

**Leadership and Young Employees' Engagement in the Workplace:  
A Qualitative Inquiry**

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## **Leadership and Young Employees' Engagement in the Workplace: A Qualitative Inquiry**

### **Abstract**

The study seeks to explore the influence of leadership on young employee commitment and engagement in the workplace in Morocco. An interpretivist approach has been adopted; online semi-structured interviews with young employees were conducted, and the data were analysed thematically. The study reveals that demotivation, workload, absence of an employee well-being culture, and job contracts are key influencing factors affecting young employees' engagement. The study suggests several managerial implications, (e.g., to better understand the perspectives of young employees towards leadership, investing in their training and development, and enhancing safety and well-being in the workplace). Undoubtedly, the findings will be beneficial to Moroccan institutions such as the Ministry of Labour (CGEM) and the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Competencies (ANAPPEC). As part of its originality and contributions, this study presents a model to help understand the key factors influencing young employees' engagement at work.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Young Employee, Employee Engagement, Morocco.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human capital represents a distinct resource that plays a crucial role in the success of every organization. An engaged employee is one who is wholly committed to maintaining a positive state of mind and focused energy at work (Tims, Bakker and Xanthopoulou, 2011). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2009), employees that are highly engaged tend to have a more positive attitude towards their employers, managers, and jobs, treat colleagues with higher levels of respect, and improve their skills on an ongoing basis. This is a view also acknowledged by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), who propose that when employees are engaged, they are less likely to quit their jobs. Academic research by Anitha, (2014) found that engaged employees have significant impact on their work performance. Other studies have shown that engagement can be an effective predictor of organisational performance, employee outcomes, and organisational standing (Gruman and Saks, 2011).

Organizational culture, respect, trust, and leadership behaviours are all crucial aspects that influence employee engagement. Consequently, an organization aiming to foster a culture of engagement must create an environment where these factors can flourish (Lockwood, 2007). The objective of the study is to investigate the influence of leadership on young employees work and engagement in the workplace of Morocco. The study seeks to answer the following question:

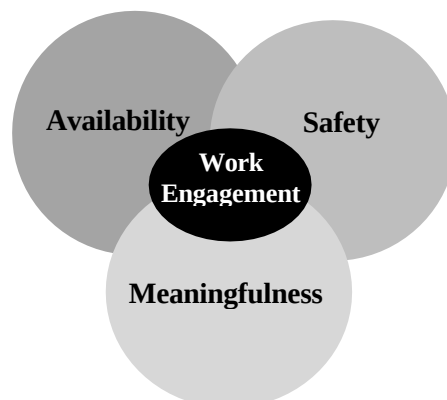
**RQ-** *How does leadership practice impact young employee engagement and commitment in the workplace of Morocco?*

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Khan's theory of Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) is one of the seminal scholars in the area of employee engagement. He is well known for his famous definition of employee engagement: *"the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; by which they employ and express themselves physically, emotionally, and cognitively during role performance"*. This definition is a product of a qualitative study where Kahn (1990) endorsed that work experiences are interpreted by employees through three conditions: meaningfulness, availability and safety. This paper represents three conditions that are interconnected between employee engagement and workplace experience:

**Figure 1. Antecedents of Work Engagement**



**a) Availability** refers to the presence of the emotional, physical, and psychological

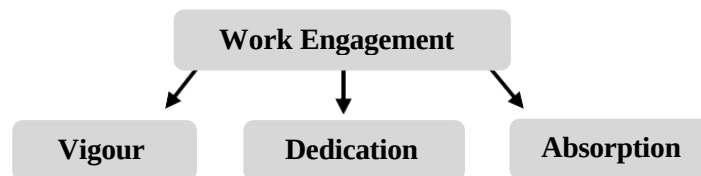
resources required for successfully accomplishing a task (Kahn, 1990). Those who experience availability tend to be able to devote and control their intellectual, physical, and emotional energy in the direction of their role performances. Availability denotes the extent to which a person can engage in a task, regardless of the interruptions that exist in the working environment.

- b) **Meaningfulness** – is when an employee perceives his/her work as worthwhile, coupled with a sense of pride in their work-related accomplishments. Meaningfulness is perceived as part of the circular model where employees bring significance and value to their work while also obtaining feedback related to the tasks they do and how significant and valuable they are to the organisation.
- c) **Safety** - employees experience safety when they know that they can be themselves without being worried about the risk of experiencing negative consequences to their status, reputation, or professional life (Kahn, 1990). In such experiences, individuals believe that situations are secure, trustworthy, and easy to anticipate. Thus, it is posited that consistent, predictable, and nonthreatening situations have a positive impact on employee safety.

## 2.2 Work Engagement Dimensions

Based on the work of Schaufeli, Salanova, Román, and Bakker (2002) on work-related well-being, we identified three dimensions (figure 2) that dictate the engagement of an employee: **Dedication** (emotional dimension), **Absorption** (cognitive dimension), and **Vigour** (physical dimension)

Figure 2. Work Engagement Dimensions



- a. **Vigour**- refers to maintaining high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, as well as a willingness to complete tasks even in critical situations.
- b. **Dedication**- is the emotional attachment to work, where employees find their work inspiring, meaningful, challenging, and take pride in the workplace.
- c. **Absorption**- refers to deep employee engagement, demonstrated by their focused behaviour and enthusiasm for their tasks. These employees are fully involved, serious, and concentrated, not constrained by watching the clock, as they genuinely enjoy their work and see themselves as integral to their roles.

## 2.3 Trust in Leadership and Work Engagement

Trust plays a vital role in fostering harmony among social actors within the workplace and is considered fundamental for a healthy leader-employee relationship. Consequently, a breakdown of trust results in serious negative effects (Mayer et al., 1995). This proves that trust in a leader has vital effects on employee engagement (Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, (2017); Håvold, Håvold and Glavee-Geo, (2020)). Academic research by Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, (2017) indicate that work environments that nurture employee engagement are built based on trustworthy behaviours a leader exhibit at work. Thus, when employees trust their leaders to make decisions aligned with their interests and expectations, they are more

likely to be fully engaged in their work.

Dirks and Ferrin (2002) discuss two theoretical perspectives to clarify the connection between work engagement and trust in a leader: **character-based** and **relationship-based**.

### 1) The Relationship-based Perspective

The relationship-based perspective is grounded in social exchange principles, which emphasize the willingness of employees to reciprocate the consideration and care expressed by their leaders. According to this theory, employees who perceive that their employer cares about their well-being, treats them with respect, and has confidence in their abilities are more likely to work with dedication, vigor, and absorption (Saks, 2006).

### 2) The Character-based Perspective

The character-based perspective centers on how the personality of the leader influences the vulnerability and hierarchical relationships. This viewpoint is deemed important considering that leaders bear responsibility for numerous decisions that significantly impact employee work engagement (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). This perspective is based on the assumption that the leader's integrity, ability, fairness, and dependability are assessed by followers. The assessment of a leader trustworthiness impacts the attitudes and conduct of followers (Clark and Payne, 2006).

In the present study, we have considered both perspectives to capture a clear picture on the nature of trust between a leader and young employees in the workplace of Morocco, and how this trust affects their work engagement and commitment. The study participants will be asked to describe their leaders' benevolence, integrity, and competence at work. They will also be asked to talk about their wellbeing at work, the mutual respect in their relationships with superiors as well as the way their skills and abilities are employed at work.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We followed an interpretivist approach to explore the subjective realities of young employees in the workplace of Morocco, through obtaining an in-depth understanding of the influencing factors of leaders' behaviours and practices on the work commitment and engagement of this category of employees. The aim was to investigate how young employees experience, perceive, and feel about their professional lives, and the meanings they have developed through their social exchange with their leaders at work. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 25 young employees, aged 23-34 (Table 1), working in different companies in Morocco. A purposive snowball sampling approach has been employed to ensure that eligible participants can be reached much easier. Collected data has been analysed thematically (Open, Axial and Selective Coding).

We have also considered 4 elements to conduct a rigorous qualitative inquiry: First, the study is **reproducible**. Our research data collection and analytic methods has reproduced consistent findings during our fieldwork. It was conducted in a **systematic** way adapting the 6 steps of Van phenomenological inquiry. (1. Phenomenon of interest, 2. Experience as lived, 3. Reflecting on the themes, 4. describing the phenomenon, 5. Focusing on the phenomenon, 6. integrating the parts as a whole.) (Van Manen, 1997). This study is **credible** as the interview guide has been produced based on the 3 topic areas of the conceptual framework (Availability, Meaningfulness, Safety). The discussion guide has also been improved a couple of times according to the concepts emerged throughout the discussions with the participants, following a cyclical process.

| Table 1. Participants' Profiles |        |     |                                                         |                                                      |                                         |                               |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Participant                     | Gender | Age | Education level                                         | Occupation                                           | Business activity                       | Location                      |
| P1                              | M      | 23Y | BA in Business                                          | Research marketer                                    | Water purification                      | Casablanca                    |
| P2                              | M      | 28Y | Bachelor in IT                                          | Software engineer                                    | Consulting company "B"to"B"             | Kenitra                       |
| P3                              | M      | 28Y | Bachelor in English studies                             | Content moderator                                    | Social media                            | Casablanca                    |
| P4                              | M      | 26Y | Master in IT                                            | Technical service support                            | Streaming service                       | Casablanca                    |
| P5                              | M      | 23Y | Msc in Business                                         | International sales logistics assistant              | Steel company                           | Casablanca                    |
| P6                              | M      | 27Y | Master's degree (Marketing)                             | Customer service                                     | Call centre (Electrical control panel)  | Rabat (Sibling French market) |
| P7                              | M      | 28Y | Master degree (Finance and accounting)                  | Accountant                                           | Accountant agency                       | Casablanca                    |
| P8                              | M      | 28Y | BA in economics                                         | Marketing assistant                                  | Construction company                    | Beni Mellal                   |
| P9                              | M      | 28Y | Master's degree (Industrial engineering)                | Shipping agent (Team leader)                         | Cement factory                          | <i>Prefer not to say</i>      |
| P10                             | F      | 27Y | Master's degree (Economics and business administration) | Secretary                                            | Argan Culinary and Cometic oil          | Essaouira                     |
| P11                             | M      | 29Y | Master degree (Computer science)                        | Software engineer                                    | Voicemail service management            | Rabat                         |
| P12                             | M      | 34Y | BA in English studies                                   | Manager                                              | Artistic activities (Theatre, Music...) | Beni Mellal                   |
| P13                             | M      | 30Y | Master in Control management                            | Audit assistant                                      | Chocolate factory                       | Casablanca                    |
| P14                             | M      | 30Y | BA in Economics and Business administration             | Assistant                                            | Public administration                   | Beni Mellal                   |
| P15                             | M      | 28Y | Master in IT                                            | Software engineer                                    | Nearshoring                             | Casablanca                    |
| P16                             | M      | 26Y | Master in IT                                            | Social media officer                                 | Media & communication                   | Casablanca                    |
| P17                             | M      | 28Y | Master in Supply chain                                  | Administrative assistant                             | Maritime transport                      | Casablanca                    |
| P18                             | M      | 32Y | BA in economics                                         | Human resource assistant                             | Event industry                          | Casablanca                    |
| P19                             | F      | 23Y | Master in Business Administration                       | Logistician                                          | National transport                      | Casablanca                    |
| P20                             | M      | 30Y | Ba in Economics                                         | Junior accountant                                    | International Fast-food restaurant      | Beni Mellal                   |
| P21                             | F      | 25Y | Master in Supply chain                                  | General ressources manager (chargée moyens généraux) | Business services industry              | Marrakech                     |
| P22                             | F      | 26Y | Master in International Business                        | Marketing assist                                     | Automobile industry                     | Tangier                       |
| P23                             | F      | 24Y | Master in HR Management (Currently reading for a PhD)   | HR manager                                           | Offshoring                              | Marrakech                     |
| P24                             | M      | 31Y | Reading for a PhD in Education                          | Associate lecturer                                   | Education                               | Casablanca                    |
| P25                             | F      | 24Y | Ba in Economics studies                                 | Supervisor                                           | Service contract in banking sector      | Marrakech                     |

## 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Following a rigorous method of data collection as explained in the methodology, now we turn to the analysis and discussion of the key emerging themes (1. Leader Relationship Behaviour, 2. Workload, 3. Employee Well-being, 4. Young Employee Turnover and 5. Job Contract).

### 4.1 Leader Relationship Behaviour

Our study has identified several aspects of leadership-young employee relationship behaviours that impact young employees' engagement at work. Factors such as unclear roles and responsibilities, poor communication, generational conflicts, unsatisfactory salaries, lack of bonuses and rewards, and insufficient recognition all contribute to decreased engagement. Additionally, participants reported that their leaders often fail to fulfill promises, leading to a loss of interest in their jobs. Participant P1 explains:

*"At the beginning they said No... because of...look at the numbers, the sales, but we promise you that we will raise your salary...and so on. But then they even proposed a slight increase of salary and...It wasn't just about money, I just said enough is enough."*

Participant P5 adds:

*"But yes, at the end of the day, it was just, you know, hopes and promises."*

Leaders who consistently break promises lack integrity, reliability, and respect for their followers. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) explain in their character-based perspective of trust that a leader's trustworthiness depends on their demonstration of integrity, ability, fairness, and dependability in interactions with followers. This trustworthiness, in turn, significantly impacts employees' engagement at work.

Trust was also found to be absent in the leader-young employee relationship. Most participants reported that they have experienced or are still experiencing a lack of trust from their leaders. Leaders appear uninterested in building relationships with young employees, instead focusing on giving orders and expecting obedience. It is more likely for young employees to earn some trust from leaders when they show obedience, inferiority, and blindly follow rules and instructions. Additionally, participants who described their unpleasant experiences at work characterized their leaders as mentally ill. According to Participant P19:

*"...he used to find pleasure when he angrily shouts at us...curse...a behaviour of someone who is not mentally stable...he was behaving like...I do not know...so narcissist...I can't find an explanation... but I can tell that this was the worst work experience in my life..."*

Such disturbing and destructive behaviours align with toxic leadership research, identifying them as dysfunctional actions that negatively impact working relationships and lead to disastrous organizational functioning. A toxic leader-employee relationship reflects the intimidation, fear, and narcissism that leaders use to control employees. The outcomes of these practices can cause long-lasting harm to employees, extending beyond the workplace to affect their personal lives.

### 4.2 Workload

In addition to the unhealthy leader-young employee relationship, workload was also identified as a significant factor contributing to work disengagement among young employees. In Morocco, a heavy workload is a common expectation within the business culture, deeply ingrained across various industries and sectors. Leaders assess

However, Young employees perceive that the salary they receive does not adequately reflect the number of tasks they perform at work. According to Participant P25:

*"...so, they load you up with many things to do, for some little money..."*

Even those who consider their workload as fine and manageable at the early stages of their jobs, they failed to control it over time. According to Participant P18:

*“The workload was fine at the beginning... and then the more we were gaining customers and the more the workload increases... and, we had another business partner who was in charge of organizing, you know events as well. So, we are partnering with another small business...the more we get you know we're getting client of course the more...responsibility bubble was increasing in terms of magnitude and in terms of workload definitely. But overall, I think it was...it was fine.”*

Over time, this leads to burnout, decreased productivity, and a higher turnover rate, as employees seek workplaces that offer a more balanced and fair exchange between work performed and salary received. The workload young employees are experiencing in the work environment impact their performance and well-being. Participant P10 explains:

*“So heavy...I always had work to do. Sometimes I don't take my lunch break, because I know that I don't have to stop otherwise I will miss my deadlines...sometimes I work from 8am to 9pm, nonstop. Every day, I am the first one who come to work and the last one who leaves. I was not able to manage all that those tasks...”*

#### **4.3 Employee Well-being**

The concept of employee well-being is largely absent in some Moroccan workplaces. Some participants report that they cannot plan their holidays in advance due to the constant expectation of being assigned work. They find it challenging to request proper vacation time from their superiors. Leaders often suggest taking up to four days of rest before returning to work; however, promises of proper holidays are frequently unfulfilled. Additionally, it is very common for young employees to work during special occasions and celebrations. According to participant P23:

*“In fact, sometimes they ask you to come to work during these occasions and celebrations. For example, in Eid El-Fitr, they let us know in advance who will be working that day.”*

Others explain that their lunch breaks are often not respected. They must seek permission from their superiors beforehand, as they might be required to work during this time. They feel obligated to sacrifice their break to complete their work, fearing they might be perceived as not doing their job properly. Furthermore, they do not receive any appreciation from their leaders for taking time out of their breaks to do extra work. Participant P18 explains:

*“Once, it was lunchtime...and I was in his office discussing things about work...and...he wanted to know the prices of some products...so I told him that I know the prices...imagine, he literally replied “ keep what you know for yourself, I need documents” ...just like that...and everyone was hearing our conversation...I have never been in such situation before...he was so rude with me...I felt really bad that day...I didn't stop crying...he has a very outdated mindset...everyone calls him Hadj...and he does not treat his employees as human beings.”*

It appears that leaders do not prioritize the well-being of their young employees. Lacking empathy, they focus solely on achieving organisational objectives at the expense of their staff. In fact, they assess performance and productivity by how much employees endure at work. Such behaviour has been found to put the lives of many participants at risk. According to participant P19:

*“... I have many fears when it comes to mistakes at work...I mean...a fear developed from that traumatic experience I had with my old employer...I am suffering stress and anxiety now...I became a nervous person...sometimes I shout at my family for no reason, something that I have never done before”.*

Some workplaces went beyond the unusual and started investing in the well-being of their employees. Some Moroccan companies organize social activities outside of work where they invite staff and teams to restaurants for new year and religious festivities (27<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan

fasting). This provides a good gathering and getting together and interacting with employees from different departments. However, the employees prefer a workload reduction rather than being invited for dinner. Others prefer bonuses to a night out. Other employees feel that they have no personal and family life due to the workload. Sometimes are called to work even during the weekend. Young employees consider the stress they are having at work is threatening their health. According to P25:

*“...I feel really exhausted when I get home from work...always headache...I cannot do anything...I cannot open my eye to do something else...you understand?... so, it is very difficult to be there every day. Not easy at all.”*

This observation has been observed by Kahn (1990) as lack of safety in his theory of work engagement (Availability, Meaningfulness, and Safety). They feel unable to be themselves when interacting with their leaders and are exposed to destructive behaviours, which not only impact their work engagement but are also detrimental to their personal lives.

#### **4.4 Young Employee Turnover**

The findings from the fieldwork reveals that employees do not stay with the same company for a longer period. Some of them, despite being new recruits, their intention is not to stay with the company. This is due to the lack of career progression and personal development. Seeking better work environments where they can grow and develop appears to be the main reason why young employees change their jobs so frequently. According to participant P25:

*“...I am still thinking to leave and seek better opportunities. Because I know that there is no future with this company...”*

Participant P21 adds:

*“...because others will not see the changes and improvement in yourself if you stay in the same place for a long time...you will be always remembered for who you used to be, not who you are now...people do not always notice the change...”*

The study reveals that temporary contracts and high workload are also major factors in young employee job stability. According to Participant P22:

*“...but the main reason why I quit, was the second temporarily contract they provided...and I wish to find another job in this sector.”*

Heavy workload also plays a significant role in employee decision to change jobs, according to participant 10:

*“I was not able to manage all that those tasks...and this is one of the main reasons why I wanted quit...I used to tell him many times to find someone to help me but he didn't...so this time I was so fed up with this job...I told him I am leaving that's it, I am not interested anymore to stay...but he kept asking me to stay...and told me to recruit an assistant to help me with all those tasks...so I found an assistant and I showed her everything...”*

Some young employees witnessed an unhealthy relationship with their leaders, such as a leader deficit behaviour and lack of duty of care. According to participant P25:

*“...that was a crazy experience as well...you cannot stand his behaviour...I left after six months of work...”*

Additionally, the study has found that those who could not change jobs are trapped in many personal responsibilities and engagement, making them accept the reality of the workplace in this context. According to participant P19:

*“He does not treat them well...the employees who did not leave that company yet, just because they have financial engagement with their families...so they have no choice except patience...but in my case, as soon as I figured out what is going on, I left the company....”*

#### 4.5 Job contract

In Morocco, there are two main types of contracts: CDD (Fixed-term contract) and CDI (permanent contract).

| Table 2. Employment Contract in Morocco |                     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Contract                                | Type of Contract    |
| CDD                                     | Fixed-term contract |
| CDI                                     | Permanent contract  |

The study has found that the contracts that young employees sign are detrimental to their engagement at work. Young employees do not consider CDD contracts as advantageous for them apart from being a source of fear and uncertainty as participant P25 described:

*“...I cannot keep working on a temporary employment contract...I don't feel secure enough. I would appreciate if they can offer a CDI (permanent contract) ...but it is not advantageous for them. You need to be in a position of weakness to say always YES, to anything they ask you for.”*

Specifically, although some employees accept such contracts hoping for CDD offers, they get frustrated by a renewal of their CDD contracts. It is like an unlimited probation period. According to participant P22:

*“At the end of my probation period, I was expecting to sign a CDI contract (Permanent contract), but unfortunately they offered a CDD contract (temporary employment contract)...personally, I didn't like that...because at the beginning they provided me with a 4 months probationary contract, which is normally similar to CDD contract (temporary employment contract)...it is like they extended my probation...because it is beneficial for them....they told me that they cannot do a permanent contract now, because of the Covid...and they promised that everything will be fine...but I refused to sign the contract...so I left...”*

Participants working under a CDD contract are exposed to many tasks without prior trainings. This is based on the fact that their roles and responsibilities are not well defined in their CDD contracts. According to participant P25:

*“...that's why if you have a CDI contract, your tasks will be clear...”*

Additionally, it seems that there is discrimination against CDD employees. For instance, there is a big difference in holidays entitlement between CDD and CDI contracts. Participant P25 explains:

*“Another thing, we have just 8days holidays every 6months, excluding weekends and special occasions...however, the other employees who have CDI contracts, they benefit from 45days of holidays per year...they have access to the restaurant, but us no...there is some sort of discrimination against employees with CDD contracts...”*

They are also excluded from rewards and bonuses. Participant P25 explains:

*“No, nothing...nothing extra...because for us...I mean, this is the difference between CDI and CDD contracts...”*

Young employees who had the chance to work for a foreign company have noticed a big difference when it comes to signing contracts. According to participant P2:

*“Well, the first thing that I noticed is that... in the first company I had just like 4 pages in the contracts, and in the new company I had 16 pages in the contract. I was shocked.”*

According to participant P18:

*“...the first week...we were in meeting, I mean...Signing the contract, doing all these paperwork... he came up with some documents, and said that all your job. This is what you need to do.”*

The covid pandemic had led many business leaders to be more interested in CDD rather than CDI. According to participant P19:

*“...so, employees are not getting what they used to get...they even changed their policy of recruitments...they became more interested in CDD contracts more than CDIs...”*

Participant P25 confirms:

*“...I heard him once talking with other managers about how beneficial for them to keep offering CDD contracts, because it is cheap and they can manage employees easily...so if they do CDI contracts, employees will be too demanding”.*

In some situations, CDD contracts can help young employees to experience new workplaces and learn about it. However, the CDD working conditions are detrimental to employee well-being. According participant P23:

*“...she (Lecturer) used to advise us to go for a CDD contract and Not CDI...she wanted us to work in different companies to learn and grow...do you understand?...”*

Hiring young employees with poor wages or without any type contracts is still present in many companies in spite of the contribution of the government to deal with this phenomenon. This practice is generally found in Moul-Chkara leadership. According to participant P19:

*“Imagine, we used to work with no contract no papers, and we get paid cash...He is a dishonest person...because once you think to leave him, you will find yourself empty hand...he will tell you I don’t know you.”*

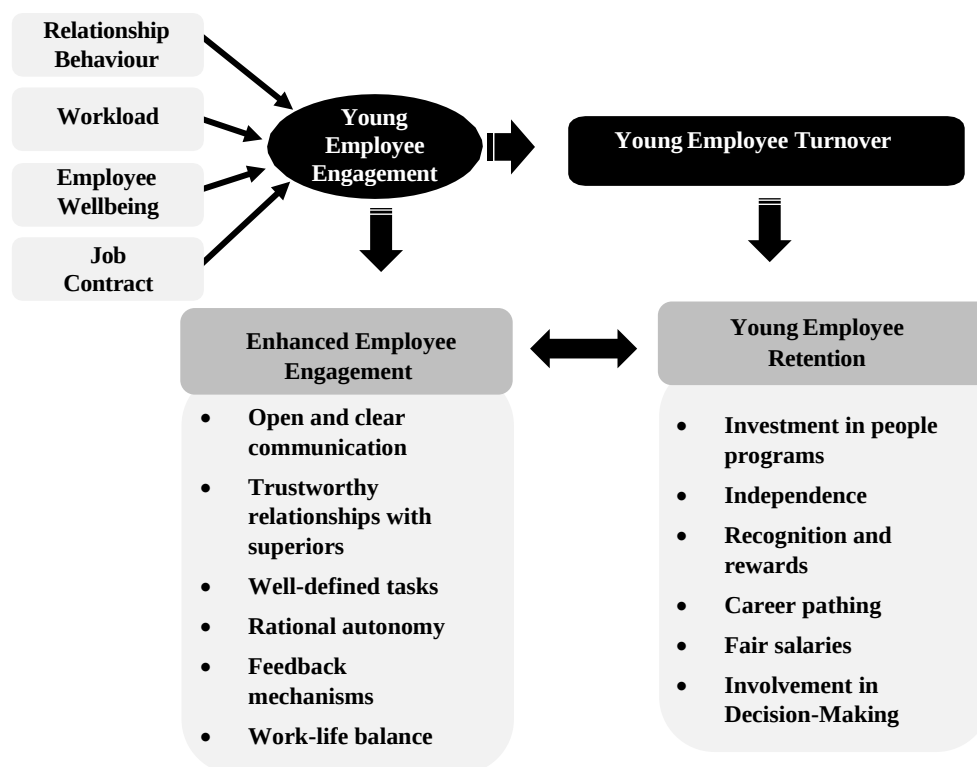
According to participant P25:

*“...he makes you feel like you are nothing, you have no value...and your work is not that important for him...so his strategy is to win the deal, and gives you the salary he satisfied with...he does not value his employees at all...”*

However, the current situation of employment in Morocco leads many young to accept any job offered. According to participant P22:

*“...to be honest with you, right now... I can accept any job offered to me. No matter where...I don’t have a problem...but I wish to find one in the automobile sector...I feel that I can be more productive in this sector, especially in the purchase department...because I studied business, supply chain and logistic...so this is the type of work I am looking for...”*

**Figure 3. Emerging Conceptual Framework**



## **Conclusion**

The study examined how leadership practices impact the work engagement of young employees. It found that leader relationship behaviour, workload, absence of well-being considerations, and job contracts are key factors influencing young employees' engagement in Moroccan workplaces. Poor communication, undefined roles and responsibilities, lack of integrity, and insufficient recognition in leadership behaviours contribute to young employees losing interest in their jobs. Leader relationship behaviour was also found to amplify the workload and make completing tasks stressful. Even those who initially perceive their workload as manageable at the beginning of their jobs find it increasingly difficult to control over time. It seems that leaders neglect the well-being of their employees in their leadership approach, often evaluating performance and productivity based on the degree of employee suffering at work. These practices not only affect the well-being of young employees in the workplace but also extend to every aspect of their lives, posing a threat to their physical and mental health. The study revealed that employee turnover is common among young employees. Despite being relatively new to the workforce, many participants not only discussed their current jobs but also referred to previous work experiences and how they impacted their personal and professional lives.

The study also found that the contracts signed by young employees are detrimental to their workplace engagement. Young employees do not view Fixed-term contracts (CDD) as advantageous, but rather as a source of fear and uncertainty. Those under CDD contracts are often assigned tasks without prior training, as their roles and responsibilities are poorly defined. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased business leaders' preference for CDD contracts over permanent contracts (CDI).

Overall, the study stresses on the need for meaningful reforms in leadership practices, contract structures, and workplace culture to enhance work engagement, well-being, and retention among young employees in Morocco. Failure to address these issues not only undermines individual performance and engagement but also perpetuates broader societal challenges related to unemployment and economic instability.

## **Future Research**

The present study opens up new horizons for future research encouraging researchers to explore leadership practice in the workplace of Morocco from a leader perspective. Also, the evolved model developed in this study might be tested on a larger sample in similar or different contexts. There is also a need for psychology researchers to conduct in-depth inquiries into the well-being of young employees, shedding light on potential interventions to enhance their overall welfare. Social researchers may find interest to explore the underlying motives driving leaders to exhibit unethical practices towards the youngest generation in the workforce, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of organizational dynamics and employee-employer relationships within this context. There is a room for this study to be conducted from the perspective of the owners as well as using a dyadic relationship.

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