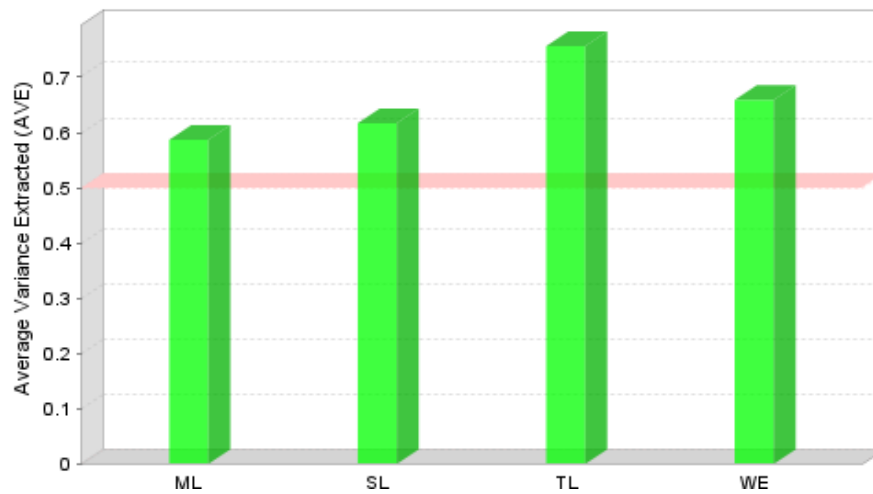
Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations

#### Appendix 4: Composite reliability (CR)



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations

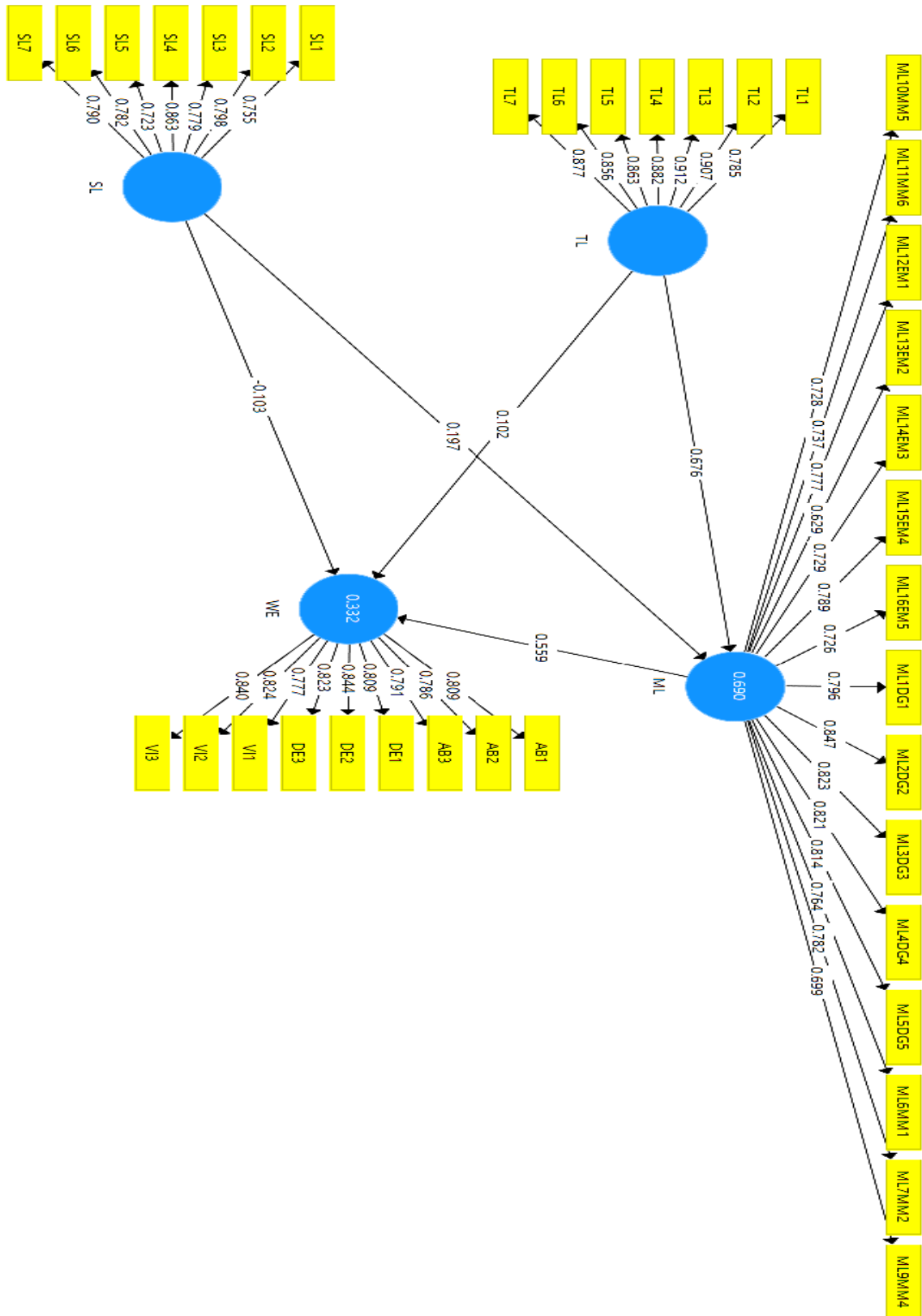
#### Appendix 5: Average variance extracted



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations



## Appendix 6: measurement model



Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations

## Appendix 7: Normality test with Amos software

Assessment of normality (Group number 1)

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
ML16EM5	1.000	5.000	-.018	-.108	-1.319	-4.039
ML15EM4	1.000	5.000	-.251	-1.537	-1.040	-3.186
ML14EM3	1.000	5.000	-.394	-2.410	-.853	-2.613
ML13EM2	1.000	5.000	.267	1.633	-1.046	-3.202
ML12EM1	1.000	5.000	-.515	-3.157	-.789	-2.416
ML11MM6	1.000	5.000	.031	.190	-1.045	-3.199
ML10MM5	1.000	5.000	.177	1.082	-1.118	-3.424
ML9MM4	1.000	5.000	.211	1.295	-1.177	-3.605
ML7MM2	1.000	5.000	-.253	-1.550	-.845	-2.587
ML6MM1	1.000	5.000	-.159	-.974	-.999	-3.059
ML5DG5	1.000	5.000	-.134	-.824	-1.086	-3.325
ML4DG4	1.000	5.000	-.070	-.426	-1.058	-3.238
ML3DG3	1.000	5.000	-.182	-1.117	-.967	-2.961
ML2DG2	1.000	5.000	-.522	-3.195	-.876	-2.681
ML1DG1	1.000	5.000	-.127	-.779	-1.146	-3.508
AB3	1.000	5.000	-.697	-4.270	-.267	-.818
AB2	1.000	5.000	-.907	-5.553	.139	.427
AB1	1.000	5.000	-.884	-5.414	-.060	-.182
VI3	1.000	5.000	-.518	-3.173	-.641	-1.962
VI2	1.000	5.000	-.343	-2.098	-.977	-2.992
VI1	1.000	5.000	-.945	-5.789	.133	.408
DE3	1.000	5.000	-1.157	-7.088	.512	1.567
DE2	1.000	5.000	-.844	-5.171	-.320	-.979
DE1	1.000	5.000	-.661	-4.050	-.400	-1.224
SL1	1.000	5.000	-.398	-2.438	-.703	-2.151
SL2	1.000	5.000	-.109	-.669	-1.024	-3.136
SL3	1.000	5.000	-.380	-2.330	-.952	-2.915
SL4	1.000	5.000	-.046	-.280	-.872	-2.671
SL5	1.000	5.000	-.011	-.066	-1.138	-3.483
SL6	1.000	5.000	-.393	-2.405	-.914	-2.800
SL7	1.000	5.000	-.237	-1.451	-1.075	-3.290
TL1	1.000	5.000	-.111	-.678	-1.055	-3.230
TL2	1.000	5.000	-.057	-.352	-.927	-2.837
TL3	1.000	5.000	-.041	-.251	-1.102	-3.374
TL4	1.000	5.000	-.114	-.697	-1.173	-3.591
TL5	1.000	5.000	-.202	-1.234	-1.071	-3.279
TL6	1.000	5.000	-.270	-1.656	-1.125	-3.444
TL7	1.000	5.000	-.088	-.538	-1.202	-3.679
Multivariate					243.715	33.152

Source: Faghihi (2022), author's calculations

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