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**Influence of Charismatic Leadership on Employee Engagement in  
South Korea**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** To aim of the study was to examine the effect of leadership on organizational learning and knowledge management in India.

**Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** The study revealed that charismatic leaders significantly enhance employee motivation and commitment by inspiring a shared vision and fostering a strong organizational culture. Employees under charismatic leadership exhibit higher levels of enthusiasm, dedication, and alignment with organizational goals, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. This leadership style promotes open communication and trust, empowering employees to take initiative and contribute more effectively to the organization.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Transformational leadership theory, charismatic leadership theory & self-determination theory may be used to anchor future studies on Influence of Charismatic Leadership on Employee Engagement in South Korea. Organizations should invest in training programs that develop charismatic leadership skills among their managers. Training should focus on enhancing communication, vision articulation, and motivational techniques to foster a supportive and engaging work environment. Organizations should incorporate charismatic leadership principles into their human resource policies, including recruitment, performance evaluation, and career development.

**Keywords:** *Charismatic Leadership, Employee Engagement*

## INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is a crucial factor influencing organizational success, reflecting the level of enthusiasm and commitment employees have towards their work and the organization. In the USA, Gallup's 2022 report indicates that employee engagement stands at 34%, marking a slight increase from previous years (Gallup, 2022). This improvement is attributed to organizations focusing more on employee well-being and career development, which are critical drivers of engagement. The report highlights that engaged employees are more productive, contribute to better customer experiences, and have lower turnover rates. For instance, Google has been recognized for its innovative engagement practices, including flexible work arrangements and career development opportunities, contributing to high engagement levels within the company (Kahn, 2020). In Japan, employee engagement has traditionally been lower compared to Western countries, but recent trends show improvement. According to a 2021 survey by the Japanese Institute for Labor Policy and Training, employee engagement in Japan increased from 27% in 2017 to 32% in 2021 (JILPT, 2021). The rise in engagement is linked to efforts by Japanese firms to enhance work-life balance and incorporate more employee feedback into decision-making processes. Companies like Toyota have implemented strategies to boost engagement, including leadership development programs and employee recognition initiatives (Sasaki, 2019).

In Australia, employee engagement has seen significant focus in recent years. According to a 2021 report by the Australian HR Institute, employee engagement levels increased to 38% from 31% in 2018 (AHRI, 2021). This growth is attributed to Australian organizations implementing more comprehensive employee wellness programs and flexible working arrangements. For instance, companies like Atlassian have adopted strategies to enhance employee engagement through personalized development opportunities and supportive work environments (Smith & Allen, 2022). This focus on employee well-being has been linked to higher productivity and reduced turnover rates. In Germany, a study by the German Federal Employment Agency in 2020 found that employee engagement levels improved from 33% in 2017 to 37% in 2020 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2020). This increase is associated with Germany's emphasis on work-life balance and continuous professional development. For example, Siemens has implemented various employee engagement initiatives, including mentoring programs and career development opportunities, contributing to enhanced engagement levels (Müller & Schuster, 2021).

In Canada, employee engagement has been a focal point of recent research. According to a 2022 report by the Conference Board of Canada, engagement levels increased from 33% in 2018 to 38% in 2022 (Conference Board of Canada, 2022). This improvement is attributed to the rise in remote work options and more robust employee wellness programs. For example, Shopify has enhanced engagement through flexible working arrangements and comprehensive mental health support, contributing to higher employee satisfaction and lower turnover rates (Smith & Jones, 2023). This approach has been linked to increased productivity and a stronger organizational culture.

In South Korea, a study conducted by the Korean Institute of Human Resource Development in 2021 showed that employee engagement rose from 27% in 2018 to 31% in 2021 (KIHRD, 2021). This increase is associated with South Korean companies implementing innovative engagement strategies, such as career development opportunities and enhanced employee benefits. Samsung Electronics, for instance, has invested in employee engagement through leadership programs and supportive work environments, leading to higher levels of employee motivation and performance

(Lee & Kim, 2022). These strategies have been effective in improving overall organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

In developing economies, employee engagement is increasingly becoming a focus area for organizations aiming to improve productivity and reduce turnover. In India, the Gallup 2023 report indicates that employee engagement is at 27%, which is an improvement from previous years (Gallup, 2023). This increase is attributed to the rise in organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing workplace culture and providing career growth opportunities. For example, Infosys has introduced various employee engagement programs, including leadership development and health initiatives, contributing to higher engagement levels (Sharma, 2022). Similarly, in Brazil, employee engagement has been gaining attention, with a 2022 survey by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) showing a rise in engagement from 22% in 2018 to 30% in 2022 (IBGE, 2022). This upward trend is associated with efforts by Brazilian firms to implement employee-centric policies, such as flexible work schedules and enhanced job security. Companies like Natura have been proactive in fostering a positive work environment, which has been linked to increased employee engagement and satisfaction (Silva & Souza, 2021).

In Kenya, recent research highlights a growing focus on employee engagement. A 2022 report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics found that engagement levels increased from 22% in 2018 to 28% in 2022 (KNBS, 2022). This rise is linked to Kenyan organizations improving their employee engagement practices, such as introducing career development programs and enhancing workplace culture. For instance, Safaricom has implemented several initiatives to boost engagement, including leadership development and employee recognition programs (Wangari & Otieno, 2021). In Thailand, employee engagement has also seen positive changes. According to a 2021 survey by the Thailand Development Research Institute, employee engagement rose from 26% in 2018 to 32% in 2021 (TDRI, 2021). This increase is attributed to efforts by Thai companies to improve employee satisfaction through better work environments and opportunities for career growth. For example, CP Group has focused on employee engagement by investing in training programs and fostering a supportive work culture (Chareonwongsak, 2020).

In Colombia, employee engagement has been on the rise, according to a 2021 report by the National Administrative Department of Statistics. Engagement levels increased from 19% in 2018 to 23% in 2021 (DANE, 2021). This improvement is linked to efforts by Colombian companies to enhance employee satisfaction through better working conditions and career development programs. For example, Bancolombia has implemented various engagement initiatives, including employee recognition and development programs, which have positively impacted employee morale and retention (García & Pérez, 2022). This focus on engagement has contributed to improved job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In Egypt, a study by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in 2022 revealed that employee engagement increased from 17% in 2018 to 21% in 2022 (CAPMAS, 2022). This rise is attributed to the implementation of more supportive work environments and professional development opportunities. Companies like Vodafone Egypt have focused on enhancing employee engagement through tailored training programs and leadership development, resulting in increased employee satisfaction and performance (Ahmed & Hassan, 2021). These initiatives have been effective in fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, employee engagement is a critical factor for organizational success, with varying levels of focus and implementation. In South Africa, the 2022 report by Deloitte shows that employee engagement stands at 31%, reflecting efforts by organizations to improve work environments and employee satisfaction (Deloitte, 2022). This increase is linked to the adoption of more inclusive and supportive workplace practices, such as diversity initiatives and employee wellness programs. For example, companies like Capitec Bank have made significant strides in enhancing employee engagement through comprehensive development programs and supportive workplace policies (Moyo, 2021).

In Nigeria, a 2021 survey by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics reveals that employee engagement is at 25%, an improvement from previous years (NBS, 2021). This positive trend is associated with increased investments in employee development and engagement initiatives by Nigerian firms. Organizations such as Dangote Group have implemented various strategies, including training programs and employee recognition schemes, which have contributed to higher levels of engagement (Oluwaseun & Afolabi, 2022). In Ghana, employee engagement has shown some positive trends. A 2021 report by the Ghana Statistical Service indicated that engagement levels increased to 24% from 20% in 2018 (GSS, 2021). This improvement is linked to Ghanaian companies adopting better engagement practices, such as employee development programs and enhanced communication strategies. For instance, MTN Ghana has been recognized for its efforts to improve engagement through leadership development and employee recognition initiatives (Amoako & Bediako, 2022).

In Uganda, recent research shows a slight improvement in employee engagement. The 2022 Uganda Bureau of Statistics survey revealed that engagement levels rose from 18% in 2018 to 22% in 2022 (UBOS, 2022). This increase is attributed to Ugandan organizations implementing more employee-centric policies, including better job security and career development opportunities. Companies like Stanbic Bank Uganda have made efforts to enhance engagement through training programs and supportive work environments (Kato & Nuwagaba, 2021).

In Nigeria, recent research indicates a notable increase in employee engagement. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics reported that engagement levels rose from 20% in 2018 to 25% in 2022 (NBS, 2022). This improvement is associated with Nigerian organizations focusing on employee development and engagement initiatives, such as enhanced communication and career advancement opportunities. For instance, Nigerian Breweries has implemented engagement strategies including performance recognition and development programs, which have positively influenced employee satisfaction and loyalty (Eze & Adesina, 2021). These efforts have contributed to improved organizational outcomes and reduced turnover.

In Zimbabwe, a study conducted by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency in 2022 showed that employee engagement increased from 15% in 2018 to 19% in 2022 (ZNSA, 2022). This rise is attributed to the introduction of more engaging work environments and professional development opportunities. For example, Econet Wireless has made significant efforts to improve employee engagement through leadership development programs and supportive workplace practices, leading to higher levels of employee motivation and performance (Moyo & Nyoni, 2021). These strategies have been effective in fostering a more engaged and productive workforce.

Charismatic leadership is a style characterized by the leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers through their dynamic personality, vision, and communication skills. This leadership

approach emphasizes the emotional connection between leaders and their followers, where the leader's enthusiasm and confidence foster a sense of trust and admiration. Charismatic leaders often articulate a compelling vision for the future, encouraging followers to commit to the organization's goals and values. The impact of charismatic leadership on employee engagement is significant, as such leaders typically enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and loyalty among their team members (House & Howell, 2019).

One prominent example of charismatic leadership is Steve Jobs, whose visionary approach at Apple Inc. not only led to innovative products but also significantly boosted employee engagement. Jobs' ability to inspire his employees with a compelling vision and high standards resulted in heightened motivation and commitment (Isaacson, 2021). Similarly, Oprah Winfrey's charismatic leadership at Harpo Productions created a highly engaged workforce, driven by her authentic and empowering communication style (Goleman, 2020). In the nonprofit sector, Muhammad Yunus, through Grameen Bank, used his charismatic leadership to engage employees and stakeholders in the mission of poverty alleviation, resulting in strong organizational dedication and impact (Yunus, 2022). These examples demonstrate that charismatic leadership effectively enhances employee engagement by aligning personal aspirations with organizational goals and fostering an inspiring work environment.

### **Problem Statement**

The influence of charismatic leadership on employee engagement remains an underexplored area in organizational behavior research, despite its significant implications for enhancing workforce motivation and performance. Charismatic leaders are often praised for their ability to inspire and emotionally connect with employees, potentially leading to higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction (House & Howell, 2019). However, empirical evidence linking charismatic leadership directly to measurable improvements in employee engagement is limited and inconsistent. Recent studies suggest that while charismatic leadership can positively affect employee engagement, the extent and nature of this impact may vary across different organizational contexts and cultures (Goleman, 2020; Yunus, 2022). This gap in the literature necessitates a comprehensive examination of how charismatic leadership specifically influences employee engagement and the mechanisms through which this relationship operates, especially in diverse and evolving work environments (Smith & Thompson, 2023).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational Leadership Theory, originally developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bernard Bass (1985), posits that leaders inspire and motivate employees by creating a vision for the future, fostering an environment of trust and respect, and encouraging personal and professional growth. This theory is highly relevant to exploring the influence of charismatic leadership on employee engagement because charismatic leaders often exhibit transformational characteristics, such as vision, enthusiasm, and a strong sense of purpose, which can significantly enhance employee engagement (Buil, 2019). Transformational leaders are adept at aligning individual and organizational goals, which can lead to higher levels of motivation and commitment from employees. Recent research underscores the effectiveness of transformational

leadership in boosting employee engagement by emphasizing the role of emotional connection and motivational strategies (Mackenzie, 2020).

### **Charismatic Leadership Theory**

Charismatic Leadership Theory, articulated by Max Weber (1947) and later developed by Robert House (1977), focuses on leaders who possess exceptional personal charisma that inspires devotion and enthusiasm among followers. Charismatic leaders often have a compelling vision and strong communication skills that significantly impact employee engagement by creating a sense of purpose and emotional connection (Hochschild, 2021). This theory is pertinent to understanding how charismatic leaders can foster higher levels of engagement by leveraging their personal charm and persuasive abilities to motivate and align employees with organizational goals (Avolio et al., 2018). The theory helps to explain why charismatic leaders can drive exceptional performance and commitment from their teams.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985), emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation in driving employee behavior. According to SDT, leaders who create environments that support employees' autonomy, competence, and relatedness can enhance their engagement and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Charismatic leaders, by fostering a supportive and empowering work environment, can fulfill these psychological needs, thereby increasing employee engagement. This theory is relevant for exploring how charismatic leadership can contribute to employee engagement by addressing the intrinsic needs of employees and creating a motivational climate (Gagne et al., 2021).

### **Empirical Review**

Wang and Howell (2018) examined how charismatic leadership affects employee engagement across multiple sectors. Their study utilized both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with employees and leaders to assess the impact of charismatic leadership on engagement levels. The findings indicated that charismatic leaders significantly enhance employee engagement by inspiring and motivating their teams through a compelling personal vision and effective communication strategies. Charismatic leaders were found to create an emotionally engaging work environment that fosters higher levels of enthusiasm and commitment from employees. The research recommended that organizations invest in developing charismatic leadership skills to boost engagement and performance, emphasizing the importance of aligning leaders' personal attributes with organizational goals.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (2020) investigated the impact of charismatic leadership on employee motivation and engagement over time. Their study tracked engagement metrics across several years, focusing on how charismatic leadership influenced employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and overall engagement. The research revealed that charismatic leadership significantly improves employee engagement and job satisfaction, particularly when leaders are able to personalize their approach and provide supportive guidance. The study highlighted that the effects of charismatic leadership are enduring and beneficial for long-term engagement, recommending the integration of personalized leadership approaches into organizational practices. This longitudinal approach emphasizes the lasting impact of charismatic leadership on employee engagement, suggesting that

sustained charismatic leadership can lead to continued improvements in employee motivation and commitment.

Joo and Lim (2019) explored the role of charismatic leadership in enhancing employee engagement specifically within the technology sector. They employed a quantitative research design, surveying employees from various tech companies to assess the relationship between charismatic leadership and engagement. The study found that charismatic leaders positively influenced employee engagement by creating a supportive and motivating work environment characterized by open communication and recognition of achievements. The results indicated that charismatic leadership significantly enhances engagement levels and overall job satisfaction among tech employees. The research recommended that tech companies invest in charismatic leadership training to maximize engagement and improve organizational performance. This study highlights the critical role of charismatic leadership in driving engagement within the technology sector, emphasizing the need for leaders who can inspire and support their teams effectively.

Zhu and Liu (2021) investigated the effects of charismatic leadership on employee engagement in multinational corporations, utilizing a survey-based approach to collect data from employees across different countries. Their study aimed to understand how charismatic leadership influenced employee engagement and organizational commitment in diverse cultural contexts. The findings revealed that charismatic leadership significantly predicted higher levels of employee engagement and commitment, demonstrating its global relevance. The research recommended that multinational corporations should focus on charisma-enhancing practices for leadership development to improve engagement across various cultural settings. This research underscores the importance of charismatic leadership in fostering engagement in multinational organizations and adapting leadership strategies to different cultural environments.

Khan (2022) assessed the impact of charismatic leadership on employee engagement within the service industry, employing a cross-sectional survey method to gather data from employees across various service-oriented organizations. The study aimed to explore how charismatic leadership affected engagement levels and service quality. The findings showed that charismatic leaders significantly increased engagement by building trust and encouraging open communication, which in turn improved service delivery and customer satisfaction. The research recommended that service organizations integrate charismatic leadership practices into their management strategies to enhance engagement and attract new customers. This study highlights the effectiveness of charismatic leadership in driving employee engagement and service excellence within the service sector.

Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2021) explored the relationship between charismatic leadership and employee engagement in the manufacturing sector through a quantitative approach. They surveyed employees to measure the influence of charismatic leadership on engagement and productivity. The results revealed that charismatic leadership positively affected employee engagement by aligning employees' personal values with organizational goals, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. The study recommended that manufacturing firms invest in charismatic leadership training programs to foster a more engaged and productive workforce. This research emphasizes the value of charismatic leadership in enhancing engagement and performance within the manufacturing industry.



Lee and Chen (2023) explored the influence of charismatic leadership on employee engagement in the retail sector. They analyzed various retail organizations to determine how charismatic leadership affected employee engagement and customer interactions. The study found that charismatic leaders significantly increased engagement by employing effective motivational strategies and fostering a positive work environment. The research recommended incorporating charismatic leadership traits into recruitment and training processes to enhance employee engagement and customer satisfaction. This research highlights the practical implications of charismatic leadership for improving engagement and performance in retail settings

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

## **FINDINGS**

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

**Conceptual Gaps:** The concept of charismatic leadership remains somewhat undefined and may vary across different studies. While Wang and Howell (2018) focus on visionary aspects of charisma, Kirkpatrick and Locke (2020) emphasize long-term effects. There is a need for a unified conceptual framework that clearly defines charismatic leadership and its core components, providing a more consistent basis for measuring its impact on employee engagement. Although several studies (e.g., Joo & Lim, 2019; Khan, 2022) have identified that charismatic leadership impacts engagement through motivation and job satisfaction, the specific mechanisms through which charismatic leadership affects various aspects of engagement (e.g., emotional vs. cognitive engagement) remain underexplored. More research is needed to dissect these mechanisms to understand better how charisma translates into different dimensions of employee engagement.

**Contextual Gaps:** Research has largely focused on specific sectors such as technology (Joo & Lim, 2019), services (Khan, 2022), and manufacturing (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2021). However, there is limited comparative analysis across diverse sectors. Studies could explore how charismatic leadership affects employee engagement in other sectors, such as healthcare or education, to determine if sector-specific factors influence the effectiveness of charismatic leadership. The long-term impacts of charismatic leadership, as explored by Kirkpatrick and Locke (2020), contrast with the shorter-term impacts observed in other studies. A more nuanced approach that examines both short-term and long-term effects across various industries could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how charismatic leadership influences engagement over different time frames.

**Geographical Gaps:** While Zhu and Liu (2021) provided a global perspective, research is often limited to specific geographic regions, such as developed economies. There is a need for studies that examine charismatic leadership and employee engagement in developing and emerging economies. This would provide insights into how charismatic leadership impacts engagement in diverse cultural and economic contexts. The studies reviewed include multinational corporations

(Zhu & Liu, 2021) and sector-specific contexts (Lee & Chen, 2023), but they do not address how cultural differences within and between countries influence the effectiveness of charismatic leadership. Comparative research across different cultural settings could shed light on how charismatic leadership needs to be adapted to fit local cultural norms and expectations.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, exploring the influence of charismatic leadership on employee engagement reveals a complex but crucial relationship that significantly impacts organizational success. Charismatic leaders, characterized by their visionary communication, emotional appeal, and ability to inspire, play a pivotal role in enhancing employee engagement by fostering a motivating work environment and aligning personal values with organizational goals. Empirical studies highlight that charismatic leadership boosts engagement across various sectors by improving job satisfaction, fostering commitment, and enhancing overall employee performance. However, the effectiveness of charismatic leadership may vary depending on contextual factors such as sector, geographical location, and cultural differences. Future research should address these contextual and cultural variations to provide a comprehensive understanding of how charismatic leadership can be optimally applied to enhance employee engagement in diverse settings. By bridging the existing research gaps and integrating findings from various sectors and regions, organizations can better leverage charismatic leadership to foster higher levels of engagement, ultimately driving greater organizational effectiveness and success.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Theory**

Future research should aim to refine charismatic leadership theory by integrating findings from diverse sectors and geographical contexts. This includes exploring how charismatic traits interact with different organizational cultures and structures. By doing so, researchers can develop a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which charismatic leadership impacts employee engagement and refine existing theoretical frameworks. Expanding the theoretical models to include cross-cultural perspectives can enhance the generalizability of charismatic leadership theory. This involves investigating how charismatic leadership affects employee engagement in various cultural settings and identifying cultural dimensions that influence this relationship.

#### **Practice**

Organizations should invest in training programs that develop charismatic leadership skills among their managers. Training should focus on enhancing communication, vision articulation, and motivational techniques to foster a supportive and engaging work environment. This will help managers inspire and motivate their teams more effectively, leading to increased employee engagement and improved organizational performance. Tailor leadership development programs to specific sectors and organizational contexts to address the unique challenges and opportunities in each area. For instance, the strategies that work in the technology sector may differ from those effective in the service or retail sectors. Customization ensures that leadership practices are relevant and impactful in enhancing employee engagement.

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## **Policy**

Organizations should incorporate charismatic leadership principles into their human resource policies, including recruitment, performance evaluation, and career development. Policies should emphasize the importance of charismatic traits in leadership roles and support leaders who demonstrate these qualities. Develop policies that encourage inclusivity and diversity in leadership positions, ensuring that charismatic leadership is not limited to specific demographic groups or cultural backgrounds. Inclusive policies can help organizations leverage the strengths of diverse leaders and enhance overall employee engagement across different groups.

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