

# **The Impact of Leadership Character on Employee Effort, Work Enjoyment, and Engagement.**

## **Executive Summary**

*By Jason E. Jones, Ph.D. & Strata Leadership, LLC*

### **DESCRIPTION**

The study was conducted over an eighteen-month time period by Dr. Jason Jones and Strata Leadership, LLC. The purpose of the study was to preliminarily investigate the relationship between perceptions employees have of their leader's character and the employee's level of effort, motivation, and engagement on the job.

Online and paper surveys were used to gather participant demographic information and measure eight variables related to organization culture and leadership character. This was a preliminary study intended to guide future large-scale studies that will provide greater insights, generalizability, and statistical power.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Five demographic questions were asked in the survey. Included were gender, age range, size of organization, employment level, and location.

### **VARIABLES**

Eight variables were used for this study. Three variables were created through the combination of statement ratings. Ratings for each statement used a 7-point Likert scale.

Variable 1 (V1) – Enjoyment of Work

Variable 2 (V2) – Life Satisfaction

Variable 3 (V3) – Self-Directed Development

Variable 4 (V4) – Understanding Organizational Goals

Variable 5 (V5) – Effort at Work

Variable 6 (V6) – Supervisor's Character (Measured by statements 11-15)

Variable 7 (V7) – Senior Leadership's Character (Measured by statements 16-20)

Variable 8 (V8) – Employee Engagement (Measured by V1, V4, and V5)

The Character variable is measured by the ratings of five statements:

- My supervisor/leader tells the truth.
- My supervisor/leader keeps promises and commitments.
- My supervisor/leader acts consistently with the values of our organization.
- My supervisor/leader stands up for what is right.
- My supervisor/leader treats everyone with respect.

The Employee Engagement variable is measured by the ratings of three statements:

- I enjoy my work.
- I understand my organization's goals and what it is trying to achieve.
- I give my best effort at work every day.

## **ANALYSIS**

The data gathered in this study was analyzed by a third-party professional statistician, Dennis House. Mr. House has no relationship with Dr. Jones or Strata Leadership and has more than one-hundred peer reviewed scientific publications. Analysis involved the utilization of Pearson Correlation methods. In addition, ANOVA and Chi-Square statistics were used to measure statistical significance between variables.

## **RESULTS**

Significant correlations were found between several variables.

### **SUPERVISOR CHARACTER**

Supervisor Character (V6) is significantly correlated with Enjoyment of Work (V1) at .47.  
Supervisor Character (V6) is significantly correlated with Effort at Work (V5) at .35.  
Supervisor Character (V6) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) at .47.

### **SENIOR LEADERSHIP CHARACTER**

Senior Leadership Character (V7) is significantly correlated with Enjoyment of Work (V1) at .51.  
Senior Leadership Character (V7) is significantly correlated with Effort at Work (V5) at .31.  
Senior Leadership Character (V7) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) .44.

### **ENJOYMENT AT WORK**

Enjoyment of Work (V1) is significantly correlated with Life Satisfaction (V2) at .67.  
Enjoyment of Work (V1) is significantly correlated with Self-Directed Development (V3) at .25.  
Enjoyment of Work (V1) is significantly correlated with Understanding Organizational Goals (V4) at .26.  
Enjoyment of Work (V1) is significantly correlated with Effort at Work (V5) at .46.  
Enjoyment of Work (V1) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) at .74.

### **LIFE SATISFACTION**

Life Satisfaction (V2) is significantly correlated with Self-Directed Development (V3) at .28.  
Life Satisfaction (V2) is significantly correlated with Effort at Work (V5) at .31 .  
Life Satisfaction (V2) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) at .56.

### **SELF\_DIRECTED DEVELOPMENT**

Self Directed Development (V3) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) at .63.

### **UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

Understanding Organizational Goals (V4) is significantly correlated with Effort at Work (V5) at .30.

Understanding Organizational Goals (V4) is significantly correlated with Employee Engagement (V8) at .64.

### **ADDITIONAL FINDINGS**

**Gender Differences:** No significant differences were found between the two genders among the variables using ANOVA. However, the Chi-square statistic for a contingency table concluded there is a significant difference between the two genders and variable (V2) Life Satisfaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study provide insight into the relationships between dynamics within the workplace. These dynamics can be negative or positive and understanding the significant relationships can help leaders and managers better understand the impact of their behavior on important variables that lead to quality, performance, efficiency, employee health, organizational health, and profitability. Improving specific behaviors can result in improvements of the related variables outlined in this study. Recommendations based on this study are listed below.

1. An employee's perception of his/her supervisor's and senior leaders' character has a direct impact on their enjoyment, engagement, and effort at work. Leadership character matters and an increase in character can result in increases in employee engagement, effort, and their overall enjoyment of their work.
2. An employee's understanding of the goals of the organization and what it is trying to achieve has a direct impact on his/her engagement and effort. When effort is made to increase employees' understanding of goals and direction you can expect and increase in engagement and effort on the job.
3. Life Satisfaction is directly related to Enjoyment of Work. Both Life Satisfaction and Enjoyment of Work are directly related to Employee Engagement, Effort, and Self-Directed Development. There is an intertwining and supportive relationship between Life Satisfaction and Work Enjoyment. Thus, the more a person enjoys their work, the greater their life satisfaction. The more they enjoy their work and have life satisfaction, the more engaged and effortful they will be on the job. In addition, they are more likely to seek to develop themselves personally and professionally on their own and without prompting from their leaders.