# The University of Newcastle, Australia
**Faculty of Business and Law**
Newcastle Business School

# Doctor of Business Administration Dissertation

# How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?

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# Statement of Originality

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 and any approved embargo.


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Sargoun Beithaji

# Abstract

Leadership is an important theme of social science as it relates to human cooperation from household decision-making to the complex management of organisations and states. In organisations a great place to work is where employees trust their leaders and are respected and valued as human beings. The employees' treatment with dignity and respect should not be compromised. Therefore, leaders' ethical and fair treatment of employees is very important as unethical and unfair treatments can negatively impact on the workplace, individuals and their families, and society.

This study extends knowledge on the importance of leader–employee relationships. It highlights the impacts of leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and practices on workplaces. It does so through examining leadership literature related to ethics and fairness. Additionally, it conducts sixteen confidential individual interviews with leaders and employees currently working at different levels in the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and government sector, including parliamentarians/politicians.

This study considers the important factors (power, self-interest and trust) impacting leader–employee relationships and examines popular leadership styles such as ethical, spiritual, authentic, transformational, servant leadership and responsible leadership. As most of these leadership styles do not adequately address the concerns of leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and practices, the author saw it necessary to propose a new concept of leadership called *cosmetic leadership*. While cosmetic leadership is a new concept and to date has not been mentioned in leadership literature, this study considered different circumstances aiding this type of leaders to become leaders in the first place and then continue with their behaviours. The proposal of cosmetic leadership highlights some of the reasons for leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and practices. Further, this prompts the policy-makers to assess the effectiveness of their guiding principles, such as codes of conduct. Finally, the author trusts this study's discussions will benefit the leadership literature and leader–employee relationships for the better.

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# Chapter 1
# Introduction

*An overview of the dissertation*

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*"The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; Be kind, but not weak; Be bold, but not bully; Be thoughtful, but not lazy; Be humble, but not timid; Be proud, but not arrogant; Have humour, but without folly." — Jim Rohn*

*"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people." — Mahatma Gandhi*

## 1    Introduction

## 1.1    Research question and rationale

From the author's personal observations in various workplaces unethical and unfair behaviours are well and truly alive, while wrong perceptions and self-interest complemented by bias and favouritism often cover the facts. As such, the following question is the title of this research and the spirit of this study:

> *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?*

While ethical and fair leadership impact on our daily working lives, they also impact on our personal and social lives outside working hours. Ethical and fair leadership behaviours and actions are important as employees spend considerable time with others at work (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). Considering organisations are made of employees and employees are working together as a society, then a society that is not built on ethics, fairness and mature hearts and minds cannot survive for long (Lassiter, 2004). In this context, one can expect that leaders play a key role in influencing ethical and fair behaviours and practices that are capable of creating a trustworthy workplace (Lassiter, 2004).

The problem is that organisational misbehaviour is neglected in ethics literature (Demirtas, 2015). While the implication of unethical leadership on employees and workplace can be thought the literature has not described the destructive or

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unethical behaviour of leaders (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). For example, employees who see their supervisors as abusive more likely will quit their jobs, have lower job and life satisfaction, lower organisational commitment and experience greater conflict between work and family including psychological distress (Sparks, 2012). On the other hand, studies have shown that employees with ethical leaders are less likely to engage in deviant or unethical behaviours (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). If common sense suggests that leadership behaviours should be measured by followers, when measuring leadership behaviours and practices at workplace, the followers should be employees. Therefore, employees can evaluate leadership effectiveness through leaders' characteristics, work attitudes and behaviour (Van Knippenberg & Van Kleef, 2016). However, some employees will tolerate unethical/unfair behaviours because of the fear of losing their job or self-interest and those who speak up, often their words against leaders will not get them too far. The perception might be that leaders may practice unethical and unfair behaviours with little or no problem, while similar behaviour and practices when committed by employees may produce a different result. Therefore, a balanced focus on impact resulting from leaders' behaviour and practices on employees and workplace is needed. Thus, this research is necessary to influence the leadership literature and to stimulate the policy-makers' view on the importance of leader–employee relationships.

## 1.2    Research objectives

The objective of this research is to presume a balanced approach between the importance of ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices on one hand, and, on the other hand, impact on employees and workplace, especially when these behaviour and practices are unethical and unfair. With this in mind, this research endeavours to facilitate a better understanding of leadership behaviour and practices to inspire some leaders to look at the human side of the leader and employee equation or working relationship. Further, this research intends to explore cause and effect of leaders' treatment of employees by using the principles of Social Learning Theory (SLT) and Fairness Theory (FT).

Through this research, the author aims to develop and propose a new concept within the leadership literature called *cosmetic leadership*. Through discussion of this new concept, the author intends to initiate and encourage leaders to evaluate and improve their own leadership styles, behaviours and practices that could favourably impact on employees and workplaces accordingly. Additionally, through introducing cosmetic leadership, the author sets a scene for future leadership studies in this area that could contribute to improving leader–employee relationship, which will ultimately impact organisations/workplaces and wider society for the better.

## 1.3    Purpose and importance

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the leadership literature and society by exploring the impact of leaders' ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviour and practices towards employees, without whom there would be no workplace. This research is to review and elaborate on leader–employee relationships and to identify related issues and resolutions. And, this study is to inspire some leaders to look at the human side of their relationship with employees, who like to be valued and trusted.

This study not only examines the leadership literature, but also seeks to analyse views and suggestions gathered from leaders and employees currently working in different industries at different levels. This research is to explore the importance of leadership behaviour and practices towards employees and the related impact on the workplace and society. This study aims to remind leaders that most of them are employees or subordinates themselves. So, why shouldn't leaders treat the employees the way leaders want to be treated (Ovari, 2018; Mathews, 2014; Lee, 2018; Robinson, 2017)? Therefore, the author believes that this research is essential to encourage more attention to be paid to the importance of leader–employee relationship, by leadership scholars and policy-makers at all levels of the organisations. This is especially relevant when the leader–employee relationship is negative (unhappy relationship mixed with sadness, fear, anxiety, hostility/anger and disgust) and stressful, caused by leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and

practices, as the negative relationship's impact goes beyond the individuals and their well-being (Watson, Clark, & Carey, 1988; Albarracin & Hart, 2011; Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling, 2004). The leader–employee negative relationship may negatively impact the workplace, the employees' families and, further, wider society (Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012; Chen & Wang, 2017). "Leadership is undoubtedly one of the most ubiquitous potential stressors in the workplace." (Kelloway et al., 2004, p. 91).

## 1.4    Research context

The author has been working in different roles in both the government and private sector and in both Iran and Australia since 1983. During the author's course of employment and personal observations, his special interest in ethical and fair treatment of people, especially employees' treatment by their leaders, has gradually matured. This created enthusiasm and motivated the author to study leadership aimed at diving deep into leader–employee relationships and, hence, contributing to the leadership literature, and in this way benefiting society.

An investigation of leadership literature shows that leaders' unethical and unfair behaviour and destructive impact on workplace is neglected (Demirtas, 2015; Brown & Mitchell, 2010). The author saw this as an important gap in leadership literature. Therefore, qualitative research was designed to address this gap as part of addressing the question/title of this study: *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* In doing so, this study not only examines ethics and fairness related to leadership behaviour and practices aided by SLT and FT, but also considers the important factors impacting leader–employee relationships, such as power, self-interest and trust. Further, this dissertation studies popular leadership styles, such as ethical, spiritual and authentic leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership and responsible leadership. Finally, the author's observations, experiences and research led to proposing a new leadership concept called cosmetic leadership, which will be enlightened throughout the dissertation.

## 1.5    Literature review

An extensive literature review has been undertaken pertaining to the question of this study, as shown in Chapter 2. The literature review examines literature on ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices and their impact on employees and workplaces. While there is considerable literature on ethical leadership, there is a gap in unethical and unfair leadership behaviour and practices and their impact on employees and workplaces.

It is generally accepted that employees as human beings expect to be treated well; hence they expect their leaders to treat them ethically and fairly (Geoffrey, 2013). Employees see leaders according to their own values (Schminke, Arnaud, & Taylor, 2015) and are able to determine whether leaders have treated them fairly (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). Although literature does not provide specific theory for ethical/unethical and fair/unfair leadership (Taylor & Pattie, 2014), this study reviews the two most related theories (SLT and FT). Social learning theory explains the effects of ethical leadership on workplaces. Similarly, FT explains leader–employee relationship, behaviours and treatments and their impact on workplace.

While ethics can be referred to as well-founded standards of right and wrong (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, S.J., & Meyer, 2015), ethical leadership is perceived as leader honesty, integrity, responsibility and people orientation (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Literature lacks definition and studies related to fair leadership. Therefore, as people deeply care about how they are treated by others, fair leadership concepts may be linked to organisational justice or fairness studies (Demirtas, 2015). Justice refers to a standard of rightness while fairness considers an ability to judge without one's feeling or interests (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, S.J., & Meyer, 2014). This literature review examines ethical and fair leadership and related theories in detail.

This literature review discusses the workplace as it forms part of this study. A great place to work is where employees trust the people they work for and have pride in

what they do (GPW, 2016). Regardless of workplace setting (Heathfield, 2016), employees expect to be respected and treated fairly (GPW, 2016). The main factors affecting leader–employee relationship in workplaces are power, self-interest and trust. Power refers to controlling others' outcomes or influence over others (Tost, Gino, & Larrick, 2013), while self-interest is the primary motivator behind all behaviours (Kim, 2013). On the other hand trust is viewed to make employees feel more emotionally secure (Lu, 2014) and not only impacts on workplace interactions, but also impacts on the public as well (Ötken & Cenkci, 2012).

Leadership is an important theme of social science as relates to human cooperation from household decision-making, to the complex management of organisations and states (van Vugt & von Rueden, 2017). Leadership has become one of the common words and a title used and questioned, which can be related to the different subjects of people's work or social life (Boaks, 2014). Leaders determine the fate of organisations through their decisions, strategies, and influence on others (Dinh et al., 2014). Generally, when things go well, leaders are liked and viewed as 'good leaders' and when things go wrong they are blamed and viewed as 'bad leaders', and sometimes when things are difficult and challenging, leaders may be feared (Simonton, 2017; Boaks, 2014). On the other hand, there are leaders/supervisors who can be clearly categorised as good (treating employees with respect and care resulting in better outcome) or bad (controlling employees through orders, policies, rules, bureaucracy and forcing employees to work to deliver what management considers satisfactory) (Simonton, 2017). The term 'good leadership' is often regarded as 'ethically good leadership', which has three criteria: methods; character; and the ends (Boaks, 2014). Boaks (2014) explains that methods refer to the ethics of leaders, their intentions and personal ethics (done in an ethical manner). Character refers to the ethics of how leaders lead (done by an ethical leader). The ends refer to the ethics of what leaders do at the end (leadership aimed at an ethical end).

Leadership is an interesting role that could be rewarding both socially and financially; however, the great leaders' courage to fulfil their vision comes from passion instead of position (Hoff, 2015). Reaching a leadership role by itself could

be challenging and maintaining that role could be even more challenging (Blanchard, 2012; Long, 2014). Naturally leaders face a lot of challenges and judgments on a daily basis that test their moral integrity (Cipriano, 2015; Hoff, 2015). However, meeting followers or employees' expectations ethically and fairly requires skills that are expected from leaders (Boaks, 2014; Schultz, 2013). Further, mostly meeting and the way of dealing with these expectations determines whether a leader has the support of followers. Without delighted followers, leadership does not exist, even if for some reason does exist, it won't last long (Schultz, 2013).

Therefore, this study considers leadership styles to be important in leader–employee relationships. As a result, the following popular leadership styles were discussed in this literature review:

> *Ethical leadership:* Refers to leaders' ethical and moral behaviour, and promotes these behaviours among employees (Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley, 2017).

> *Spiritual leadership:* Refers to inspiring workers through hope/faith, human values and tapping into spiritual well-being (IISL, 2015).

> *Authentic leadership:* Refers to mimicking other effective styles, such as transformational leadership, and remaining true to oneself, and holding values and beliefs (Anderson et al., 2017).

> *Transformational leadership:* This leadership style is considered ethical and has attracted more attention than all other leadership theories/styles (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012). It occurs when leaders broaden the interest of employees, generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and motivate employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1990 cited in Kelloway et al., 2012).

*Servant leadership:* This is another style that is considered ethical (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). It is a philosophy and set of practices where leader is servant first and wants to improve employees and build more just organisation (Greenleaf, 2016). Servant leaders communicate honestly, encourage compliance and value the organisation's success (Sturm, Vera, & Crossan, 2017).

*Cosmetic leadership:* This is a new leadership concept developed and proposed in this dissertation. Cosmetic leaders come to leadership positions either by having connections or by showing technical skills while lacking leadership skills from a human point of view (Chiu, Balkundi, & Weinberg, 2017; Nations, 2017; Goins, 2017). These leaders' behaviour and actions may be regarded as unethical and unfair and based on selfishness just to stay in power (Golden, 2011; XQ Innovation, 2016; Rees, 2016; Nisen, 2012). Often superiors have social power over cosmetic leaders (Kumar, 2012; Boaks, 2014). The most important concern of this type of leaders is showing results to superiors to secure their own position (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Yet, it is too simplistic to assume that that all the cosmetic leaders are evil and selfish (Lassiter, 2004). Certainly there is more to the circumstance that aids this type of leaders to become leaders and continue with their behaviours and practices. Therefore, this research sheds light on cosmetic leadership with anticipation of future studies on this new concept.

As seen from the above discussions (see p.6 for the related discussions including their studies/references), the most popular leadership styles are regarded as ethical; however, they don't adequately address the concerns of unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices. Therefore, the author sees it necessary to develop and propose the new concept of cosmetic leadership, which highlights some of the reasons for leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and practices that previously were not addressed by the leadership literature or were ignored by the policy-makers. Thus, the discussions of this study on cosmetic leadership contribute to the leadership literature and prompt the policy-makers that deal with the

organisational behaviour and design preventive measures or guiding principles, such as codes of conduct, to assess the effectiveness of their guiding principles.

As part of the research on leadership, this literature review studies responsible leadership. Responsible leadership is defined as "a relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by leadership…" (Maak & Pless, 2006 cited in Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014, p. 344). While lack of responsible leadership can navigate people/employees into the harsh territory (Broadbelt, 2016) a responsible leadership can impact positively on social responsibility, organisational outcomes and stakeholders, and provide psychological benefits to followers (employees) (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

## 1.6    Methodology

The Methodology chapter (Chapter 3) paves the way to operationalise the research question of this study and explore the new concept of cosmetic leadership. The methodology sets out two qualitative research methods, which provide a balance between theoretical views and practical views practiced in the workplace. The interviews provide opportunity to understand the views, experiences and attitudes of interviewees currently in the workplace. Additionally, analyses of written materials as secondary data assist in having knowledge and understanding of other researchers. The combination of these two methods aids the author to identify new findings and views, and to contribute to leadership literature and benefit the workplace and society.

The methodology considers the qualitative approach based on the anti-positivism paradigm, which has three schools of thought in social science research (phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism). 'Phenomenology' stresses that individual behaviour is determined by the experience through direct interactions with the phenomena, while 'ethnomethodology' stresses that common sense reality is constructed through everyday face-to-face interactions with the world of everyday life (Dash, 2005).

Finally, 'symbolic interactionism' explains the understanding and interpretation of interactions between human beings that have taken place. These interactions not only cause human beings to change, but also cause change in societies (Dash, 2005).

While this dissertation examines a range of theories its main focus is on SLT and FT. Additionally this study involves philosophical approaches such as ontology and epistemology. The ontology as a theory of nature assists in the way in which research questions are formulated considering that organisations and cultures are objective social entities and act as individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The epistemological approach assists in gaining knowledge about the nature of leadership behaviour and practices and the ability to see them as acceptable realities of ethical and fair behaviours and practices (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The operationalisation of the question becomes achievable by following the guidance developed by Singh (2015). The methodology's plan for data collection is to conduct sixteen confidential individual interviews with Australian leaders and employees currently working in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) at different levels in the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and government sector, including parliamentarians/politicians. The sample comprises four parliamentarians, three senior executives, three directors, three assistant directors and three employees at different levels. Further, written materials can be used, such as published journals, reports and other materials available in libraries and online websites (internet), and well as textbooks.

The operationalisation process involves transcribing recorded interviews (data) into Microsoft Office products and separating them into different interrelated themes. These themes are ethics and fairness, leadership (including cosmetic leadership), and employee and workplace, with special attention to attitudes and attributes affecting leader–employee relationships. Finally, the methodology provides a pathway to start and finish the research and present its output in a dissertation. The dissertation can be used in a variety of organisational situations.

## 1.7    Results and analysis

Following this study's methodology the interviews enhance the wealth of knowledge and information for this dissertation and strengthen the views discussed in the literature review. Thus the fifteen interview questions presented in Chapter 4 (Results) and listed in Appendix A are designed based on the research question, issues discussed in the literature review, research framework and themes identified in the methodology (Singh, 2015; Bricki & Green, 2007).

The interviews' conduct and results' analyses are in accordance with the operationalisation process explained in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 3). The analysis presented in Chapter 5 breaks down themes into two sections each (issue/s and issue resolution). This approach is envisaged by analysing interviewees' concerns and suggestions that may assist in addressing the major gap of unethical and unfair leadership behaviour and practices and the related impact on employees and workplaces. The comparison and link of the interview analysis to the literature review arguments provides a deeper analysis of the themes. Hence, Chapter 5, through its analysis of results, aims to address the research question and contribute to the leadership literature through its discussions and findings.

## 1.8    Conclusion

The Conclusion chapter (Chapter 6) concludes the dissertation in a way of summarising the dissertation and touching on the major issues and related resolutions identified in this study. Chapter 6 provides a response to the research question and mentions the dissertation's limitations and contributions. Finally, the Conclusion chapter outlines the major findings revealed in this research and proposes some topics and questions to be considered for future research.

# Chapter 2
# Literature Review

*A selective review of writings on ethical and fair leadership behaviours and practices towards employees, and the impact on the workplace*

*"We are living in a time when leadership has never been more needed yet talent is, apparently, scarce." — Grahame Broadbelt*

*"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between, the leader is a servant." — Max DePree*

## 2      Literature Review

## 2.1      Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine literature on ethical and fair leadership behaviours and practices or actions and their impact on employees and workplaces. Employees, based on their human nature, expect ethical and fair treatment from their leaders as these treatments aid their job satisfaction (Geoffrey, 2013; El Din & El Ghetany, 2016; Koh & Boo, 2004; Mintz, 2011). Despite considerable literature on ethical leadership, little is known about unethical and unfair leadership practices and the impact on employees and workplaces, even though the treatment of employees in organisations is very important (Midgen, 2015). This is a gap that this study intends to close. In doing so, the author believes that this research is essential to encourage more attention to be paid on the importance of leader–employee relationship by the leadership scholars and the policy-makers at all levels in the organisations. This is especially relevant when the leader–employee relationship is negative, caused by leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours and practices, wherein the negative relationship's impact goes beyond the individuals. The leader–employee negative relationship may negatively impact on the workplace, and go to the employees' families and, wider society.

Employees see leaders according to their own values and form perceptions that influence attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Schminke et al., 2015). Therefore, it is natural for employees to react to unethical, abusive and unfair treatment by their leaders that produces unhappy behaviour in the workplace (Midgen, 2015). Thus, leaders considerably impact the behaviour of the employees (Jha & Pandey, 2015) while, generally speaking, leaders or supervisors themselves are subordinates to their own superiors. However, those leaders who use unethical and unfair practices on employees are perceived as abusive leaders or supervisors (sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours excluding physical contact) (Chen & Wang, 2017; Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Hence, these behaviours have a negative impact on the workplace, and literature has paid little attention to interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Chen & Wang, 2017).

While ethical issues impact on others and workplace (little studies on this topic is available in literature), values provide foundation for making fair judgments (Schminke et al., 2015). There is little attention given to fair leadership behaviour and practices in research literature and very little is known about factors determining whether leaders' actions are fair or not. Ethical and fair leadership are actions and behaviours that are made of appropriate norms (Demirtas, 2015), but the problem is how to measure and judge these norms given individuals may see them differently (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Although leaders can create and manage a culture that leads to higher job satisfaction (El Din & El Ghetany, 2016), as a general principle individuals respond to negative more than positive behaviours (Liu et al., 2012).

Concepts of ethical and fair leadership are built on the Western-based private sector focusing on compliance, while lacking the universal/cross-cultural studies (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Although the ethical literature is focused on performance and leaders, it lacks the attention to employees and workplace.

While the literature does not provide a specific theory for ethical/unethical leadership and fair/unfair leadership (Taylor & Pattie, 2014), this literature review discusses the two most related and commonly used theories: SLT to explain the

effects of ethical leadership on the workplace, and FT, to explain leaders' and employees' working relationship, behaviours and treatments, and their impact on the workplace. The review extends its literature investigation by addressing the question: *What is a workplace?* As ethical leadership literature is focused on performance, cost savings and profit maximisation practices this literature review will pave the way to investigate the factors that can assist in making a better workplace.

This review considers the important elements impacting leaders' and employees' work relationship, including power exercise of leadership and motives for self-interest and trust (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006). This is because there is little known about the power that could be unethical or misused. Similarly, the literature does not provide much detail about fair leadership and trust.

This review explores popular and emerging leadership styles considered ethical and fair. The review examines ethical, spiritual, authentic, transformational and servant leadership styles and proposes a new concept of leadership called cosmetic leadership. In this dissertation, cosmetic leadership refers to leaders who come to leadership/supervisory position either by having connections or by showing technical skills. Cosmetic leaders do not have leadership skills or the courage to stand up for what is right or wrong (Palanski, Cullen, Gentry, & Nichols, 2015) and often use abusive supervision. To date, there is no study/research for this new concept in leadership literature. Hence this literature review provides a starting point for researchers to conduct studies or empirical work regarding the concept of cosmetic leadership. Thus, by taking into account ethics and fairness literature and theories related to organisations and individuals this literature review discusses the responsible leadership. Owing to the emerging importance of responsible leadership concept and its limited studies in literature, responsible leadership requires further research and clarification (Vogtlin, 2017).

The scope of this literature review is to research the question: *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* And, concludes by proposing further research on this question.

## 2.2 Treatment of employees by their leaders

It is generally accepted that human nature dictates people expect to be treated well. Employees expect their leaders to treat them ethically and fairly (Geoffrey, 2013) and desire consistency between their ethical values and the ethical atmosphere of their organisation (Koh & Boo, 2004). No matter how well employees do their job, if they are treated unethically and unfairly, they will not have job satisfaction or enthusiasm to go to work the next day unless they have no other options (El Din & El Ghetany, 2016; Koh & Boo, 2004; Mintz, 2011). However, despite the importance of ethical treatment of employees by their leaders, there is limited research on unethical leadership (Midgen, 2015). There are some contradictory views in literature, as Mintz (2011) suggests that employees have some responsibility to create job satisfaction, not to be a complainer and never leave a job on bad terms.

Employees see leaders according to their own understanding and values in which values serve as guiding principles in people's lives and the basis for their behaviour, attitudes and actions (Schminke et al., 2015). However, as ethical values may differ among people, experienced and skilled leaders adopt to certain measures to encourage certain ethical values among employees in order to manage and yield better organisational outcomes (Koh & Boo, 2004). Moreover, employees form justice perceptions where these perceptions influence attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Schminke et al., 2015). The fairness of outcome allocations (distributive fairness), the process leading to the allocation of outcomes (procedural fairness), and the treatment of employees during the process of allocations (interactional fairness) influences employees to form distinct perceptions (Schminke et al., 2015; Koh & Boo, 2004; Colquitt et al., 2013). The fairness perceptions affect important outcomes in the workplace, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, performance and organisational citizenship behaviours, (Schminke et al., 2015). Organisational citizenship behaviours refers to employees who feel very close with the organisation and extend their voluntary behaviours that go above and beyond the formal or normal duties of their role to help individuals or the organisation (Wengrzyn, 2017; Powell, 2011). Therefore, leaders are in very

important position to show ethical and fair decision-making, workplace values and moral philosophy to employees and their organisations (Midgen, 2015).

There are some important ethical leadership characteristics comprising accountability, consideration and respect for others, fairness and non-discriminatory treatment, character, collective orientation including organisation and social, and openness and flexibility (Midgen, 2015). It is natural that employees will react accordingly if they see a lack of ethical leadership characteristics accompanied by negative treatments received from their leaders. In other words, when there are unethical, abusive and unfair treatments by leaders, their employees will more likely be unhappy and potentially demonstrate unethical behaviour as a reactionary behaviour (Midgen, 2015). Thus, leaders who occupy higher positions in organisations considerably impact the behaviour of the employees or subordinates (Jha & Pandey, 2015).

In addition to the limited research on unethical and unfair treatments of employees by leaders, the literature demonstrates some contradictions. For example, Moon (2017) argues much of the empirical research on justice in public administration (referring to the U.S. federal government) has little attention to organisational-level investigations. Moon (2017) further argues that the growing attention to employees' shared perceptions of fair treatment creates imbalance, which is problematic as justice impacts are more powerful when all or most of the members of an organisation have been treated fairly.

Generally speaking, as can be seen in our daily working life most leaders or supervisors are subordinates themselves, trying to succeed at their positions. There is nothing wrong with success as long as the concerns of employees as human beings are respected (Green, 2015). However, for leaders to get their way by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of employees, otherwise known as influencing tactic(s) (Lee, Han, Cheong, Kim, & Yun, 2017), behaviour may be unethical or unfair. For example, leaders may abuse their employees while trying to succeed for themselves. As a result, employees perceive their leaders abusive, unethical and unfair. Abusive supervision is regarded as employees' (subordinates')

perception of their supervisors engaging in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours, excluding physical contact (Chen & Wang, 2017; Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Naturally, employees will regard abusive behaviours as unethical and unfair, thereby reducing the level of their performance (Chen & Wang, 2017). Consequently, these behaviours impact negatively on the workplace; the literature has paid little attention to interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Chen & Wang, 2017).

Ethical issues and concerns are driven from actions and behaviours that most of the time have potential impact on others (Schminke et al., 2015). The ethical behaviours not only involve an 'I' component, but also a 'we' component. On the other hand, ethical behaviours can benefit individuals as well as society (Schminke et al., 2015), and organisations, employees and leaders are part of a society. The ethical behaviours and treatments cause employees' perceptions on overall organisational justice or overall fairness of leadership that impact on attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Schminke et al., 2015). The term organisational justice is closely connected to fairness and refers to the employees' perception of organisation's behaviours, decisions and actions that are morally right and how the employees' attitude towards management is influenced (Tan & Ab Aziz, 2016).

Values provide leaders and employees with a foundation for making fair judgments and right or wrong decisions on treatment and behaviour (Schminke et al., 2015). Further, values provide a system that enables prioritising beliefs and norms and determining what is fair or unfair (Schminke et al., 2015). Therefore, it can be said that ethical and fair leadership are actions and behaviours that are made of appropriate norms (Demirtas, 2015). However ethical behaviour and fairness in the workplace can be seen and judged differently by individuals (Jha & Pandey, 2015); therefore, the problem is how to judge these norms. When employees perceive a leader's behaviour and treatment as ethical and fair they like their leader. In contrast, when a leader is perceived unethical, employees dislike that leader. Liking and disliking leaders (behaviours) may seem simplistic; however it is the beginning of favourable or unfavourable reactions and behaviours that impact the workplace, individuals and their families. The difficulty is how to measure and judge

leadership's ethical and fair behaviours. Judgment of ethics in relation to leadership can and does go wrong (Levine & Boaks, 2014). It is difficult to evaluate ethical and fair leadership behaviours without taking into account the factors of environment, timing of action and reaction, ethical/unethical behaviour, fair/unfair treatment, power and authority (Levine & Boaks, 2014).

While in this competitive world it may not be easy to create a workplace capable of demonstrating workforce job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Jha & Pandey, 2015), it is on leaders to create and manage a culture that leads to higher job satisfaction and thus higher productivity of employees (El Din & El Ghetany, 2016). Leadership from the lower to the higher level plays an important role in creating a workplace capable of providing job satisfaction and at the same time meeting organisational objectives. Leadership's ethical and fair behaviours are perceived positive to employees. While the positive behaviours impact on employees' reactions positively, as a general principle individuals are more responsive to negative than positive aspects of external context (Liu et al., 2012). As leaders at a lower level engage in mimicking behaviours of leaders at a higher hierarchical level, top management ethical behaviours trigger supervisory ethical leadership (Liu et al., 2012). Leaders' ethical and fair behaviours are important because employees react to unethical behaviour or acts of unfairness (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suarez-Acosta, 2014). Additionally, leaders' unethical and unfair behaviours cause deviant workplace behaviours and influences organisational citizenship behaviours that impact on peers observing injustice towards their colleagues (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suarez-Acosta, 2014). Thus, it is on leaders to behave and act ethically and fairly, so to create a harmonious workplace climate capable of inspiring the staff to contribute in meeting organisational objectives while having positive perceptions to their leaders and organisation (Li, Feng, Liu, & Cheng, 2014).

## 2.3    What are ethical and fair leadership?

Literature related to ethical and fair leadership is built on Western-based private sector views focused on a compliance-oriented understanding of ethical and unethical leadership (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Moving to a universal literature covering ethical and fair leadership expectations globally for both the private and government sectors requires not only cross-cultural studies, but also internationally enforceable codes of conduct that need to be examined (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Ethical leadership is perceived as leader honesty, integrity, responsibility and people-orientation, while unethical leadership refers to leader dishonesty, corruption, self-interest (egocentrism) and falsification (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). While the literature provides studies related to ethical leadership and fairness including fairness theory, there is a lack of definition and studies related to fair leadership. Hence, fair leadership concepts may be drawn and linked to fairness studies. Demirtas (2015) indicates that people deeply care about how they are treated by others, so organisational justice is important. Organisational justice has three components: distributive justice (allocations of outcomes – rewards and punishments); procedural justice (perceived fairness of the processes); and interactional justice (individual's concerns about the quality of interpersonal treatment). Therefore, the universal studies should broadly cover the human side of ethical and fair leadership impacts on employees, in addition to the organisational objectives and effects. Limited studies and analyses show that ethical leadership is universally viewed as outstanding leadership, but the degree of endorsement varies in different groups (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Nevertheless, in ethics and fairness specific leadership literature, cross-cultural research/studies have been rare. Similarly, limited studies have been undertaken on unethical and unfair leadership behaviours theoretically and empirically (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014).

### 2.3.1 Understanding ethical and fair leadership

*Ethics and ethical leadership*

Ethics has been defined by scholars and academics in a variety of journals and publications: "Ethics can be defined as the science of morals or rules of behaviour" (BPS, 2009 cited in Midgen, 2015, p. 81). The meaning of ethics is hard to understand as some behaviours or actions might be ethical to one and unethical to another. Conversely, some behaviours or actions might be ethical in one culture and nation while unethical in another culture or nation (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Sociologist Raymond Baumhart asked business people "What does ethics mean to you?", they replied with different answers related to feelings, religious beliefs, law requirements and standards of behaviour that their society accepts; some replied "I don't know" (Velasquez et al., 2015, para. 1-2).

Ethics can be referred to well-founded standards of right and wrong that humans are supposed to adhere to in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues complemented by honesty, compassion, and loyalty (Velasquez et al., 2015). Additionally, the study and development of one's ethical standards can be regarded as a part of ethics (Velasquez et al., 2015). Ethical expectations and requirements are fine; however, there is not much written about unethical behaviours. Moreover, what guarantee is there that all members of society will be expected to deliver ethical behaviours at the same standards? "Ironically, only those who understand their own potential for unethical behaviour can become the ethical decision makers that they aspire to be." (Banaji, Bazerman & Chugh, 2003 cited in Midgen, 2015, p. 85). It is true that organisations have codes of conduct or codes of ethics, which usually are similar in nature among government and public sectors. However, what guarantee is there that leaders versus employees will be judged at the same standards if and when the codes of ethics are broken? Sometimes ethical behaviours are used not only to serve as legal compliance but also for corporate interests, whereby leadership aims to impact compliance by removing individual ethical options (Adelstein & Clegg 2016). Thus, removal of, or limitations to, ethical choice by leaders can be overpowering in its impact on both

the employees and, afterwards, the organisation or workplace, often resulting in warning to or dismissal of employees (Adelstein & Clegg 2016).

Generally, ethical leadership is viewed as being an ethical example, treating people fairly and actively managing morality (Mayer et al., 2012). Ethical leaders encourage ethical behaviours and discourage unethical behaviours to their employees by communicating ethics and punishing unethical behaviours (Mayer et al., 2012). Although ethical leadership has attracted attention, few studies directly examine the relationship between ethical leadership and ethical outcomes or the impact on employees and workplaces (Mayer et al., 2012).

While leaders' behaviour and actions play an important role in organisations, ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Mayer et al., 2012, p. 157). When leadership acts contrary to social norms, employees express anger and resentment towards decision-makers (Brockner et al., 2007). Appropriate conduct and reinforcement are important aspects of ethical leadership that cannot be achieved if the influence and related behaviour and actions are not fair. Although treating employees fairly could be subjective, as people may see situations differently, fair treatment refers to listening to employees, being fair and balanced and having the best interest of employees in mind (Mayer et al., 2012). Consequently, leaders' fair treatment shows moral and ethical standards that can add to a more meaningful working life for employees (Colquitt et al., 2006).

By investigating the literature, it is obvious that there is not enough attention paid to unethical leadership behaviours perpetrated by leaders/supervisors (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suarez-Acosta, 2014). Hence, it is valuable to focus on unethical leadership as it is neglected in the research literature, bearing in mind the significantly harmful outcomes that may result (Midgen, 2015). For instance, unethical leadership could be caused by the leader's power that allows abusive supervision. In this case, owing to leaders' higher organisational positions and

stronger decisional power, leaders incline to display abusive supervisory behaviours such as ridiculing, yelling, intimidating employees, taking credit for subordinates' achievements and ascribing undesirable outcomes to subordinates' personal issues (Liu et al., 2012). Therefore, these unethical behaviours and mistreatments not only harm employees' creativity and performance, well-being, and social life, but also impact negatively on workplace (Liu et al., 2012).

*Fairness and fair leadership*

There is little attention given to fair leadership behaviour and practices in research literature and very little is known about factors to determine whether leaders act fairly or not (van Houwelingen, van Dijke, & De Cremer 2017). Hence, to understand fair leadership, it is useful to understand what fairness is. In our daily lives, we often hear the word fairness as it is commonly used among politicians and policy-makers. The literature relates fairness to positive attitudes and behaviours such as trust, organisational citizenship and satisfaction, whereby when employees have been treated fairly, they respond positively (Collins & Mossholder, 2017). When leaders or supervisors treat employees fairly (with integrity, honesty and civility), the work behaviours and outcomes benefit supervisors as well (Collins & Mossholder, 2017).

In Western civilization, fairness or justice is linked to ethics; every work on ethics regards justice as part of the central core of morality (Velasquez et al., 2014), whereby leaders set the ethical tone of organisations (Mayer et al., 2012). While justice and fairness often today used interchangeably justice means individuals should be given what they deserve (Velasquez et al., 2014). As justice refers to a standard of rightness, fairness refers to an ability to judge without reference to one's feelings or interests and has been used to make judgments specific to a particular case (Velasquez et al., 2014).

The words justice and fairness sound noble and convey an admirable objective (Collins & Mossholder 2017); however, when there is a conflict in society or an organisation, how can we determine what people deserve or what is fair or unfair?

Therefore, principles and standards are required to assist and guide the judgment that is made in each conflict (Velasquez et al., 2014). The basic principle of justice was defined by Aristotle more than two thousand years ago, which says "equals should be treated equally and unequals unequally" meaning people at individual level should be treated the same unless there are situations that require them to be treated differently (Velasquez et al., 2014, para. 5). For example, it is deemed to be justifiable and fair to give more benefits to an employee who makes more contribution to a project than others, and it is unfair to punish an employee for something over which who had no control (Velasquez et al., 2014).

Philosophers and social scientists use different definitions of the terms 'justice' and 'fairness'. Philosophers use these terms as distinct concepts, while empirical social scientists use these two terms interchangeably. For example, social scientists refer to organisational justice and workplace fairness as the same event (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). Organisational scholars tend to de-stress an internalised belief in ethical principles arguing that victims of injustice are not concerned with ethical issues rather they are troubled by unattractive outcomes, lack of control and damaged social status (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). These types of assertions and conflict of thoughts may urge the need for looking at ethical and fair treatments of employees by their leaders in a holistic way as individuals see and judge situations differently. Individuals often see situations based on their personal values and beliefs that are not facts, but personalised ideas (Waggoner, 2010). While fairness theory provides an important piece of the justice evaluation puzzle (Cropanzano et al., 2001), there are insufficient studies regarding employees' reactions and behaviours against mistreatments caused by their leaders.

Justice comprises three elements: distributive (assuring benefits and burdens are distributed fair and just); retributive (assuring punishments are fair and just); and corrective and compensatory justice (assuring people are fairly compensated) (Velasquez et al., 2014; Demirtas, 2015; Colquitt et al., 2006). As the foundations of justice can be based on social stability, interdependence and equal dignity, then justice is a central part of ethics that plays an important part in our moral lives (Velasquez et al., 2014). Thus, employees as human beings and members of society

expect leaders' moral decisions and actions treat them equally, and if not, leaders must determine whether unequal treatment is justifiable (Velasquez et al., 2014). It is important for leaders to consider justice/fairness as the basic dignity of employees, which will yield mutual recognition and organisational and social benefits (Velasquez et al., 2014). Further, the results of a study completed by van Houwelingen et al. (2017) demonstrated that management unfairness can have a detrimental impact throughout the organisation, especially when lower-level management integrates and learns unfair behaviour from higher levels.

Finally, some leaders who have been appointed to their positions because of their technical skills may not have enough leadership skills to behave ethically and fairly towards their subordinates. These types of leaders, in order to achieve their objectives, will most probably focus their attention on managerial controls while disregarding perceptions of managerial fairness, which are mutually reinforcing (Long, Bendersky, & Morrill, 2011). Long et al. (2011) argues that leaders can use controls as long as subordinates see those controls are fairly applied. However, scholars have identified that fair implementation of controls is important, while researchers acknowledge tensions between controls and fairness (Long et al., 2011). Similarly, little attention has been paid to promote fairness among leaders who are naturally in favour of engaging lower levels of fairness because of their personality characteristics. Therefore managing fairness in organisations is very important as not all leaders are inclined to perform high levels of fairness (Whiteside & Barclay 2016).

### 2.3.2   Related ethical and fairness theories

*Ethical theories*

The word 'ethics' comes from the Greek word 'ethos', referring to 'morals' ("Ethical theories", n.d.). Ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do in terms of obligations, rights, benefits to society, and fairness, and it refers to the study and development of people's (employees) ethical standards (Velasquez, Claire, Shanks, J., & Meyer,

2010 cited in MC, 2019). Ethical theory is the basis of ethical solutions to the difficult situations people face in life. Philosophers have used theoretical ways to differentiate between right and wrong and to give guidelines on how to act ethically (Panza & Potthast, n.d.). Ethics scholars believe that ethical decision-making is based on six classes of theories: Consequentialism; Kantian Deontologism; Natural Law; Virtue Ethics (SUSoE, 2017); Contract Theory; and Care Ethics (Panza, & Potthast, n.d.). Consequentialism refers to ethical theories that view the rightness or wrongness of any action to produce the greatest good (utilitarianism or social consequentialism) (SUSoE, 2017; Panza & Potthast, n.d.; "Ethical theories", n.d.). Second, Kantian Deontologism refers to the acts that should be performed by universality and appropriate for everyone or to be according with moral law (SUSoE, 2017; Panza & Potthast, n.d.; "Ethical theories", n.d.). Third, Natural Law refers to human nature and suggests that human beings can discover principles of good and bad themselves and move toward human prosperity (SUSoE, 2017). Virtue Ethics is a systematic formulation of the traits of character (developing courage, compassion and wisdom, and avoiding weaknesses like greed, jealousy and selfishness) that make human behaviour praiseworthy or blameworthy (Shelp, 1985 cited in SUSoE, 2017; Panza & Potthast, n.d.; "Ethical theories", n.d.). Moreover, Contract Theory suggests that doing the right thing is abiding by the agreements among the members of a rational society, and ethics is not about character, consequences or principles; rather, it is a suggestion about ethical thinking in terms of agreements between people (Panza & Potthast, n.d.). Additionally, Care Ethics is a new ethical theory that suggests people should learn norms and values in specific situations and the moral problems should be solved by maintaining the relationship between people. Acting rightly displays care for others and, therefore, people's connections and relationships are important (Panza & Potthast, n.d.; "Ethical theories", n.d.).

The literature has related ethical theory to moral theory, which is a mechanism for assessing whether an action is ethically justified. A moral theory can assist moral vision to determine whether an action is right (to be performed or followed), wrong (not to be performed or followed), or permissible (may or may not be performed or followed) ("Center for the Study of Ethics," n.d.). Moral theories range between

utilitarianism, which is considered morally right based on the results of an action, and deontological theories which is based on what is considered to be morally right by taking into account universal laws existing outside a specific situation ("Center for the Study of Ethics," n.d.).

Ethical behaviours in the workplace can be viewed differently by individuals, and hence judged differently based on individuals' moral understanding, judgment, ideology and ethical position (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Ethical position refers to idealism and relativism of individuals, whereby people have different levels of idealism and relativism that causes a perception of ethics and ethical behaviour in an organisation to be viewed differently (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Idealism (believe in avoidance of harm to others) has a deontological approach of evaluating and resolving the ethical problems and is based on one's own stand against untruthfulness, deceitfulness, uprightness and fairness as well as individuals' belief in moral obligations (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Relativism on the other hand, refers to individuals' disagreement with the moral rules that are universal and a belief in universal rules that lead to their ethical behaviour in all situations and attempts for their benefits and their organisation (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Relativism roots are found in teleological theories that explain the end results of behaviours and the prevention of damage to others (Jha & Pandey, 2015).

The literature does not provide a specific theory for ethical or unethical leadership. As Taylor and Pattie (2014) by citing Bandura (1977, 1986); Brown and Mitchell (2010); and Mayer et al. (2009, 2010) mentions that several researchers have used SLT to explain the effects of ethical leadership on workplaces, as it is the most commonly used theory related to ethical leadership. This theory can help us to understand why some leaders are more likely to be ethical leaders than others (Brown & Treviño, 2006). According to SLT, individuals learn appropriate (ethical) or inappropriate (unethical) behaviours by noticing or watching others' behaviours (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011). In other words, leaders or supervisors may be viewed as role models for employees because of their position in organisations, and their ability to provide rewards and punishments (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Thus, leaders play an important role in

promoting ethical behaviours in the workplace (Mayer et al., 2012). Employees observe and pay attention to their supervisors and leaders and then based on their observations decide how to behave and react (Liu et al., 2012).

Further, Taylor and Pattie (2014) mention that Bandura (1977; 1986) and Mayer et al. (2009; 2010) use SLT to elaborate on ethical leadership and to understand negative outcomes of ethical leadership. In line with SLT, individuals learn from rewards and punishments, and through observations and experiences (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). Leaders can influence employees and hold them accountable to ethical standards (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). According to SLT, when leaders reward and discipline employees' ethical and unethical behaviours, employees are influenced to engage in the desired behaviours (Mayer et al., 2012). Leaders' influence by rewarding employees for ethical conduct and punishing for inappropriate conduct is not a problem; the problem is when employees learn that unethical conduct/behaviour goes unpunished or the results of violating the standards are unclear (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). Therefore, it is not clear how employees hold leaders accountable to ethical standards. Would the codes of conduct play an important role in holding leaders accountable for their ethical or unethical behaviours towards employees?

*Fairness theories*

Similar to ethical leadership theory, the literature does not provide specific theory for fair or unfair leadership. However, several writers (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Stein, 2009; & Colquitt et al., 2006) studied FT, which, as a result this theory, can be related to leaders' and employees' working relationship, behaviours and treatments, thus their impact on the workplace.

According to Cropanzano and Stein (2009), workplace fairness researchers discovered that their study may fall within the domain of behavioural ethics research; while it has been more than forty years, the term 'organisational justice' has been used to explain fairness related issues in the workplace. Fairness scholars have focused on material and social interests, where ethical behaviour researchers

considered the importance of moral convictions. Both fairness and ethics researchers recognise the importance of identity; the former focuses on the social side of the identity, and the latter focuses on the moral side of identity (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). The justice appearance has changed as the literature in the past ten years has witnessed the rise of social exchange theory as the dominant lens for explaining justice effects. The justice researchers, after decades of painting people as rational beings who care about justice issues, now acknowledge that people feel justice issues as well (Cropanzano, Stein, & Nadisic, 2011 and De Cremer, 2007 cited in Colquitt et al., 2013). Blau (1964) cited in Moon (2017, p. 124) defines social exchange as: "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others". Social exchange theory explains individuals'/employees' reactions towards their leaders. The theory assumes people enter into a social exchange with a feeling of commitment or duty for the benefits received from others that stops from expectations that social exchange will provide returns in the near future (Jha & Pandey, 2015; Collins & Mossholder 2017). According to social exchange theory, the relationship between employees and an organisation is informal and employees put their best effort towards achieving organisational goals while expecting their organisation will respond to their efforts (Jha & Pandey, 2015; Collins & Mossholder 2017). However, when employees see a lack of reciprocal fairness, they will respond by reducing such efforts (Collins & Mossholder 2017). Social exchange theory assists in mutuality of ethical ideology at the workplace, which influences employees' job satisfaction as well as the organisational commitment (Jha & Pandey, 2015).

Fairness judgments are drawn from equity theory that suggests employees evaluate whether they are treated fairly and outcomes are fair based on examining and comparing the input-to-outcome ratio with other employees, such as effort, time and cognitive resources (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2006). Because equity theory was criticised as being too narrow in explaining the formation of justice judgments, referent cognitions theory attempted to address the concerns of equity theory by referring to the awareness of procedural alternatives leading to more favourable outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2001). The referent cognitions

theory defines unfair treatment conditions; however, it does not explain the process of accountability judgments. Therefore, these limitations led to a revised theory called fairness theory that determines if a given situation is fair, three separate judgments must be made. That is, judgments disagree with the negativity of the situation, the target's actions and the moral conduct, which counter the facts of what would, could and should have taken place (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2006). Another fairness related theory is Fairness Heuristic Theory (FHT), which argues individuals are often in situations in which they must surrender to authorities, and conceding to authorities provides an opportunity to be exploited or abused. Therefore, FHT provides additional reasoning to form judgments and explains that procedures are more relevant than evaluations of outcomes in fairness judgments (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2006). However, FT argues that people engage in counterfactual thinking to determine the fairness of an event or whether authorities should be blamed for that event, which can be separated from FHT (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2006). Fairness theory relates to a particular event. Judging fairness is more deliberate and is suited to explaining counterproductive reactions, while FHT is used for a number of events and focuses on cooperation that makes it more relevant to explaining prosocial behaviours (Colquitt et al., 2006).

The theory of justice, which is known as fairness, develops principles of justice governance as a modern social order. The theory assumes that a society consists of free and equal individuals with equal opportunities, political and personal freedom, and has cooperative arrangements that benefit the more and the less advantaged people in the society (Garrett, 2005). In line with FT, employees can determine whether their leaders have treated them fairly based either on assumptions or facts (Cropanzano et al., 2001). According to FT, a situation can be regarded as unfair or socially unjust where there are three conditions: an existence of an unfavourable condition; determination of who is accountable for the injustice; and the 'should' component which is a moral virtue that dictates how people should treat or interact with each other (Cropanzano et al., 2001).

Additionally, the FT explains and clarifies that social injustice occurs when another individual can be assumed and held answerable and responsible in a situation (Cropanzano et al., 2001). To have a situation that can be regarded as being socially unjust, the FT considers three processes of having a 'victim', 'accountable person' and 'should' component (Cropanzano et al., 2001). According to this theory, employees engage in counterfactual thinking and assumptions or based on the facts to determine whether the incident or authorities' role in that incident (leaders' treatment of employees) is fair or not (Colquitt et al., 2006; Cropanzano et al., 2001). Finally, when an employee views himself/herself as a victim by the accountable person's (supervisor/leader) behaviours or actions will react negatively, otherwise the employee's reactions will be positive (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh, 2008; Collins & Mossholder, 2017). The negative reactions and conflicts are often dysfunctional and increase frictions, hostilities, personality clashes and will decrease mutual understanding that all of these will impact negatively on the work environment (Liu et al., 2012; Midgen, 2015; Robbins et al., 2008). On the contrary, the author believes that leaders' or supervisors' ethical behaviours, fair practices and positive treatments of employees will result in having better workplaces capable of producing better performance and job satisfaction.

## 2.4    What is a workplace?

'Workplace' is commonly thought of as a place of work. It is a location that an employer provides to employees to do work and in today's knowledge economy, the workplace is located in a variety of settings including offices, factories, stores and farms (Heathfield, 2016). Knowledge economy refers to production and services that are based on knowledge-intensive activities contributing to accelerated technical and scientific advance and rapid obsolescence (Powell & Snellman, 2004). A great place to work is where employees trust the people for whom they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people with whom they work (GPW, 2016). No matter what type of setting—for example, standing desks, sitting desks, bright or dim lights—a workplace can offer, or how safe it is (Heathfield, 2016), employees expect to be respected and treated fairly (GPW, 2016), and these

factors aid employees' motivation. While many theories have been trying to explain motivations concerning human behaviour, the ethical and fair leadership literature covers a variety of related theories. Human emotion will not only exist at work but it will also influence workplace outcomes considering the large portion of employees' lives spent with others at work (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). Contrary to what most people think, employees value other things more than the amount of money they get paid (Geoffrey, 2013). If they are treated ethically and fairly, they will be happy in workplace and may work for less money, and they will also be more productive (Geoffrey, 2013). Thus, it is important that employees work in a workplace that ensures equity and diversity, and is free of discrimination and bias (Tolbert & Castilla, 2017). Leaders of effective workplaces acknowledge and recognise organisations' greatest resources are their employees. These leaders do not aim only to survive, but they try to flourish (WWW, n.d.).

Leaders play an important role in motivating employees and shaping employees' workplace attitudes and behaviour, whether these attitudes and behaviour are workplace civility or incivility, or the cause of building workplace aggression (Taylor & Pattie, 2014; Ferris, Yan, Lim, Chen, & Fatimah, 2016). It is clear that incivility (uncivil behaviour at workplace) can be harmful to employees and to their organisations as well (Sliter, 2013). Incivility refers to a low intensity unexpected or nonstandard behaviour (lacking in good manners and respect and threatening behaviour) with ambiguous intent to harm others, violate workplace norms for mutual respect and courtesy (Sliter, 2013; Parther, n.d.). In contrary, civil behaviour in the workplace refers to respect toward others that causes a feeling of value in others and contributes to mutual respect, effective communication and team collaboration that all impact positively on organisational objectives (Parther, n.d.). Ethical and fair leadership promotes an environment where employees are less likely to engage in workplace incivility (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). On the other hand unethical and unfair leadership behaviour promotes a negative relationship between employees and virtuous workplace that not only impacts on employees' behaviour at the workplace but also impacts their social behaviour (Mayer et al., 2012).

Further, workplace aggression refers to negative acts such as incivility, abusive supervision, undermining and workplace ostracism that intentionally or unintentionally causes harm to others (Ferris et al., 2016; Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Both abusive supervision and workplace ostracism (the perception that one is being ignored or excluded) have similar negative relationship and impact on job satisfaction and commitment (Ferris et al., 2016). Abusive supervision interacts with the target of abuse, while workplace ostracism abstains from interaction with the target of the abuse (Ferris et al., 2008 & Tepper, 2000 cited in Ferris et al., 2016). Therefore, different types of workplace aggression enable behaviours that have approach and avoidance drives. This means that abusive supervision and supervisory undermining can produce an approach that is based on emotion and anger which is counterproductive workplace behaviour. Workplace ostracism on the other hand produces emotions of anxiety leading to avoiding others at work which is counterproductive as well (Ferris et al., 2016). In the workplace some employees face another form of counterproductive behaviour and treatment (bullying) that can be regarded as unreasonable, unfair and unacceptable and constitutes a fundamental violation of human rights (Fisher, 2015). Workplace bullying refers to a situation of negative acts at work, such as withholding information, gossiping, a pattern of systematic mistreatment, abuse and negative acts persistent in nature, which last for at least six months (Baillien et al., 2016). Leaders should not only avoid bullying employees themselves, but also should manage the situation correctly (as soon as they become aware of it), otherwise this will create conflict in the workplace (Crana, n.d.). Conflicts refer to relational disputes between two or more parties that can arise when supervisors behave in a negative manner or employees perceive the negative behaviour. In other words, conflict is a process between two individuals that make them feel obstructed or irritated by another (Crana, n.d.; Römer, Rispens, Giebels, & Euwema, 2012). This relationship in the workplace is damaging and performance is battered due to poor team unity (Crana, n.d.). Because low-level employees are often hesitant in entering into conflict with their leaders, and working colleagues try to avoid dealing or involving in situations arising from conflict, usually those leaders with abusive nature continue with their unethical and unfair behaviour (Crana, n.d.).

This literature review will pave the way to investigate the factors involving workplaces and how ethical and fair leadership assists in making a better workplace. There is no doubt that ethical and fair treatments create a better workplace where employees are motivated or stimulated to do certain tasks, complete them faster and better even when tasks are not very pleasurable (Damij, Levanjic, Skrt, & Suklan, 2015). To improve the workplace leadership support is an important factor in a way that leader must not only act as a role model, but must hold others accountable in an ethical and fair manner (Blake, 2016). Leaders can positively impact job satisfaction and enhance employees' organisational commitment in the workplace by promoting and developing a more compassionate ethical climate (Koh & Boo, 2004). There is evidence that employees' ethical behaviour or personal belief in work ethics directly impacts on organisational commitment and that leads to job satisfaction in the workplace (Chusmir & Koberg, 1988 and Saks et al., 1996 cited in Koh & Boo, 2004). Existing studies have shown job satisfaction is an important element of organisational commitment and that employees who have job satisfaction exhibit extra-role behaviour at the workplace (Jha & Pandey, 2015). Leaders and line managers/supervisors directly and indirectly contribute to enhance extra-role behaviour which ultimately results in better organisational performance (Knies & Leisink, 2014). Extra-role refers to employee performance and behaviours that are beyond a formal job description (Powell, 2011).

If recent ethical leadership literature is focused on performance, cost savings or profit maximisation practices, attention and focus is required toward including employees and their expectations of the workplace in ethical studies. Workplaces are made of human beings that like to be respected and valued. Employees' treatment with dignity and respect should not be compromised. If employees accept unethical behaviour and let leaders/supervisors get their way, employees have rewarded them for unethical and unacceptable behaviour (Dowd-Higgins, 2013). Treatments by leaders are an important factor in having a healthy workplace. Those "companies that can hire and/or train ethical leaders are more likely to create ethical and interpersonally harmonious work environments" (Mayer et al., 2012, p. 167). It takes a conscious effort from leadership to build and maintain a workplace

where every employee feels like a star (Feffer, 2015) and a culture of ethical and fair leadership practices needs to be noticed by employees. Further, workplace culture is one of the biggest factors that increase employee commitment, engagement and job satisfaction (Brunges & Foley-Brinza, 2014). However, the culture needs to be based on ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices, and the literature needs to expand on cultural implications.

## 2.5    Factors affecting leader and employee work relationships

Leader–employee relationships in the workplace are important, to the extent that this relationship has been regarded to be equal to an employee's relationship with their spouse when it comes to the well-being of employees (HTC, 2011; Römer, Rispens, Giebels, & Euwema, 2012; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010). It should not be surprising when leaders and employees spend or interact with each other for approximately two thousand hours in a year (HTC, 2011). Any good relationship and a rewarding job cannot compensate for a negative relationship that employees can have with leaders/supervisors (HTC, 2011). HTC (2011) referred to James Kouzes and Barry Posner insights gained over thirty years of research into what employees expect from leaders, and points out that concerns such as honesty, forward-looking, inspiring others and integrity ranked highly. There is a relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour, whether this relationship has been directed by organisations or by employees (Lu, 2014).

The relationship between leaders and employees is so important that it directly and indirectly impacts on the workplace and, from there, to organisational objectives. This relationship can be ethical or unethical, and fair or unfair, but it is not well studied in literature. This could be owing to the fact that when it comes to unethical and unfair behaviour or treatments imposed by leaders on employees, often it is employees' words against leaders' words. Further, little research exists in the literature regarding the impact of mistreatments by leaders on employees and the workplace, or how employees respond to these mistreatments, or whom leaders decide to treat fairly/unfairly (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). While studies suggest

that there are relationships between ethical leadership and employees, there is little attention paid in the literature to investigate the complexities of these relationships and their impact on the workplace (Demirtas, 2015) or about the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees (Lu, 2014).

The main factors affecting leader and employee relationships are power, and self-interest and trust. Power refers to the ability of controlling others' outcomes, experiences, or behaviours, whereby leaders use power to influence others in order to follow personal or organisational objectives (Tost et al., 2013). The success of leaders and work units may depend on employees' behaviours and performance (Grant & Patil, 2012). The leaders' and employees' behaviours are linked to self-interest, as the most academic theories of human behaviour suggest that self-interest is the primary motivator behind all behaviours (Kim, 2013). Trust is another important factor in leader–employee relationships. This relationship indicates trust makes employees feel more emotionally secure which leads them to feel less anxious to engage in performing extra-role behaviour (Lu, 2014). Trust between a leader and employee is the defining principle of having a workplace capable of achieving organisational objectives, where leaders and employees are supportive of each other and leaders' credibility, and respectful and fair treatment of employees is evident (GPW, 2016).

## 2.5.1 Power

Power is a "monopoly over rights to causes a result to object, or is it the privilege of doing" (Petrova, 2015, p. 84). Leaders, by definition, have power, and the exercise of this power determines whether leadership is perceived as ethical and/or fair. Employees trust ethical and fair leaders' exercise of power because they perceive wisdom and goodness (Boaks, 2014). If leaders' exercise of power is dominating, unequal, unethical and unfair, it will have a negative psychological impact on perceived performance and, therefore, on employees' behaviour (Tost et al., 2013). While it is important to ensure those who hold the power are capable of ethical and fair leadership exercises and doing good to others (employees), it is unclear how to safeguard the ways of choosing the rightful holders of power (Boaks, 2014). The

first component of agency theory is that "all actors are narrowly self-interested" (Bosse & Phillips, 2016, p. 276). Even though all actors looking or acting for self-interest includes both leader and employee, leaders have power over employees. In other words, employees are influenced by leaders because leaders have the power to exercise both punishments and rewards (Mayer et al., 2012).

Ethical leadership will take into account how leaders' decision-making will impact on employees because these decisions may be complex, with high stakes, and require professional judgment and not just applying the rules (Lawton & Paez, 2015). Ethical leadership also is positively related to leader–employee relationships in a way that enhances leader or employee effectiveness, trust, organisational citizenship behaviours and job satisfaction (Kalshoven, 2010 cited in Lawton & Paez, 2015). On the other hand unethical leadership will be more concerned in decision-makings that will produce fame, money, power and reputation (Lawton & Paez, 2015). While most employees, if not all understand that leaders have authority and power of decision-making, the sensitivity, unhappiness and problem starts when these authorities and powers are misused and decisions are unethical and mixed with greed, corruption and arrogance (Barnes, 2006). There is very little written about the power that is unethical and misused. In this literature review the misused power will be referred to as 'a power that is not justified or used legitimately, ethically or fairly'. Therefore, the misused power can be referred to 'abuse of power' (Boyle, 2015; Boaks, 2014). Abuse of power clearly is unethical and refers to the prime source and true essence of moral evil (Boyle, 2015). Moral evil means that someone refuses to accept responsibility for the welfare of others, which, in this review, refers to those leaders refusing to support employees' welfare because they have power over employees and can influence the reality. In other words, someone (an employee) who doesn't have power cannot abuse it (Boyle, 2015). Leaders who abuse their power do not have any regard for ethical principles. These leaders are unethical and unfair and their behaviours places them in a position of conflict of interest, which means their benefits are dependent on harming or exploiting employees. In this case, employees often do not have sufficient power to stop the abuser (abusive leader) as their efforts will become a source of amusement to their abusive leader (Boyle, 2015). Concentration of power

in leaders leads to negative performance and has a negative impact on the workplace, as employees do not like to be dominated by their leaders (Tost et al., 2013).

Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoogh (2011) by citing Brown et al. (2005) and Trevino et al. (2003) point out that power sharing is behaviour of an ethical leader in addition to fairness and role clarification. Kalshoven et al. (2011) explain that fairness includes making fair choices, showing trustworthy and honest behaviour, and avoiding favouritism and taking responsibility to one's own actions. Role clarification behaviour refers to leaders that should communicate respectfully, clarifying responsibilities, expectations and performance goals as well as knowledge sharing (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Glanz, 2010; Tost et al., 2013). Finally, Kalshoven et al. (2011) refer to power sharing as ethical leadership that empowers employees or subordinates and provides them with a voice, listening to them and providing them with an opportunity that allows sharing ideas and participating in decision-making, at least in those decisions that concern their tasks (Kalshoven et al., 2011). Leaders who are privileged to be in their leadership positions (have power) should ensure that employees are heard, supported and respected (Rapp, 2002 cited in Glanz, 2010), and not use power only to protect their own interest (Petrova, 2015).

## 2.5.2   Self-interest

"Self-interest is a powerful motivator", (Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino, Baker, & Martin, 2014, p. 282). Self-interest is viewed as essential for one's happiness and well-being in a way that enables people to provide food and shelter for themselves and their family. Additionally, self-interest has been regarded as necessary for economic and career success (Golden, 2011). Confusion exists between self-interest and selfishness, and sometimes they have been used interchangeably (Golden, 2011). In conflicting views of self-interest, some differentiate self-interest from selfishness. Selfishness has been regarded as self-interest at the expense of others and clearly unethical, while acting in one's self-interest has been regarded as good (Duska, 2012). Further, some relate self-interest and selfishness to each other. For

example, Kanev (2017) by citing Immanuel Kant argues that sympathy is of selfish origin and it is in line with self-interest. He further explains that if the knowledge of others' torture makes you sick, then it is a case of sympathy (regarded as a virtue when striving for fairness), which helps the tortured person. He adds that this is selfish and clarifies sin, because you lighten your own suffering. On the other hand, commitment relates to individual's morals, not the well-being. That is, you will not have self-interest to obey the sense of commitment because it is your own action that will not bring any benefits to you. Therefore, if something doesn't make you feel better or worse off but seems to be wrong, you will try to stop it and that is a commitment. Kanev (2017) further argues that a sense of commitment imposes moral values and choices. For instance, you don't pay your taxes when you don't have money to pay and you don't help other sick people when you yourself are sick.

The self-interest theory is subjective (self-interest depends on a person's life) and the value of self-interest can be questioned. Or, it can be asked whether acting in self-interest is for the good (McDonald, 2014). Self-interest is a concern for one's own well-being, whereas selfishness is concerned excessively or solely for one's own advantage or well-being with no regard for others (Golden, 2011). In other words, it has been argued that having a healthy self-interest (like one loves neighbour as oneself) does not prevent caring about others nor if one cannot care about oneself then cannot care about others (Golden, 2011; Duska, 2012). On the other hand selfish people have been regarded with no ethics, moral or standards and don't care how they will get their interest (Golden, 2011).

Finally, self-interest has been recognised as a powerful human motive that potentially has unethical consequences (Kish-Gephart et al., 2014). Self-interest is a motive to maximise material resources and to minimise harm to one's wealth and health, an interest that may conflict with ethical leadership (Kim, 2013). Leaders may show either selfishness or self-interest to followers where integrity of moral/ethical is expected to accompany honesty, trustworthiness, fairness and compassion (Lawton & Paez, 2015). While there are multiple works on self-interest and ethics, there is less on the impact of leader self-interest on followers. Then, the

question is how do employees determine that their leaders have the best interest of employees in mind (Neves & Story, 2015)? How do employees determine that the behaviour or actions of their leaders towards them or their organisation/workplace are self-interest or selfishness? How do employees have peace of mind that their high aspirations, hard work, close working relationship with colleagues/peers and leaders, instead of organisational citizenship, are not interpreted as self-interest or selfishness (Golden, 2011; Grant & Patil, 2012)? Or, what should employees do when their leaders treat them unethically and unfairly from one hand, and having social pressures from the other hand (Kanev, 2017)? The literature does not provide enough discussion to shed light on these questions that may be circling in the mind of all those employees who are concerned about their leaders' ethical behaviour.

### 2.5.3  Trust

Trust is the "willingness to accept vulnerability to another based on positive expectations of that person's intentions and actions" (Colquitt et al., 2006, p. 112). Trust plays a role in almost all human relationships such as friendship relations, family relations and economic relations, and most certainly leaders–employee relations (Fehr, 2009 cited in Cox, Kerschbamer, & Neururer 2016). Leaders ideally require the trust of followers in the workplace in order to implement organisational requirements. However, employees have difficulty trusting leaders with unethical and unfair behaviours and actions. According to FHT, fairness/justice is used as a substitute for trust, with fair treatment signalling a trustworthy authority (Colquitt et al., 2006). Trust is an important determinant of individual and organisational effectiveness and positive trust in a leader establishes desirable outcomes, attitudes and behaviours (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015). While trust is desirable, there is less research on the impacts of mistrust resulting from unethical and unfair leadership on employee behaviour, reactions and workplace.

Trust may bring positive or negative results and it can be manifested at the individual, group, organisational and social levels (Bulatova, 2015). Trust cannot be formed without a prior basis for it, meaning leaders and employees (trusted and

trustees) have previously followed the same values and principles, and have involved perceptions, interpretations and beliefs (Bulatova, 2015). In order for trust to be present, repeated interactions are needed to build the trustworthiness of the party wishing to be trusted, so these repeated actions build trust at functional and effective levels (Roy, Devlin & Sekhon, 2015). Trust usually refers to the attitude or intention of the person doing the trusting (trustor) (Sharp, Thwaites, Curtis, & Millar, 2013). Trustworthiness refers to characteristic of the person being trusted (trustee) upon which the trustor forms a judgment. Trustworthiness can be influenced by the party wishing to be trusted (Roy et al., 2015; Sharp et al., 2013). Trust and trustworthiness are viewed differently; however, they are related (Sharp et al., 2013). Once trust is established, it builds a certain context and enhances communities of practice (Bulatova, 2015). Leaders, by demonstrating leadership abilities, competent actions and having employees' best interests at heart, enhance their trustworthiness (ability to be relied on or be trusted). Leaders can demonstrate their employees' interest at heart by showing compassion, respect and reassurance as well as sharing community values such as transparency, credibility and honesty (Sharp et al., 2013). Similarly, employees can positively impact on trust building activity with their leaders by demonstrating their ability to perform the role and their loyalty to organisation (Sharp et al., 2013). After all, organisations are made of people (employees at all levels, including leaders) and organisational life (working life) will be more pleasant and productive when there is proper trust between organisations' members; leadership behaviour certainly plays a key role in this context (Bulatova, 2015).

While successful leadership and productive workplaces depend on trust, credibility and respect (DePuy, 2015), building and maintaining trust in employees is so important that it not only impacts workplace interactions, but also impacts the public as well (Ötken & Cenkci, 2012). As trust takes time and repeated actions and efforts to be built, once it is broken it will erase all trustworthy behaviour and leave leaders and employees with a damaged relationship, hence negatively impacting the workplace (Delgado, 2008).

The exact meaning of ethical leadership is unclear; hence, the impact of underlying ethical behaviour may be perceived differently. Lu (2014) explains that the ethical leader acts with the best interests of employees in mind, complies with laws and regulations and implements an organisational system based on just and fair principles. When ethical leaders treat employees in an open and just way complemented with integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, a psychologically secure environment and the foundations of trust are created (Lu, 2014). Finally, literature in organisational behaviour and sociology identified trust as a result of fairness; however, very little is known about the relationship between fair leadership and trust, and their impact on employees and the workplace (Roy et al., 2015).

## 2.6    Popular leadership styles versus cosmetic leadership

Leadership is a topic that has received considerable attention in business literature and has a variety of definitions: "Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen, despite any obstacles" (Kotter, 1996 cited in Schultz, 2013, p. 47). Further, "leadership is the presence and spirit of the individual who leads, and the relationship created with those who are led" (Scholtes, 1988 cited in Schultz, 2013, pp. 47-48). Simply, in three words, leadership is to "make things better" (Summerfield, 2014, p. 252). However, to challenge the status quo, leaders need courage to influence and the ability and willingness to confront fear, pain and uncertainty (Hoff, 2015). True leaders are not afraid of doing what they believe or taking risks, take responsibility for their actions (win or failure), or inspire others to achieve a win-win outcome as "a rising tide lifts all boats" (Long, 2014, para. 7).

Political leaders are often asked to 'show leadership' on issues and leaders at work are expected to be good, fair, right and just, and certainly, good leaders try to go above and beyond these expectations (Boaks, 2014). Leaders to meet these expectations need to be consistent between words and actions. That is, they need to have behavioural integrity which includes stated and enacted values and promise-keeping instead of 'how do I get my way?' by using different influencing tactics such as ingratiation, performance appraisal and leader–member exchange (LMX)

(Palanski et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2017). Integrity is a core element of leadership theories such as transformational leadership and ethical leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier 1999 and Brown et al. 2005 cited in Palanski et al., 2015). Ingratiation tactics are usually used as initial tactics to make employees feel better before or during influence attempts. It includes forms of flattery and praise, trying to show a friendly and positive side of the leader. This tactic may yield positive outcomes as naturally people like to be liked, so that will increase employees' morale and, thus, productivity. Therefore, ingratiation may relate to performance appraisal ratings, and this relation will mainly depend on leaders' behaviour and judgment (Lee et al., 2017). 'Exchange tactic' refers to rewards and benefits provided for performing a favour or complying with agents' (leaders') requests. This tactic may be effective when employees perceive leaders are willing to fulfil their promise of future favours or benefits (Lee et al., 2017). LMX theory refers to showing the quality of exchange between leaders and employees and leaders develop a close relationship with employees. Thus, LMX is related to transformational leadership because leaders are supportive of their followers (Ng, 2017).

Further, by taking into account the expectations of a new generation of employees (Millennials or GenMe born between 1982 and 1999), leaders can use other influence tactics, such as socialisation process within the organisation. Through this process, employees adopt to organisational values. That is, ethical leaders gain more influence over employees by increasing millennials' moral awareness, and for authentic leaders, this drive value congruence, which is very important for leader–employee relationships. Further, for transformational leaders, socialisation can increase the vision of greater good, especially when employees obtain contact with their work's beneficiaries (Anderson et al., 2017).

*Ethical leadership, spiritual leadership and authentic leadership*

Ethical leadership is an emerging theory in the field of leadership, which refers to leaders' ethical and moral behaviour, as well as promoting these behaviours among employees and leading employees to do the same. This theory is of moral leadership alongside servant leadership, spiritual leadership and authentic leadership, because it concerns about the right thing (Anderson et al., 2017).

Similarly, spiritual leadership refers to "…intrinsically motivating and inspiring workers through hope/faith in a vision of service to key stakeholders…" (IISL, 2015, para. 1). This leadership style is based on the values of humane love to have a highly motivated, committed and productive workforce by tapping into leaders' and employees' spiritual well-being. That is, promoting the sentiment of 'life has meaning and makes a difference' and 'belonging', which aids vision creation and value congruence (IISL, 2015). Further, authentic leadership, while it has roots in ancient Greek philosophy, is a new approach to leadership. It is referred to mimic other popular and effective leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, and remain true to one's self and hold values and beliefs as these leaders have self-awareness (Anderson et al., 2017).

*Transformational leadership*

Transformational leadership theory has attracted more attention than all other leadership theories combined and the theory has evolved over time (Kelloway et al., 2012). Bass (1990) cited in Kelloway et al. (2012), defines the transformational leadership as superior leadership performance that occurs when leaders broaden the interest of employees, generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes or missions of the group, and motivate employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. This is made of four essential components: "idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration" (Bass, 1985, Bass & Avolio, 1993 cited in Ng, 2017, p. 386). Idealised influence refers to showing confidence and charisma that produce employees' strong emotions and loyalty. Inspirational motivation refers to formulating and conveying organisational goals and high expectations, and convincing employees of the importance of those goals. Intellectual stimulation refers to encouraging innovative thinking and doing things different from what is usually done (existing routines and norms). Individualised consideration refers to meeting employees' needs, coaching them and listening to their concerns (Ng, 2017; Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017). Innovative thinking is a behaviour that involves coming up with new and useful ideas and share them with teams and other organisation's members, and implement those ideas as well as

assist others to do so (Ng, 2017). Thus, charismatic and transformational leaders have a dual effect on employees' outcomes through the relational and the collective selves, "through priming the social aspects of the self" (Epitropaki, et al., 2017, p. 110). Charismatic leadership refers to leaders that are much-liked communicators who can deeply connect with employees' emotional levels while articulating compelling and captivating vision (Riggio, 2012). Murphy and Ensher (2008) indicate that charismatic leadership, while it receives less research attention compared to transformational leadership, could be an appropriate leadership style for managing creative teams.

While the transformational leadership model has been idealised as a style of ethical leadership and organisations express the importance of leaders behave ethically, ethical scandals are still commonplace (Neves & Story, 2015). Even though ethics is generally regarded as right or wrong behaviour, ethics can also be regarded as a process by which organisations and leaders should be aware that ethical leadership influences employees' view on the organisation and determines their actions and reactions in the workplace (Neves & Story, 2015). Although, some studies present a strong correlation between transformational leadership, including ethical behaviours and affective organisational commitment, few studies have examined the relationship between ethical leadership and affective organisational commitment (Neves & Story, 2015). Transformational leadership affects the way followers think about their work by leaders using inspirational motivation; the inspiration becomes a charismatic element that provides followers or employees with a clear vision and sense of purpose (Graham, Ziegert, & Capitano, 2015). As transformational leadership has been described in terms of transforming followers' values and goals ethically and fairly (Effelsberg & Solga, 2013), this leadership style has been considered morally neutral and its use linked to the intentions of the leader (Sebastian, Zhang, & Tian, 2012). Even though transformational leadership is regarded as ethical, further studies are needed to determine its fairness and impacts on employees and workplace.

*Servant leadership*

Servant leadership is another leadership style that has been considered as an ethical style of leadership (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). It is a philosophy and set of practices where the leader is servant first, with the natural feeling of wanting to serve and attempting to improve employees, building a more just and caring organisation (Greenleaf, 2016). It is a style that values diverse opinions, cultivates a culture of trust, develops other leaders, helps others, thinks of employees rather than oneself, thinks long term and acts with humility, and keeps the balance between leader and servant (May, 2013; Sturm et al., 2017). While servant leaders understand self and others/employees, they communicate honestly and effectively, encourage and enable compliance, value successful operation of the organisation (are both people and results oriented), and use power ethically (Sturm et al., 2017). Servant leadership and transformational leadership theories are similar, except for one primary difference. That is the focus of the leader. The servant leadership focus is to service the followers/employees, while transformational leadership focus is to get followers/employees to support organisational objectives. In other words, servant leadership concern is the well-being of those who form the entity/organisation and produce results whereas transformational leadership concern is the building of commitment to deliver the organisational objectives (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Further, servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that addresses ethics and employee engagement while creating a unique culture where both leaders and employees unite to meet organisational goals without expectation of positional or authoritative power or self-interest (Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Levine & Boaks, 2014). Servant leaders are not motivated by self-interest; rather; they rise to a higher level of motivation by providing vision to followers/employees and gain credibility and trust, and influence them (Stone et al., 2004). Although servant leadership empowers employees through development, trust and building confidence and helping employees to become leaders, this style of leadership tends to be more widespread in non-profit and religious organisations (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). The question then becomes: if the servant leadership is ethical, tries to serve

the employees, is fair and thinks of employee needs (Carter & Baghurst, 2014), why is it not popular among private and government organisations? Even though servant leadership is a popular concept, has been undefined and lacks in empirical support (Stone et al., 2004). Further investigations on servant leadership style and its impact on employees and workplace are required.

*Cosmetic leadership*

Cosmetic leadership is a new concept developed and proposed by the author in this dissertation. Based on an extensive online search, to date, there is no study/research regarding the cosmetic leadership available in the leadership literature. The word "cosmetic" has been used extensively in cosmetic industry and its related marketing, and it has been defined in various dictionaries. The "cosmetic leadership" has been first mentioned and explained briefly in unpublished manuscripts (Beithaji, 2010; Beithaji, 2016) and used in Mentorship Conference (Brooks, 2016). Cosmetic is something made for the sake of appearance, for beauty, not substantive, superficial and not true or genuine by itself (Beithaji, 2010; Brooks, 2016). The cosmetic leadership is not genuine, it lacks humility and servant heart, it is selfish and cosmetic leaders are leaders by the name only (Beithaji, 2010; Brooks, 2016).

Cosmetic leadership in this dissertation refers to those leaders who often come to a leadership/supervisory position either by having connections (social network leading to social power) or being able to show technical skills (work outcomes) (Chiu et al., 2017). Social networking is about who you know and refers to knowing people and communicating with them, which is very important and effective to get a dream job (Nations, 2017; Goins, 2017). Social power, on the other hand, refers to the ability to determine the behaviour of others and control them with their own wishes regardless of opposition (Kumar, 2012). The power can be a source of causing envy in the leader–follower/employee relationship (Leheta, Dimotakis, & Schatten, 2017).

Cosmetic leaders do not have leadership skills to lead employees from a human point of view (employees often treated as physical object/machine just to produce results); therefore, their behaviour and actions are often seen by others/employees as unethical and unfair, and based on selfishness just to stay in power (Golden, 2011; XQ Innovation, 2016; Rees, 2016; Nisen, 2012). These leaders are willing to be in a leadership position and, in order to stay in power (leadership position), try to fulfil their superiors' demands without considering the merit of those demands (ethics and fairness) and, because they have superior's support, they can afford using abusive supervision (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Boaks, 2014). Because cosmetic leaders may have been supported by superiors (connections) to get their position in the first place, they feel obliged to fulfil the superiors' wishes (superiors have social power over cosmetic leaders and they have interconnected relationship) (Kumar, 2012; Boaks, 2014). Despite the fact that leaders' personalities have been developed during childhood and teenage-hood, cosmetic leaders can change their behaviour, attitude, character or personality (Kersting, 2003; Nowack, 2009; Radwan, 2017). Through training complemented by technical skills, cosmetic leaders may facilitate respectful and dignified leadership behaviour and practice that would benefit both employees and workplace (Taylor & Pattie, 2014; Mayer et al., 2012).

Over time, cosmetic leaders build a circle of employees around them (in-group, which refers to those who share particular qualities and factors such as sex, age and race/ethnicity, and feel safe and protected when bonded together) by influencing some employees who are afraid of losing their job/income, or try to avoid conflict/confrontation (Whitbourne, 2010; Crana, n.d.; Lee et al., 2017). These leaders have no concern for the well-being of employees, especially those employees who have been regarded outside their circle (out-group, which refers to those who don't share particular qualities) that have been referred to, as out-group hate, hostility and avoidance, versus in-group love or favouritism (Weisel & Böhm, 2015; Shkurko, 2013; Whitbourne, 2010). Employees regarded as out-group by cosmetic leaders often suffer bias (belief that in-group members are superior over out-group members, which dehumanises the out-group and erodes their rights), discrimination (a poorer treatment of out-group members) and punishment at the

expense of in-group's favouritism (a preferential treatment of in-group employees) (Schiller, Baumgartner, & Knoch, 2014; UMatter, 2017). The most important concern to cosmetic leaders is showing results to superiors to secure their leadership position, even if their behaviour and actions towards achieving personal objectives are unethical/unfair and counterproductive to the workplace (Brown & Mitchell, 2010).

Cosmetic leadership refers to leaders who act as leaders but, in reality or practice, do not have leadership capability to exercise one of the main components of leadership, which is courage (Palanski et al., 2015). These leaders are found at all levels, but mainly at low to medium levels of leadership hierarchy; they implement what they have been told by their higher level leaders/supervisors without having the ability to stand up for what is right or wrong (Beithaji, 2016; Palanski et al., 2015). Yet, to assume that all the cosmetic leaders are evil and selfish is too simplistic (Lassiter, 2004). Certainly, there is more to the circumstances that aids these types of leaders to become leaders and continue with their behaviours and practices. Because this type of leadership is a new concept, there is no empirical work on how cosmetic leaders should be judged in terms of ethical and fair behaviour. So, this research sheds light on cosmetic leadership with anticipation of future studies on this new concept.

Although most of the popular leadership styles are regarded as ethical they don't adequately address the concerns of unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices. Therefore, the author sees it necessary to develop and propose the new concept of cosmetic leadership, which highlights the reasons for leadership's unethical and unfair behaviours and practices that previously were not addressed by the leadership literature or were ignored by the policy-makers. Thus, the discussions of this study on cosmetic leadership contribute to the leadership literature and prompt the policy-makers that deal with the organisational behaviour and design preventive measures or guiding principles, such as codes of conduct, to assess the effectiveness of their guiding principles.

## 2.7    Responsible leadership

Lack of effective and responsible leadership will aid people/employees to navigate into the difficult and harsh territory at present and in the future (Broadbelt, 2016). As de Bettignies (2014, para. 1) says: "A changing world demands a new leadership style emphasizing societal impact and commitment to the common good." Responsible leadership is defined as "a relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction with those who affect or are affected by leadership and have a stake in the purpose and vision of the leadership relationship" (Maak & Pless, 2006 cited in Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014, p. 344). The main focus of responsible leadership is on its effects on social responsibility, organisational outcomes, stakeholders and psychological benefits of responsible leadership (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Responsible leadership needs framing in the context of individual behaviours and decisions, rather than responsible organisations (Waldman & Balven, 2014).

It has been suggested that responsible leadership has five dimensions: *Awareness* (how do I know myself, organisation and world around me better?); *Vision* (how do I envision myself, organisation and planet in five to ten years from now?); *Imagination* (could I be a different person or leader? Could my organisation have different values and culture? What kind of society do we want to leave for our next generations and beyond?); *Responsibility* (how can I use my sense of responsibility as a leader who can build responsible and sustainable strategies and ensure the organisation impacts positively on society); and *Action* (how can I inspire trust, develop courage to take action and voice my values and beliefs and contribute to build a safe and prosperous society?) (de Bettignies, 2014; Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Further, it has been suggested that responsible leadership is responsible action, because there are no shortage of leaders in organisations. What are short or missing is effective leadership action and a kind of action to make a difference (Broadbelt, 2016). Responsible leaders should be conscientious, act with integrity and with a personal sense of what is right and what is wrong. They should also be able to live authentically and notice situations, themselves and others with the power to choose, respond and change (Broadbelt, 2016).

Additionally, five markers of responsible leadership have been suggested as: rooted in justice; leader does not seek glory for oneself in the process of gaining justice; depends on the support and cooperation of people; is ready to suffer rejection and punishment for the sake of justice; and is open to criticism (Stückelberger & Mugambi, 2007). Further, responsible leadership has been related to an agile or alert way of leaders' thinking (mind and attitude), having strategy and structure to support organisations' and employees' capacity, and commitment to change (Wells, 2009). Moreover, private sector enterprises have come to view that delivering results is not enough; how to deliver those results is important. Therefore, to have a long-term healthy enterprise, the simple principles of fairness and honesty should be considered (Wells, 2009; Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Responsible leaders will take to account fairness and honesty, build trust, take a broad and long view of organisations'/enterprises' performance, consider social responsibility and endeavour sustainable performance while being fair and honest at the national level or internationally (Wells, 2009; Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014).

As ethics and fairness are aligned with responsible leadership in a wider sense, from social responsibility to personal and global issues, further studies need to specify to what extent ethical leadership and responsible leadership theories coincide (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014; Wells, 2009). The modern world context for responsible leadership demands that leaders to lead responsibly in a complex and uncertain global economy, social environment and workplace, while running daily business by taking into account what is right and what is wrong. Hence, the responsible leadership concept is not as simple as it seems, thus requiring further studies to pin down this concept (Vogtlin, 2017).

## 2.8    Conclusion

This literature review examines ethical and fair leadership behaviours and practices and their impact on employees. It is generally accepted that human nature dictates people to be treated well. Employees expect their leaders to treat them ethically and fairly. No matter how well employees do their job, if they are treated unethically and unfairly they will not have job satisfaction.

Employees see leaders according to their own understanding and values. Employees form justice perceptions where these perceptions influence attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. Therefore, leaders are in a very important position to show ethical and fair decision-making, workplace values and moral philosophy to employees and their organisations. Ethical and fair leadership are actions and behaviours that are judged through appropriate but subjective norms. Further research is needed to understand the norms that determine what is ethical and fair.

Because ethical and fair leadership literature is built on Western-based private sector views focusing on compliance, there is a further need for non-Western research on ethical leadership, including the impact of unethical behaviour on employees. Universal studies should broadly cover the human side of ethical and fair leadership and the impact on employees, in addition to organisational objectives. Leadership's fair treatment shows moral and ethical standards that can add to a more meaningful working life for employees. However, there is not enough attention paid to unethical leadership behaviour perpetrated by leaders/supervisors. Hence, it is valuable to focus on unethical leadership, as it is neglected in the research literature, resulting in harmful outcomes. Similarly, little attention is given to fair leadership practices and behaviours in research literature and very little is known about factors to determine whether leaders act fairly or not.

While literature does not provide specific theories for ethical or unethical and fair or unfair leadership, SLT and FT can be related to the subject. Consistent with FT, employees can determine whether their leaders have treated them fairly, based either on assumptions or facts. However, further research is needed to know how employees hold leaders accountable to ethical standards.

Leaders play an important role in motivating employees and shaping employees' workplace attitudes and behaviour. This literature review will pave the way to investigate the factors involving workplaces and how ethical and fair leadership assist in making a better workplace. To improve the workplace, leadership support is an important factor; the leader must not only act as a role model, but must hold others accountable in an ethical and fair manner. If recent ethical leadership

literature is focused on performance, cost savings or profit maximisation practices there is a need for attention and focus towards including employees and their expectations of the workplace in ethical studies.

The well-being of employees in the workplace is affected by leader–employee relationships, mainly because of factors such as power, self-interest and trust. Further research is needed to know more about these factors that are impacting leader–employee relationships.

Leadership is an important theme of social science as it relates to human cooperation from household decision-making to the complex management of organisations and states. This literature review further extends by discussing the emerging and popular leadership styles (ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership) versus cosmetic leadership. Cosmetic leadership is a new concept proposed in this dissertation. Cosmetic leadership refers to those leaders who often come to leadership/supervisory position either by having connections or being able to show technical skills. Cosmetic leaders do not have leadership skills to lead employees from a human point of view (employees often treated as physical object or machine just to produce results). Therefore, their behaviour and actions often are seen as unethical and unfair, and based on selfishness just to stay in power. Cosmetic leaders treat some employees as in-group and some as out-group, use abusive supervision, have no concern about well-being of employees and lack the main component of leadership, which is courage. Because cosmetic leadership is a new concept, there is no empirical work on how cosmetic leaders should be judged in terms of ethical and fair behaviour.

This literature review also discusses responsible leadership. The main focus of responsible leadership is on its effects on social responsibility, organisational outcomes, stakeholders and psychological benefits of responsible leadership. As ethics and fairness is aligned with responsible leadership, further studies need to specify to what extent ethical leadership and responsible leadership theories coincide. Thus, it requires much further studies to pin down this concept.

Finally, while this literature review broadly addresses the question of *"How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?"* it assists this study's attempt to close a significant gap of unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices in the literature. The question or study of the workplace and factors such as power, self-interest, trust and leadership styles, especially responsible leadership and the new concept of cosmetic leadership, and their perceptions and impact on ethics and fairness are relevant to further investigations.

# Chapter 3
# Methodology

## *An overview of the research plan to operationalise the research question*

*"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."* — *Albert Einstein*

*"Writing the perfect paper is a lot like a military operation. It takes discipline, foresight, research, strategy, and, if done right, ends in total victory."* — *Ryan Holiday*

# 3      Methodology

## 3.1      Introduction

This methodology lays the foundation of undertaking research on ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices and their impact on workplaces. The centre of this chapter is based on discussing the two qualitative methods: Interviews and Investigation or Analysis of Written Materials as secondary data (literature). The author believes these two methods would enable a practical and successful implementation of the dissertation project. The interviews will provide the author with leadership views and practices and employees' expectations from those practices, while written materials will provide knowledge and understanding drawn from previous studies. This approach provides a balance between theory and practice in the real world (the world of everyday life).

The dissertation examines a range of theories related to the topic, whereas the main focus is on SLT and FT. The ethical leadership effects on workplace outcomes have been explained by SLT, while FT looks at fairness and unfairness, the reasons for just treatments and the processes to regard a situation socially unjust.

In addition to SLT and FT, this dissertation involves philosophical approaches, such as ontological and epistemological, to formulate operational requirements that can assist in gaining knowledge about the nature of leadership behaviour and

practices. The methodology operationalises this dissertation based on the eleven steps provided by Singh (2015), as outlined in section 3.2.

The topic of this dissertation is important as it looks at some ethical/unethical and fair/unfair leadership behaviours and practices and proposes a new concept called cosmetic leadership. Despite the importance of the topic and formulation of this methodology this dissertation has some limitations because all the interviews are conducted with Australian interviewees. However, the author uses written materials sourced from global studies.

### 3.1.2  Aim

The aim of this methodology is to facilitate operationalisation of the research question: *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* The key purpose of this methodology, therefore, is to contribute to this study's goal, which aims at investigating the leaders' ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviour and practices towards employees and their impact on workplaces. Additionally, this methodology paves the way for exploring the new concept of cosmetic leadership which to date, has no study or research in leadership literature.

### 3.1.3  Background and justification of qualitative method

This methodology set out the dissertation to use two qualitative research methods, which provided a balance between theoretical views and practical points of view practised in the workplace. The interviews provided the author with the opportunity to get in contact with people connected to organisations and find out their views and expectations. In other words, the qualitative method aided the author to understand the experiences and attitudes of interviewees (Bricki & Green, 2007). Additionally, analysis of written materials facilitated possession of knowledge and understanding gained by previous researchers. The combination of these two methods assisted the author in identifying new findings and views that can contribute to leadership literature.

As the aim of this dissertation is to study leader–employee relationships, from an ethical and fairness point of view, the qualitative method is appropriate because it relates to understanding some aspects of individuals, community and social life (Bricki & Green, 2007). The qualitative research methods enabled the author to seek and apply words, points of view of participants, get close to people investigated, and understand deep data, processes (including practices), meaning, natural settings and emerging theories (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The qualitative research also assisted the author to gather rich data in order to develop more realistic theories (Chen, 2015).

The interview method assisted the author to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations that cause ethical and fair, as opposed to unethical and unfair, leadership behaviours and practices (Wyse, 2011). Another method is written materials that include journals, textbooks, online publications, analysed texts, media releases, and all other types of written documents/texts. The aim of using this method was to discover the general conventions, interests and cultural practices that have been uncovered by previous researchers, authors and different publishers or sources. Additionally, the findings, understandings and interpretations of the creators (authors) have been embedded in their written materials (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Further, the knowledge and understanding gained through the written materials assisted and complemented the knowledge, skills and techniques used in interviews.

The interview and written materials methods enabled the author to investigate and study different theories related to the dissertation's topic. Among a range of related organisational, behavioural, social, political and leadership theories the main focus was on SLT and FT, while consideration was given to emerging theories. The ethical leadership effects on workplace outcomes were explained by SLT. And, FT looked at fairness and unfairness, and the reasons for just treatments and the processes to regard a situation socially unjust.

### 3.1.4 Research paradigm

A paradigm is a model or framework that is derived from a worldview or belief system, or theory about the nature of knowledge and existence that establishes a set of practices to guide the way people do things with regard to inquiry (eRM, 2017; RWJF, 2008). A paradigm is characterised as: "An integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools…" (Thomas Kuhn cited in Dash, 2005, para. 1). There are mainly two paradigms of positivism and anti-positivism (or naturalistic inquiry) to verify theoretical propositions (Dash, 2005; PSU, n.d.). The positivism paradigm is related to exploring social reality by emphasising on observations and reason as a means to understand human behaviour where knowledge is understood through the scientific methods (Dash, 2005). Anti-positivism explains that social reality is viewed and interpreted by individuals based on their ideological positions where reality is multi-layered and complex, and knowledge is experienced rather than influenced from outside (Dash, 2005; PSU, n.d.).

While positivism is suited to a quantitative approach, the anti-positivism has three schools of thought in the social science research (phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism); which all three of them suggest a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to social research or investigation (Dash, 2005). 'Phenomenology' stresses that individual behaviour is determined by the experience through direct interactions with the phenomena. 'Ethnomethodology' stresses the process by which common sense reality is constructed through everyday face-to-face interactions with the world of everyday life (Dash, 2005). 'Symbolic interactionism', on the other hand, explains the understanding and interpretation of interactions between human beings that have taken place; these interactions result in not only change in human beings themselves, but also change in societies (Dash, 2005). Critical theory is another approach of investigation in the social sciences that explains the historical forces restrict human freedom and expose the ideological justification of those forces where knowledge is not value-free and bias needs to be articulated (Dash, 2005, eRM, 2017). Critical theory suggests ideology critique and action research are

research methods of exploring the existing phenomena (Dash, 2005, eRM, 2017) that suits this paradigm.

Based on explanations provided above, the anti-positivism paradigm matches the aims of this study. Thus, to have in-depth study and understanding of the question of this dissertation the qualitative approach has been selected, which will be further explained in the following sections.

## 3.2    Methodology

Methodology refers to finding out, gaining knowledge and carrying out the research, which is a strategic approach instead of techniques and data analysis (Wainright, 1997 cited in eRM, 2017). Methodology, therefore, refers to how people gain knowledge about the world or what theoretically informed approach they adopt to produce data (RWJF, 2008). Hence, this leads to carrying out the research by using either quantitative or qualitative methods. The main difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is the logic of sampling approaches. Qualitative research focuses in-depth on relatively small samples selected purposefully (even a single case with n = 1), while quantitative research methods focuses on larger samples, numbers, proportions and statistics (Shields & Twycross, 2003; Patton, 1990). Not only the techniques of these two methods' sampling are different, but also their logic and purpose of each strategy is different (Patton, 1990). The logic and power of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases for in-depth study; that is, finding out and learning a great deal of important issues related to the purpose of research (purposeful sampling). On the other hand, the logic and power of randomly and statistically sampling permits confident generalisation of a larger population achieved through the sample, thus the purpose is generalisation (Patton, 1990).

This methodology intended to show how putting two qualitative methods of interviews and investigation of written materials into operation can assist in the study of dissertation's question and ultimately in the implementation of the dissertation's project. In addition to SLT and FT, in order to have deep

understandings of the social construction of the reality of leadership behaviours and practices and ability to interpret those understandings, the dissertation considered philosophy discussions involving ontology and epistemology (Singh, 2015). According to RWJF (2008), both qualitative and quantitative approaches are rooted in philosophical traditions with different ontological and epistemological assumptions. Philosophy is an Ancient Greek word meaning 'love of wisdom', that refers to the study of general and fundamental problems connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, mind and language (Definitions.net., 2017). Further, philosophy is the ontological and epistemological view of what the nature of knowledge is and how it can be created, which also involves making choices among opposite points or poles (Singh, 2015).

The ontology relates to the philosophy of existence, assumptions and beliefs that people hold about the nature of being or existence (RWJF, 2008). The ontology as a theory of nature assists in the way in which research questions are formulated considering that organisations and cultures are objective social entities and act as individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The epistemology relates to the theory of knowledge and the assumptions and beliefs that people have about the nature of knowledge (RWJF, 2008). The epistemological approach assists in gaining knowledge about the nature of leadership behaviour and practices and ability to see them as acceptable realities of ethical and fair behaviours and practices (Bryman & Bell, 2015). While there is increasing interest in an ontological approach within business and management (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Singh, 2015), a realist epistemology would be considered to identify the structures that generate the world. Hence, in the dissertation, critical realism would aim to identify leadership inequalities and injustices and try to change or counteract them (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The operationalisation of this dissertation's question became achievable by following the eleven qualitative research steps developed by Singh (2015) as a guide. These steps are shown as follows:

1. Research question, framework and design
2. Data collection and transcription

3. Coding

4. Classification of codes

5. Data interpretation and identification of salient themes

6. Memo or note writing

7. Descriptions

8. Analysis and explanation

9. Comparative analysis and refinement

10. Theory building and discussions

11. Creating research outputs

These steps of theory-building are methods developed to operationalise the philosophy and the methodology (Singh, 2015). These self-explanatory steps can be followed and implemented by using both interviews and written materials. Hence, by taking into account the research question and aims of this methodology, these eleven steps were addressed as shown in the following sections:

### 3.2.1   Step 1 - *Research question, framework and design*

*Research question*
How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?

*Research framework*
Ethics and fairness ⟷ Leadership practices ⟷ Impact on workplace

(Giddens, 1984, Sewell, 1992 & Callero, 1994 cited in Singh, 2015)

*Research design*
Conducting interviews with leaders and employees working at different levels in the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and government sector.

Using a wide range of written materials available in physical and online libraries and internet in general.
(Singh, 2015)

### 3.2.2 Step 2 - *Data collection and transcription*

This study has approval from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The contact details of the HREC were provided to the participants. Data were collected through personal interviews with leaders and employees working in different capacities and different fields of activity. The participants were selected from the private sector, not-for-profit organisations and government sector. This allowed obtaining quality data and a deep understanding of participants' views/ideas, beliefs, values, experiences, and suggestions of leaders/employees currently working in workplace (Bricki & Green, 2007; Palgrave Study Skills, 2019).

The interviewees were asked to answer general and specific questions based on their own understanding, characteristics and behaviours, experiences, and relevant critical incidents that they may have encountered during their career (see Appendix A for a list of interview questions). Also, the interviewees were asked some indirect questions aimed at reducing the social desirability bias (Fisher & Tellis, 1998). This allowed interviewees to give information about situations based on facts rather than opinion, meaning they answered the questions behind "a façade of impersonality" (Simon & Simon, 1975, p. 586; Nguyen, Anderson, Dunne, & Nguyen, 2015, p. 602; Fisher, 1993, p. 304). All the interviews were tape recorded. At the end of interviews, the tape recorder was turned off while chatting continued with the interviewees to evaluate whether or not recoding had influenced the respondent/interviewee (Bricki & Green, 2007).

Table 3.1 shows that there were sixteen confidential individual interviews conducted with an average length of thirty-nine minutes and seventeen seconds per interview, totalling ten hours and forty-five minutes, excluding the additional time required for interview preparation and travel. The potential participants were invited and informed of the study's objectives by using one of the communication tools such as telephone, email or personal contact. The sample comprised sixteen participants whom were four parliamentarians, three senior executives, three directors, three assistant directors and three employees at different levels. The

common qualitative research interview protocol was used in a way to have both general and specific questions asked from interviewees. The standardised interview structure was kept short to have time to react spontaneously to interviewees' responses, with probe questions if deemed necessary (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014). Interviews were preferred to be tape-recorded with interviewees' permission, or handwritten notes were taken during and immediately after the interview (Eisenbiß & Brodbeck, 2014; Bricki & Green, 2007).

Further, written materials were used, including published journals, reports and other materials available in libraries and online websites (internet) as well as textbooks. The collected data was transcribed into Microsoft Office products such as Excel spreadsheets (Singh, 2015).

*Table 3.1    Participants' roles and interview information*

| Code | Industry | Position | Interview Date | Place of Interview | Length of Interview |
|------|----------|----------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| A | *Australian Capital Territory Parliamentarians* | | | | |
| A1 | ACT Legislative Assembly | Politician | 16/4/2018 | Interviewee office | 46.51 |
| A2 | ACT Legislative Assembly | Politician | 6/4/2018 | Interviewee office | 42.53 |
| A3 | ACT Legislative Assembly | Politician | 11/4/2018 | Interviewee office | 27.34 |
| A4 | ACT Legislative Assembly | Politician | 27/3/2018 | Interviewee office | 45.34 |
| B | *Senior executives* | | | | |
| B1 | Government | Chief Financial Officer | 19/1/2018 | Interviewee office | 35.57 |
| B2 | Private | Managing Director | 5/2/2018 | Interviewee office | 30.14 |
| B3 | Not for Profit Organisations | Chief Executive Officer | 23/2/2018 | Interviewee office | 39.41 |
| C | *Directors* | | | | |
| C1 | Government | Director | 24/1/2018 | Interviewee office | 48.23 |
| C2 | Private | Principal | 7/3/2018 | Interviewee office | 33.36 |
| C3 | Not for Profit Organisations | Member Services Manager | 13/2/2018 | Interviewee office | 42.02 |
| D | *Assistant Directors or similar* | | | | |
| D1 | Government | Assistant Director | 20/2/2018 | Interviewer home office | 49.47 |
| D2 | Private | Financial Controller | 1/3/2018 | Interviewee office | 35.29 |
| D3 | Not for Profit Organisations | Manager | 13/2/2018 | Interviewee office | 46.53 |
| E | *Employees at different levels* | | | | |
| E1 | Government | Australian Public Service Level 6 | 5/2/2018 | Interviewee home | 38.49 |
| E2 | Private | Associate Lawyer | 22/2/2018 | Interviewer home office | 36.25 |
| E3 | Not for Profit Organisations | Event Coordinator | 16/2/2018 | Interviewee office | 30.31 |
| *Average Length of Interviews in Minutes* | | | | | *39.17* |
| *Total Hours* | | | | | *10.45* |

### 3.2.3 Step 3 - *Coding*

The transcribed data entered in Excel spreadsheets as chunks were codified, and those codes were processed subsequently (Singh, 2015). In other words, data were categorised or codified as words and short phrases that represent the essence or key attribute of collected information (Curry, 2015). The codes were applied to the whole set of data (maximise reliability) and the text was marked in the Excel spreadsheets (Bricki & Green, 2007).

### 3.2.4 Step 4 - *Classification of codes*

Referring to the initial research framework the identified codes were suitably placed under broad headings of 'ethics and fairness' (includes unethical and unfair), 'leadership practices' (includes leadership behaviour) and 'impact on workplace'. The codes under each heading were grouped together and the content were analysed for common themes. The codes under the broad headings of ethics and fairness, leadership practices and impact on workplace were analysed to identify the underlying themes that enabled codes to be explained (Singh, 2015).

### 3.2.5 Step 5 - *Data interpretation and identification of salient themes*

A thematic analysis of all collected data to identify the common issues and summarise views was undertaken, as well as a detailed look at data aimed at creating an abstract (Bricki & Green, 2007). Various themes were identified that together described the ethics and fairness of the leadership practices. These practices were identified based on the process of data collection, coding and content analysis. The main themes identified in this step were further developed and referred to as the author's sense-making and as important elements of theory building. The author tried to be objective throughout the process of completing the dissertation. The grounded data, stories and metaphors that the author had in mind naturally played an important role in the process of the author's sense-making (Singh, 2015). However, the author was not influenced by favourite findings and

tried not to pull out only those findings that he found interesting, thus the subjectiveness of sense-making was reduced (Singh, 2015; Bricki & Green, 2007).

### 3.2.6   Step 6 - *Memo or note writing*

Writing memos or notes were undertaken on different aspects of the phenomenon to serve as a tool for analysing descriptions and comparisons. The notes were built upon subsequent scenarios or examples that emerged during the interviews and written materials. The emerged notes were related to the phenomenon of ethics and fairness and impact of leadership practices on the workplace. At this step, the handling of data bias, consistency and inconsistency of data both within and across data sources were looked at (Singh, 2015).

### 3.2.7   Step 7 - *Descriptions*

At this stage, the views of the relevant themes to the phenomenon were identified. This identification integrated the three aspects of grounded data, self as an interpreter, and the existing theory. These themes served as tools for narrating the story, which enabled producing the descriptions, and looking in detail enabled seeing how the themes were interrelated (Singh, 2015; Bricki & Green, 2007 ).

### 3.2.8   Step 8 - *Analysis and explanation*

Although it is common that qualitative data is collected in the relatively unstructured form, the author saw it important to ensure that analyses were reliable and their validity was safeguarded (Bricki & Green, 2007). The process of completion of the dissertation involved actors (interviewees), their experiences, relations and interactions as well as authors and their views, findings and interpretations; all of these were embedded in the dissertation. Therefore, it seemed logical to combine explanation and analysis together and see them as a whole, rather than separating them (Singh, 2015).

### 3.2.9   Step 9 - *Comparative analysis and refinement*

Data gathered were analysed by carefully reading the interview transcripts and notes, and listening to audio records (at least twice). Data were separated into different interrelated themes, such as ethics and fairness, leadership, and employee and workplace. Special attention was paid to see whether attitudes and attributes such as integrity, honesty, compassion, trust, courage, self-interest and power have been pointed out by the interviewees.

The analyses and explanations provided the basis for refinement in the initial framework and abstraction of the theory. Also, a chronological approach to refinements and thought-over situations aided identifying the key dimensions of the phenomenon, which provided opportunity to compare the themes or situations (Singh, 2015).

### 3.2.10   Step 10 - *Theory building and discussions*

"Theories can be defined as a method for making sense of natural phenomena" (Meuser et al., 2016, p.3). A theory can provide a bridge to connect findings of different studies, allow comparison of findings among studies, and identify active ingredients that can further assist in identifying findings from one population that are likely to generalise to another population (Nguyen et al., 2015). As the multi-pronged data collection strategy of personal interviews and written materials was adopted, at this stage, after studies were conducted and theoretical capacities achieved, the final abstracted theory was developed. The theory building included strengthening the argument of new cosmetic leadership concept and the impact of leadership behaviours and practices on workplaces (Singh, 2015).

### 3.2.11   Step 11 - *Creating research outputs*

To ensure the validity or trustworthiness of findings is maximised the triangulation method was considered, allowing seeking evidence (where it was possible) and

comparing findings from different sources (Bricki & Green, 2007). Then, research outputs were presented in the dissertation. As it was expected, the dissertation made it clear to its audience that it can be used in a variety of organisational situations. Also, it can affect the ethical and fair leadership behaviours and practices for the better and improve employees' work relationship, which ultimately would benefit workplaces and work environments (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The methodology provided a pathway to start and finish the required dissertation. The topic of the dissertation was important as it may have touched the heart and minds of thousands of employees at all levels. It was particularly important to remind some leaders of the importance of trust that gives employees security, which security builds healthy and happy relationship. Further, leaders are reminded that their word is their wand. In other words, leaders' word creates the expectation that keeping their word builds trust (Barnett, 2017). Thus, naturally giving or promising words becomes a moral obligation and when leaders say something orally and practise something contrary to what they have said, or what the codes of conduct asked them to practise, would damage the leader–employee relationship (Barnett, 2017).

Finally, the dissertation not only had no known ethical complications during the process of its completion, but instead after its completion may have enhanced ethical behaviours and practices. However, despite the importance of the topic and its impact on workplaces, the dissertation had some limitations. This is because all the interviews were conducted with Australian interviewees, and the exchanged views were mainly related to the Australian workplace. Nevertheless, to minimise the effect of this limitation, the written materials were chosen from related studies undertaken globally.

## 3.3    Conclusion

This chapter looked at the ways of operationalising the research question of *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* In order to have a balanced approach between theory and practice, the two qualitative methods of interviews and investigation of written materials were chosen. The interview method assisted in gaining knowledge and understanding of ethical and fair, as opposed to unethical and unfair leadership behaviour and practices. On the other hand, the written materials facilitated possession of knowledge and understanding gained by previous researchers.

The methodology elaborated on SLT, believing that it would explain the ethical/unethical leadership effects on workplaces, while FT would look at fairness/unfairness. Additionally, ontological and epistemological approaches were looked at, and it was believed these two approaches would assist in formulating research questions and gaining knowledge about the nature of leadership behaviours and practices.

Finally, this chapter in its methodology section discussed the eleven steps of operationalising the dissertation. The author believes this dissertation can be used in a variety of organisational situations to benefit the workplace, regardless of being in a private, not-for-profit or government organisations.

# Chapter 4
# Results

## *An overview of the results of the interviews*

*"You can't be a good leader unless you generally like people."* — *Richard Branson*

*"People don't leave companies. They leave their bosses."* — *Brigette Hyacinth*

# 4      Results

## 4.1    Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the interviews conducted in accordance with the discussions provided in the Methodology chapter (see Chapter 3, 3.2.2 and table 3.1 for the interviewees' information). Each interview was divided into four themes. The questions related to each theme were asked in a mixed manner considering the order of the questions from one to fifteen (see Appendix A for a list of questions). All the interviews were face-to-face, tape recorded, and handwritten notes were taken from most of the key points. Each interview was completely transcribed in a Microsoft Word document. All the responses pertaining to each question were analysed in separate tabs by using Excel spreadsheets.

In order to obtain quality data and a deep understanding of identified themes, the interviewees were selected from different industries at different levels and they were asked the same questions. Some questions were open-ended with the intention of allowing the interviewees to express their views freely without feeling any time constraint. The questions were not made available to the interviewees before the interview. This allowed the interviewees to rely on their own knowledge, understanding and experience up to the point of their interview session rather than searching for answers beforehand. The immediate responses by the participants soon after hearing the questions produced insights, behavioural views and practices, examples and experiences, and storytelling. To address themes and relevant issues some extracts and quotes from the interviewees' responses have been used. The

quotations at the end have a code in the bracket, such as (A1), (B3), (E2), and so on. These codes have been used to show the participants who made the comments while keeping their details confidential (see table 3.1).

As explained in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 3 of the dissertation), the operationalisation of the question of this dissertation was achievable by following the Singh (2015) eleven qualitative steps. Thus, the interview questions were designed based on the research question, issues discussed in the literature review, research framework and themes, such as ethics and fairness, leadership (including cosmetic leadership), and employee and workplace. These themes facilitated a structure that provided a fuller description and explanation associated with the research question (Singh, 2015; Bricki & Green, 2007).

## 4.2 Theme 1

### 4.2.1 Theme title

Theme 1 was related to *ethics and fairness*. Three questions (Question 1, 2 and 7) were asked trying to find out interviewees' views and understanding of these topics.

### 4.2.2 Question 1

The first question asked was:

*What is your understanding of ethical behaviour and practices?*

This was an open-ended question. It was to find out different views and understandings related to ethical behaviour and practices that people believe, practice or witness in their daily work and social life. Given that this was the first question and seemed easy to answer, seven interviewees provided clear answers while some were prompted by the interviewer. The interviewees expressed different views and beliefs related to ethical behaviour and practices. The common and notable answers were related to 'doing the right thing', 'honesty', 'set of values'

and 'what is deemed to be acceptable in society'. Some of the highlights extracted from the interview transcripts are as follows:

> *"... it is about honesty that I should be talking in the workplace and honesty between leaders and lower staff and at all levels actually. That means doing the right thing by staff, doing the right thing by clients and stakeholders, and doing what it's said, not to do if saying one thing and doing another, that is honesty and transparency I am trying to say" (E1).*

> *"... it is about behaviour that is right and I know that it can come with a subjective contact ... it is a complex area in that there's no one definition, there's no one standard, it is dependent very much upon the society in which we live in. So it is a subjective set of practices and behaviour that in the Society deems to be acceptable or not" (A3).*

> *"Ethical behaviour would mean persons behaviour is governed by set of ethics. Ethics are something beyond personal moral code, they actually relate to an organisational construct or social construct... So, ethical behaviour would be making decisions within that context governed by ethical principles and practices" (B1).*

> *"For me this is around the moral compass that we all have and which we apply to our lives. So a set of morals and values that we would have guided by on what we do" (A2).*

These extracts show the interviewees' views and understanding of ethical behaviour and practices. The interviewees' views can be regarded as the basis of their practice in the workplace and society and expectations from their leaders or employees.

### 4.2.3  Question 2

The second question asked was:

*What is your understanding of fairness and fair treatment?*

Similar to the previous question, Question 2 was an open-ended question as well. The question was designed to find out the interviewees' understanding of fairness and fair treatment. And, to see what behaviours, practices or treatments the interviewees consider to be fair. This was the second question, thus most of the

interviewees felt relaxed, as shown in their body language and tone of voice. The common and notable answers pertained to 'treating people equally and the same regardless of their background and with no favouritism'. The following quotes are the highlights extracted from the interview transcripts:

> *"… it is insuring that every person regardless of their differences, so whether be their gender, or their race is treated the same" (A3).*

> *"Fairness to me is about consistency. So, making sure everyone is treated the same way regardless of age, sex, skin, religion and etc. And, there's not a favouritism to people showing in the organisation because they happen to go out with the boss ... everyone is treated in a consistent manner" (D2).*

> *"I think that is really trying to eliminate unfair biases ... acknowledging that as an individual we have inherited biases, and trying to eliminate those when you make decisions and deal with individuals and with people…" (B1).*

> *"...you listen to all parties involved if there is an issue and you find out solution that is going to be fair to everybody, that is equal fairness, not favouring one party over the other, ... to ensure all sorts of things that is fairly distributed and people compensated for things that they go above and beyond and you can see that is a repeated pattern ..." (C3).*

> *"Just treating people as you expect to be treated ..." (E3).*

These extracts show the interviewees' expectations and insights, which can be translated as being their expectations in the workplace or social life.

### 4.2.4 Question 7

The third question, related to Theme 1 (Question 7 in the order of the fifteen questions), was:

*Have you been in a situation that you either considered your leader or your employees to be unethical and unfair? If 'yes' go to question 7.1.*

*7.1 Did you show any reaction or did you do anything about the situation?*

*Yes – go to question (a)*

*No – go to question (b)*

*(a) What did you do? What was the outcome?*

*(b) Why not?*

This question was designed to find out whether interviewees had any unethical and unfair experiences in the workplace in a practical sense. And, if they had any experience, what was their reaction and what outcomes were reached. Interviewees presented their stories, examples, actions they took and the outcomes they reached. Interestingly, thirteen out of sixteen interviewees had practical unethical and unfair experiences and all of them showed reaction. While thirteen interviewees encountered unethical and unfair behaviours and treatments, none reached a positive conclusion. The results were that six interviewees left their work, one ended up having more trouble and the rest didn't reach any outcome as their concerns were ignored. Only one unethical business partner was fired. Below are some reasons that caused interviewees to leave their work:

> *"I did raise it with the supervisor and in that instance it was dismissed. There was no listening and it is one of the key reasons why I left that workplace … I did not feel any confidence that if I've raised it to anyone higher that it would be addressed. If you don't have that confidence then there's no point raising it"* (A3).

> *"… Eventually I did leave that work area because it was problem and you know frankly I would encourage people to think about whether they want to work in that environment…"* (B1).

> *"I was pretty horrified and clearly I remember this very vividly because it's a long time ago but I was very annoyed and what I did about the situation is I already started looking for other work and within a few weeks I had another job"* (A4).

> *"In one case I did go to couple of board members,… what was the outcome of that, was nothing… they backed up the leader…"* (C3).

Question 7 produced stories that clearly showed there are struggles among employees at all levels when they encounter unethical and unfair behaviours and treatments.

### 4.2.5 Theme 1 observations' summary

The interviewees presented their views and understandings regarding ethics and fairness. When answering the first two questions they kept their responses short, while most of them produced similar key points. However, when answering Question 7, the interviewees provided lengthy examples and discussions, even though their stories were very informative and attention-grabbing.

Some key points mentioned by the interviewees were similar. For example, doing the right thing; honesty; set of values; what is deemed to be acceptable in society; and treating people equally and same with no favouritism. Given the nature of the questions relating to ethics and fairness, the attitudes and attributes mentioned in the Methodology chapter (3.2.9, Step 9) were important. Nevertheless, the results revealed that in all the answers provided for the first two questions, the word 'honesty' three times and 'integrity' one time were mentioned, and none in the Question 7. These words were mentioned by those interviewees working at the lower level of hierarchy. Finally, as a result of the interview discussions, it was emerged that thirteen of the interviewees encountered unethical and unfair treatments by their leaders and none reached a positive conclusion. Further, it emerged that there is discomfort among employees at all levels to feel confident in relying on their higher level supervisors or leaders when they face unethical and unfair behaviours and treatments. And, if they take any action, the chance of reaching an outcome is minimal.

## 4.3 Theme 2

### 4.3.1 Theme title

Theme 2 was related to *leadership (including cosmetic leadership)*. Five questions (Question 3, 11, 12, 13 and 14) were asked trying to find out interviewees' views, understandings and expectations concerning leadership.

### 4.3.2 Question 3

Question 3 was posed as:

*What leadership qualities are important to you?*

This question generated very useful discussions enabling interviewees express their thoughts and expectations from their leaders. Eleven out of sixteen interviewees were able to present some clear qualities or characteristics that are expected from leaders. For example: communicative; setting standard; set vision and bring people along; give and receive feedback; fair and ethical; courageous; honest with integrity; easily approached; humble; respectful; and have sense of humour. The followings are some related quotes presented by the interviewees:

> *"I think one of the most important factors or attributes for a good leader is courage. It takes courage to make decisions that are hard but right not the decisions that are easy ... the ability to inspire and motivate, empathy to acknowledge that everyone has a positive contribution to make..."* (A3).

> *"... Leaders really have to be able to inspire people. So, part of that goes beyond management, it is about setting a vision and bringing people along with you to achieve that vision..." (B1).*

> *"Integrity is important to me, um Integrity, honesty, openness, relationship, yes they are high on the list of important qualities in leadership" (D3).*

> *"Honesty, respect, high quality of work standards and being able to give good feedback and also accept feedback..." (E1).*

> *"Friendly, ethical, fair, sense of humour, being able to interact with your staff, acting justly, and good communication ..." (E3).*

These extracts displayed some major views and expectations that interviewees have from their leaders drawn from their general knowledge and experiences.

### 4.3.3   Question 11

The following question was asked:

*In your experience what makes to be a good leader or boss?*

The question intended to find out from the practical point of view what makes a person regarded as being a good leader or boss. While some of the interviewees were prompted by the interviewer twelve of them were able to provide some clear characteristics of good leaders or bosses. For instance: good listener; understanding how business works; being clear about your values and communicate about what needs to be achieved; make employees feel valued and part of organisational goals; give employees sense of ownership over their work and support their professional goals; inspire people; set expectations and directions and look after people; empathy; vision and innovation; available and approachable; don't let employees feel alone.

The followings are extracts from the interview transcripts:

> *"Good listener, understanding how business works" (A1).*

> *"... it does require of having that vision and aspiration what you want to do, what needs to be done, it does require an understanding of the people you are leading and making sure that they are equipped to do what you want them to do…" (B1).*

> *"Being clear what your values are. Communication but also getting along with people ... making employees feel valued and making a part of achieving organisational goals…also being a communicator actually about what needs to be achieved and also giving a level of responsibility to employees to undertake piece of work with all level of supervision but relatively independently so that there is sense of ownership over that work…" (A2).*

> *"Empathy, vision, and innovation. They go hand in hand but just always trying to find ways to do things better and better ... no point being a leader and then never been there when your employees need help even if you're not there physically, they need to know that never feeling on your own, you should never feel alone"* (E2).

The answers and discussions of this question showed some practical expectations based on the interviewees' experiences from their leaders or supervisors.

### 4.3.4  Question 12

This question was related to the new concept of *cosmetic leadership*. Before the question was posed, a brief explanation was provided to the interviewees in the following manner:

*Cosmetic leadership is a new concept and it is expected to be treated confidentially until the thesis or dissertation is approved by the university. The Cosmetic Leadership refers to those leaders who most of them come to leadership or supervisory positions either by having connections or having some kind of special technical skills. Cosmetic leaders don't have leadership skills to lead employees from a human point of view. Employees often are treated as physical objects or machines just to produce results. Therefore their behaviour and actions often are seen as unethical and unfair, and based on selfishness just to stay in power. Cosmetic leaders treat some employees as in-group and some as out-group, have no concern about the well-being of employees and often use abusive supervision. They treat in-group employees well and out group employees bad regardless whether they do a good job or not. They lack one of the main ingredients of leadership which is courage to stand up for what is right or wrong, especially if the wrong doing is from their connections who brought them in the leadership position. This was a very brief explanation, now the question is:*
*Is it fair to say that these types of leaders are Cosmetic Leaders as oppose to real and strong leaders?*

It was evident that this brief explanation was clear to the interviewees as none of them questioned the points explained by the interviewer. While the terms used in this explanation were self-explanatory, the interviewer was prepared to clarify any potential query. For example, stand up for what is right or wrong. This meant to stand up for what is right and do not accept an unethical or unfair behaviour or any other wrongdoing, regardless of who is committing the wrongdoing (Nelson, 2017; Anderson, 2018). Or, real leaders referred to leaders who are true in themselves,

able to win people over and move them to action with desire to provide direction, help and collective success (McCauley, 2018; Addison, 2016). Further, the interviewer, by mentioning strong leaders meant leaders who have vision, creativity, the ability to influence and support others, inspire others and solve problems effectively (Warren, 2018; Growth Engineering, 2018; Virgin, 2018).

The purpose of this question was to introduce cosmetic leadership to the interviewees and find out whether they agree with this new concept. While there were fourteen positive answers, twelve interviewees strongly agreed with the term by answering 'yes' or 'absolutely'. Two interviewees seemed doubtful by answering:

> *"Yes, sometimes. Sometimes it is fair, absolutely" (A1).*

> *"Yes and no. Probably depends" (D1).*

Although the question did not disregard the technical aspect of leadership, one interviewee argued that you need a strong and real leader with technical skills.

> *"I think that you need both… If you going to be a managing partner in a law firm, if you are not a good lawyer then you not going to get respect, or have a credibility to lead a law firm…" (A3).*

Additionally, the following is an interviewee's opinion:

> *"I actually change the word there; I don't think they are leaders at all…" (C1).*

The twelve interviewees who strongly agreed with the new concept of cosmetic leadership provided very useful discussions and examples to support their views. Below are extracts from these interviewees' transcripts:

> *"…they may have both skills that is fantastic, and those people are gold and we need to find them, … they are cosmetic leaders because they don't necessarily possess the full leadership capabilities needed to undertake Capital L leadership position" (A2).*

*"Yes. Yes. I have met many of these people… people in senior positions they wouldn't be described as leaders who technically very intelligent but also they were micro-managers didn't treat their staff well…" (A4).*

*"Yeah,   Cosmetic Leaders is a good way of describing those leaders who haven't got there, on the basis of being a leader, but they got there by other means, yeah and I think that does happen a fair bit in public service frankly, "where we promote people based on their technical skills and experience and they might be good at a job and go through the ranks and before they know it, they got a team under them and before they know it, they have been asked to lead quite large teams and exhibit leadership skills without us really having equipped them for it or challenge them on it or make sure that they are able to do that. So, you could say that, yes they are Cosmetic Leaders but they put in that position of leadership, yeah" (B1).*

*"Oh, absolutely. This is so interesting. This is so true… This is in life. It is everywhere …" (B2).*

*"Absolutely, absolutely" (B3).*

*"I think, yeah, … One of the characteristics of good leaders has to be authentic to practice what you preach. And, if you cannot do that, certainly there is no trust between the team and trust is broken certainly you are not a good leader, so I agree. I agree, certainly" (C2).*

*"… Yeah it is fair to say that,… I had a leader just like that completely sucked the  oxygen out of office and made people so unmotivated except the ones in the middle of the circle,…" (C3).*

*"Yeah…they don't have leadership skills and it is fair enough to call them cosmetic leaders" (D2).*

*"It is a good term, Cosmetic Leader…" (D3).*

*"Yeah. … I think it happens quite a lot actually…Yeah, I think that is quite a good term really" (E1).*

*"Oh. Absolutely…" (E2).*

*"Yes. I worked in situations very similar…I always been inside the circle, but I have seen examples were people have been promoted when they really shouldn't have been promoted. …" (E3).*

The interview discussions showed a very strong approval by the interviewees to call those leaders described in the opening of the question as cosmetic leaders.

## 4.3.5  Question 13

This question was designed to find out how cosmetic leaders or the workplace they lead can be helped for the better. This question asked:

*In your view is it fair to allow Cosmetic Leaders continue in their leadership role?*

> *If 'Yes' what should employees do when they are reporting to Cosmetic Leaders?*

> *If 'No' would the proper leadership trainings with proven acceptable leadership behaviours and practices help? What else do you think it will be helpful to Cosmetic Leaders?*

This question produced very lengthy discussions with different thoughts. For the first part of the question, eight of the interviewees said 'no' for cosmetic leaders to continue in their role, in contrary four said 'yes', two answered 'depends', and two said 'yes and no'. For the second part of the question, twelve interviewees believed that training can make a difference, two said training will not help and two were doubtful whether training can help these cosmetic leaders or not. One of the interviewees argued that: *"...there is a mutual obligation that particularly if the leaders themselves are not been deliberately unethical or vindictive or whatever, but trying to do the right thing... But yeah if their motivation is right then the employees have to somehow assist in that..."* (B1). Depending on the interviewees' initial responses, twelve of the interviewees were asked a supplementary question as: *"Do you think that training can change a person's nature?"* Ten of the interviewees answered 'no', one said 'yes' (E3) and one said *"I think to a degree yes"* (A2).

The following quotes are extracts from some discussions presented by the interviewees:

> *"...just put him in a room, and let him to build this amazing robot,..."* (C1).

> *"Training cannot change the personality that is already established in certain behaviour"* (C3).

> *"... I don't think training alone would be enough..."* (E2).

> *"Yes. I have seen a cousin to go amazing leadership training and she is now managing a team of 40..." (E3).*
> *"Some people may be shocked to learn and realise that is what they have done, so, yeah, if you make them aware of it, you may not change the nature but at least you may change their behaviour"* (D1).

Question 13 produced lengthy discussions although most interviewees agreed that training can help cosmetic leaders.

## 4.3.6  Question 14

This following question was presented:

*Do you have any favourite leadership style?*

This question intended to test the interviewees' theoretical knowledge and their familiarity of leadership literature and the most common styles used in leadership studies. After prompting most of the interviewees, they presented some leadership characteristics or styles such as communicative, inclusive, collaborative, motivational, little bit of toughness and a lot of softness, comrade leadership, clear expectation with clear vision, and relaxed able to provide direction. Only two of the interviewees were able to provide one of the commonly and most frequently talked-about leadership styles such as 'transformational leadership' and 'charismatic leadership' (Informa Australia, 2018).

One of the interviewees touched on transformational leadership style. However, the interviewee was asked: *"What do you think about the transformational*

*leadership?"* The interviewee replied: *"… I don't know too much about it…"* (D2). Another interviewee touched on charismatic leadership as follows:

> *"… I think you've got to have Charisma for sure, you got to know how to get people excited about what they're doing… That is probably my favourite…"* (E3).

This question produced lengthy discussions. However, only one of the sixteen interviewees could touch on a commonly talked-about leadership style and being able to provide a very brief explanation. It was emerged that most of the interviewees (employees) are unfamiliar with the leadership literature, studies and popular concepts. This finding demonstrated that there is disconnect between theory and what people believe and practice.

### 4.3.7   Theme 2 observations' summary

Questions related to the Theme 2 were designed to find out interviewees' views, understandings of leadership and whether they will agree on the new concept of cosmetic leadership proposed in this dissertation. For Question 3, eleven of the interviewees were able to present some clear leadership qualities (see 4.3.2). Similarly, for Question 11, twelve of the interviewees were able to provide some clear characteristics of a good leader or boss based on their experiences (see 4.3.3). Question 12 introduced cosmetic leadership and sought the interviewees' views on this new concept. Out of fourteen positive answers twelve of them strongly agreed with the new concept of cosmetic leadership (see 4.3.4). Thus, this new concept was well received by the interviewees.

While eight of the interviewees were against cosmetic leaders to continue in their role, twelve of them believed that training can make a difference for the better (see 4.3.5 Question 13). When twelve interviewees asked a supplementary question as whether training can change the person's nature, ten answered 'no'. In Question 14 discussions, it emerged that there is not much familiarity with the leadership literature or studies including common leadership concepts among the employees at

different levels. Only one interviewee was able to mention and briefly explain a commonly talked-about leadership style (see 4.3.6).

During the questions and answers related to this theme, it was noted that some of the important attitudes and attributes (Methodology chapter, 3.2.9, Step 9) were mentioned. Each of the words 'courage', 'honesty', 'integrity' and 'empathy (compassion)' were used three times and the word 'trust' was used five times.

Finally, this theme's questions and answers generated very informative discussions regarding leadership behaviours and practices. The results of the interviewees' discussions ensured that cosmetic leadership is the right concept to be used.

## 4.4    Theme 3

### 4.4.1   Theme title

Theme 3 was related to *employee and workplace*. Six questions (Question 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) were asked to find out interviewees' views concerning this theme.

### 4.4.2   Question 4

The Question 4 was on leader and employee relationships and asked the interviewees:

*In your view how should leaders treat the underperforming employees?*

This question intended to find out the interviewees' views, expectations, behaviours and actions on underperforming employees. Ten interviewees provided a clear answer to the question and three expressed their opinion about the underperforming employees even though did not answer the question. Two interviewees provided unclear answers and one interviewee was unable to relate the answer to the question. Some interviewees were prompted to elaborate on their answers. The key points expressed were: being supportive; make communications; provide

opportunity and training; performance manage; and terminate employment. The followings are the most notable comments:

> *"… Supportive approach and communicating clearly what your expectations are…"* (A2).

> *"… Again comes back to that question of fairness…one of my leadership strategies is affection… Just like an army, one gets injured the rest support the person… We actually see the friendship a little bit different; we treat our staff like family members…"* (C2).

> *"Find out what is going on… They need support whether is education, building on their skills, building their understanding, or they could be overloaded, just try to address that"* (C3).

> *"… an issue needs to be spoken directly with the underperforming employee… managed in an ongoing way,… employee to be treated like any other employee to have a chance to improve their performance…"* (E1).

> *"… look beyond the personality traits, understand what might be driving employee's performance and behaviour,… treat individuals fairly, … set expectations and monitor a person's performance, … then ultimately if a person is not performing deal with that proactively"* (B1).

> *"… they bring the team down, don't give them good reference to hand the problem somewhere else… have a frank conversation with the employee…"* (D1).

> *"… have tough conversations, regular feedback, performance management…"* (C1).

> *"… give them opportunity to improve, if they don't improve, terminate the employee as a last resort"* (D2).

> *"… give them less income,… that rule of thumb would be three strikes and you are out"* (D3).

> *"Performance manage them… give opportunity to improve, and if hasn't worked out then get rid of them… otherwise you will be seen as being weak"* (E2).

> *"Give opportunity to improve, but if you are not performing; if you are not contributing to the team go elsewhere… you letting everybody else down" (E3).*

This question generated lengthy discussions where most of the interviewees spoke about supporting, training and giving opportunity for underperforming employees to improve. However, it was emerged that a considerable number of the interviewees were in favour of some kind of performance management and termination of employment.

### 4.4.3 Question 5

This question was:

*How should employees react when despite their well performance and dedication they have been treated unfairly by their leaders/supervisors?*

This question intended to find out the interviewees' views, suggestions and possible ways to improve the leader–employee relationship when leaders/supervisors act unfairly. Only seven interviewees provided a clear answer, while six expressed their views that somehow could be related to the question. Although the question clearly mentioned that employees have been treated unfairly, following few prompts by the interviewer one interviewee was more concerned about the well-being of the business, one was indirectly backing up the leaders and one was unable to relate the answer or explanation to the question. The key suggestions provided were: move to another job/somewhere else (suggested by five interviewees); talk to higher level leaders, Human Resources (HR), or union and seek advice; and continue to stand up for yourself. Some of the remarks were as follows:

> *"… Talk to your boss. Talk to other people. If easy move to another job… I suggest join union. And, try to get advice from them" (A1).*

> *"I guess this happens to all of us at times and hopefully we can work through it. In part it does depend on a situation… it is important to raise that with their supervisors and leaders. I do know that can be hard for some individuals to do… That is where they might need some support…*

> *just as a leader needs to set expectations of someone who works for them, the employee need to be able to set the expectations on a leader. Make sure that a leader understands what they got to do in terms of treating that employee fairly"* (B1).

> *"... I can see that you can get backed into a corner... I guess if there is an opportunity maybe go one level higher although that can be complicated too, I think you need to continue to stand up for yourself"* (E1).

> *"... I would hope that an employee would reach out to their leaders or supervisor and ask and explain how they felt and seek an explanation of why they have been treated unfairly and differently... If their expectations aren't going to be met as what they hoped, to get out of the job..."* (A4).

> *"... some sort of approach to the bosses, try and tell them, but not by affecting their business"* (B2).

> *"I think the employees really need to have a hard look at themselves first"* (C1).

> *"I will find another job... I'll find someone else"* (E3).

While the interviewees provided different answers and views for this question, they had similar points such as move to another job or elsewhere, go to higher level leaders, or HR for advice. However, in the later questions and answers the suggestion of going to higher leaders proved to be ineffective to some extent (see Theme 1, 4.2.4, Question 7).

### 4.4.4   Question 6

This question was presented in the following manner:

*When there is an unethical and unfair treatment of employees by leadership often there is employees' word against their leaders. Often it seems the word of employees against a leader/s will not get employees too far. The perception could be that when leaders do/practice unethical and unfair behaviours or practices have fewer problems or explanations to do than employees when similarly commit unethical behaviours or practices. When there is a conflict, often employees are worried to lose their job or have unpleasant time among colleagues or in*

*workplace if continue fighting unfair treatments. So, in your view what should employees do?*

This question was following on Question 5. The question was trying to further stimulate the interviewees' thinking ability to suggest or propose ways that employees can react when they are treated unfairly. Twelve interviewees provided clear answers, three provided related arguments and one was unable to relate the answer to the question. The key points presented were: legal options; contact unions, HR, public service commission and senior management for support and advice; document discussions; don't be overwhelmed; leave (eight interviewees suggested walk away or get another job); clear communication; and leader always have upper hand. The following quotes are some of the relevant views or suggestions expressed by the interviewees:

> *"Yeah, it is a tough one. You think is kind of I guess the analogy if the like the police's word carries more weight than your word. If a policeman says you're breaking the law and you say you weren't you go to court, the policeman his words going to carry more weight in court… if I've been treated unfairly and I'd be feeling pretty angry about it, … I'll probably be pursuing it, … so I'll be kind of thinking like that if I've been treated unfairly I guess there's a good chance that the supervisor is doing the same to others … so in a mode probably see if you know the responsible thing to do to pursue it, I think" (D1).*

> *"… There's not a lot you can do. I say some practices like whistle blowing and in my experience anyone goes that track gets hung at, … So, if she go down that track it so it's very difficult and it's the same, yeah and I guess that would be the same in most organisations… so the boss or the leader is always, they going to have the upper hand and in most yeah, that is just the way a lot of Australian organisations work, they will, it is not always fair in terms of investigation of the outcome" (D2).*

> *"I guess … depends on the culture that is within the organisation… You're right though that some individuals will find it more difficult to that than others and there will be circumstances where will be more challenging. I think in those sort of situations employees are going to have to umm, not, umm I guess trying deal with the problem alone and just become isolated within the workplace which I have seen happen where the problem weighs them down so much that it disrupts the way they work, the level of trust across the workplace disappears, and they are not able to interact much as with you know, supervisor they may have problem with but also with their peers, their counter parts and other*

> *people they have to deal with. So, it is important that employees feel that they can get support somewhere and look for that support outside their organisation… But a key thing is not letting you overwhelmed too. So, trying to isolate the impacts of a leader's behaviour but not as a person feel they are isolated from broader work community"* (B1).

This question generated lengthy and interesting discussions, even though three interviewees mentioned that they see this question very difficult.

### 4.4.5 Question 8

This question was asked as follows:

*In your understanding would leadership ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviours impact on employees?*

This question was setting premises for the next two questions (Question 9 and 10). Also, the question was aiming to find out the views of the interviewees on the importance of leadership behaviours practiced at workplace and beyond. Fifteen interviewees responded 'yes' (yes, absolutely, of course yeah, yeah definitely, very much so, and has a huge impact). Only one interviewee responded *"yes, but not in all situations"* (A1). Below are some comments expressed by the interviewees:

> *"Very much so, absolutely. Leaders should be setting the tone for how the work place function and if it's clear that there is a workplace where ethics don't matter or there is poor ethical behaviour that allowed and encouraged or whatever it might be that will impact on workers that follow that line of behaviour, a lot of employees will not flourishing that environment and eventually that organisation will be brought down or it should be, it impact on individuals if they feel they are treated unfairly, their moral will be reduced and eats away at people if they feel that they not been heard and they just been treated poorly…"* (B1).

> *"Yes, of course yeah, I mean everything impacts, it impacts on morale, it impacts on how employees end up treating each other, how trustworthy, how secure feel, it impacts on so many levels. And, if the management is been unethical, you know why should I be ethical? It has that sort of breeds, you know, it's just water falls down, down the line, um generally speaking, yeah"* (C3).

> *"Absolutely ... I think if you don't feel valued at work or respected it really affects good you really want to give to a job and also causes a lot of moral issues in general, ... I guess this affects life outside of work as well and relationships outside work as well, quite detrimental lead to other problems, lead to health problems"* (E1).

> *"Yeah, yeah, it does. Yeah. Because people say if they drinking why should I work or if they're doing these things why shouldn't I. Its monkey see monkey do, you know"* (E2).

> *"Definitely ... if you have unfair leader is going to push people down... they're not going to be motivated and they are not going to do the best job for the organisation"* (D2).

This question revealed strong support from the interviewees that leadership behaviours impact on employees.

### 4.4.6 Question 9

The following question was asked:

*Is it fair to say that employees make workplace or organisations? Then, how should leaders treat employees to improve workplace for the better?*

This question was asked in two sections trying to further explore the views of the interviewees on the importance of employees. Also, the question tried to further find out the interviewees' views on leader–employee relationships, and how this relationship can impact on the workplace. For the first section of the question fourteen interviewees answered yes (yes, sure and absolutely), and only two employees despite lengthy discussions did not provide a direct answer. The followings are the most common remarks for the second part of this question:

- Treat them as human beings and compassionately (A1);

- Make them part of decision making and achieving the organisational objectives and success (A2);

- Make sure that there is an understanding, career path, empathy and an acknowledgement that every team member brings something different (A3);

- Leaders should invest in their employees, build trust, build capability, create good atmosphere and culture, and setting an example (A4);

- The only way we achieve results in through our people, therefore to get the best out of people does require leadership that is appropriate, ethical and gives room to move (B1);

- Make a fair workplace and treat employees like the human beings (B2);

- I value myself and the organisation, so the same can apply to employee. Every human being on this planet makes mistakes including me, so if you tell employees they are not doing a good job, they not going to feel valued, they are not going to do their best (B3);

- Create a good team and a good culture (C1);

- Shared responsibility. It is not just leaders' responsibility to make sure the workplace is fair. It is everyone in the team (C2);

- Acknowledge, support and help employees. Build skills and flexible environment, give vision and purpose, make it clear why the employees are here and what the goals are, look after employees mentally and physically, and keep them happy and engaged (C3);

- Treat them like human, fairly and respectful without any biases. Look after staff and they will look after you and will contribute to society (D1);

- Understand what employees want, what motivates them and try to accommodate that (D2);

- Leaders got to treat employees with respect and appreciation (D3);

- Workplace is the product of how well the employees work, so if leaders treat employees with respect and make them feel valued they can contribute to ideas and decisions and they work better (E1);

- Make employees feel they have been invested in, make their workplace comfortable and leaders should understand they are not perfect in everything they do (E2); and

- Treat employees fair, look after your staff, create a good professional and friendly atmosphere, and good working conditions (E3).

These brief remarks showed a great interest in supporting employees in different ways which ultimately would impact the workplace for the better.

## 4.4.7   Question 10

This question asked:

*In your view which one of the following points is more important than other?*

> *(a) Tasks and meeting deadlines*
>
> *(b) Employees, their concerns and needs*

Following the previous questions, Question 10 intended to find out which side of the coin is more important to the interviewees (work-side or human-side). The question produced lengthy discussions with some unclear answers that made the interviewer prompt the interviewees on a few occasions. During the discussions, some of the interviewees changed their position between (a) and (b). Thirteen interviewees ended up giving a clear answer. One interviewee's answer could be related to the question and two other answers were unclear. Nine interviewees answered (b) is more important than (a), one answered (a) is more important, three said they are interrelated and equally important, one said that (a) is important for the short term and (b) for the long term, one said it depends, and one interviewee was unsure. When answering this question most of the interviewees said that without having (b) you cannot have (a). According to (E1): *"It is difficult because kind of you need to have (a) to be a successful organisation but you kind of can't have (a) unless you got (b). But I guess, I would say that the primary concern is that employees' needs are met.  So, if employees feel that their needs are met, they can work effectively and then they can complete their tasks and meet deadlines"*.

The interviewee (C2) stated that:

> *"I think (b) is more important. We actually are going through it. We used procedures to pursue tasking and meeting deadlines, now we realised that was too reactive. Because we didn't solve any problem. So, we then turned around and changed the strategy, is all about the employee now. What can we do for you to make sure that you finish your tasks in the deadline? That is a message from the Manager, from the leader. Now the team is not about question whether you going to finish this task, it is about what, how we can do, to have you to finish the task to meet that deadline. So, that is employee centric record and is more proactive rather than reactive... If you try to work with the team to put the employee in the centre then that is much better strategy... I think number (b) is far more important than deadline. Deadlines and tasking we follow up, if we know to assist the employees and the tools that they need, the resources that they want..."*.

This question revealed some interviewees' views towards leader and employee relationships changed since the beginning of the interviews:

> *"... I learned a lot in this interview. There are reflections I need to make"* (A4).

> *"If you went with your employees and then you know looked after them, I'm kind of contradicting myself, don't I?"* (E3).

> *"I am deadline-driven. And, I know that, that's not always ideal and I need to soften that with an appreciation for the people I lead and value the people that I lead"* (D3).

This question's answers and discussions illustrated the importance of employees to the workplace or organisations as well as the importance of leadership's attention to leader–employee relationship.

### 4.4.8   Theme 3 observations' summary

The Theme 3 questions were mainly designed to investigate and explore interviewees' views, understandings and suggestions towards leader–employee relationships, leaders' treatment of employees, and workplace improvement for the better. These questions produced lengthy discussions and proved to be so effective

that by Question 10 three employees admitted to change their views on leader–employee relationships (see 4.4.7).

For Question 4, ten interviews provided their clear views. While most of the interviewees favoured supporting and training staff when they are underperforming, a considerable amount of the interviewees favoured performance management and termination of employment of underperformers (see 4.4.2). Question 5 provided different and mixed responses. Most of the interviewees suggested when there is an unfair treatment move to another job or elsewhere, go to the higher level leaders or HR for advice (see 4.4.3). Later in Question 7, it emerged that the suggestion of going to the higher level leaders proved to be ineffective (see 4.2.4). Question 6 aimed at further exploring views expressed in Question 5. Twelve interviewees provided clear answers and suggestions for this question (see 4.4.4). That said, eight of the interviewees suggested employees to leave when they have been treated unethical and unfair by their leaders and the other eight interviewees provided different suggestions, such as considering legal options, and contacting unions and HR for advice.

Question 8 strongly proved by fifteen interviewees that leadership behaviours impact on employees (see 4.4.5). Similarly, Question 9 strongly proved by fourteen interviewees that employees make workplaces or organisations. The discussions of this question further proved that support to employees will impact on the workplace for the better (see 4.4.6). Although Question 10 generated lengthy and mixed views, nine interviewees directly favoured looking after employees and their needs over tasks and meeting deadlines (see 4.4.7). During the discussions of this question, it emerged that some interviewees' views towards leader–employee relationships changed since the beginning of the interviews.

The attitudes and attributes mentioned in this theme were 'trust' used ten times, 'compassion' three times, and 'power' and 'integrity' each used once. Finally, the results of this theme showed the importance of the leader and employee relationship and its impact on workplaces.

## 4.5   Theme 4

### 4.5.1   Theme title

Theme 4 consisted of one general question only. It was to give an opportunity for the interviewees to express their concluding comments.

### 4.5.2   Question 15

The last question was posed as following:

*Do you have any comment that you would like to add?*

The final comments showed the interest and enthusiasm of the interviewees in the topic as well as diversity of opinions. Twelve of the interviewees expressed their final comments and four believed they have said everything. The following are remarks made by the interviewees:

> *"Leadership in a political context is quite different from smaller organisations… size makes really difference and power… Power makes huge amount of difference… power puts you in a management leadership position"* (A1).

> *"Political world is different from corporate world … it is battle of ideas"* (A2).

> *"… sometimes when organisations train people or emphasis what people need to do to get to the next level, they look at it in a very technical perspective around what you need to do as a Manager without necessarily picking up on one of the core skills that you need as a leader of people which we know be different,…"* (B1).

> *"I'd like to see the end of research about this. Because, I like the cosmetic leader new concept. I'm glad that you throw it out; because it's always on my mind I just didn't know what to call it. The only other thing you can add is in certain countries there are laws that protect this kind of leadership, in other countries is not that strong"* (B2).

*"I like your analogy of a cosmetic leader because it is very true, it gives a fine line... if you've got somebody who's a cosmetic leader and never ever going to achieve what needs to be achieved... probably you asking me what my leadership style and strength is I think that's it always only deal with facts because they impact on somebody's life"* (B3).

*"I think the leaders' role is very important role, and is not a role that you can, is a role that is practice, a lot of practice,... if you select the wrong leader, fanatical behaviour they can do bad very quickly right through whole team and the only action you can really do is to get him step down and find someone else..."* (C2).

*"My comment is just that I think there's a lot of work to be done in leadership. ... I think leaders have to step up even more than they had in the past and skill shortage and just keeping you know if you keep somebody for 2 years you think you're doing well..."* (C3).

*"No more, more than I wish this sort of thing was a bit more studied or yeah it was the biggest thing at work in the government because I think we do have problems with leaders and the whole structure..."* (D1).

*"Just I think there is real value in having leaders... really open to what the needs of employees are I think there will be more motivation than just giving them pay rise"* (D2).

*"It's been a very good discussion and challenging for me, so thank you for that"* (D3).

*"I think a lot of the time good leaders shouldn't even be from within the business... a CEO or someone with vision instead of promoting leaders from within the business who is got no skills at all of leading people"* (E2).

*"I think I may have started in one direction and I ended up in another direction..."* (E3).

The attitudes and attributes mentioned in this theme were 'trust' and 'power' used by two interviewees. Finally, this question generated interesting final comments reiterating the importance of leadership behaviours and practices, and participants indicated that they liked the proposal concerning cosmetic leadership.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The interviews enhanced the wealth of knowledge and information for this dissertation and strengthened the views discussed in the literature review. The interviewees showed enthusiasm to the topic of this dissertation and provided their views by answering the interview questions drawn from their understanding and experience.

A total of fifteen questions were used in the interviews and divided into four themes:

Theme 1 was related to *'ethics and fairness'* which consisted of three questions (1, 2 and 7). While the interviewees believed that people should do the right things, and leaders should treat employees the same with no favouritism, most of them encountered unethical and unfair treatment committed by their leaders. None of the interviewees reached a positive conclusion (six interviewees left their work, eight interviewees' concerns were ignored and one became more troubled). Only one unethical partner was fired. During the discussions related to this theme it was emerged that there is discomfort among the employees to rely on their higher level leaders when they confront an unethical or unfair treatment. The interviewees' experiences revealed that when they approached their higher level leaders regarding the unethical and unfair treatments, their concerns were ignored and often no outcomes were reached.

Theme 2 was related to *'leadership including cosmetic leadership'* and involved five questions (3, 11, 12, 13 and 14). The questions and answers of this theme produced very informative discussions related to leadership behaviours and practices. The result of this theme's discussions indicates support for the term '*cosmetic leadership'*. Eight interviewees didn't like to see the cosmetic leaders continue work in their position. Twelve believed training will help the cosmetic leaders for the better, even though ten said training cannot change their nature. Moreover, as a result of this theme's

questions it emerged that interviewees (employees) are able to identify leadership qualities and traits probably drawn from their general knowledge or experiences. However, employees at different levels of hierarchy are unfamiliar with the leadership literature, studies, or popular leadership concepts or styles. Thus, there is disconnection between theory and what people believe and practice.

Theme 3 was related to *'employee and workplace',* which contained six questions (4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10). The results of this theme revealed that while the most interviewees favoured support and training to underperforming employees, a considerable number of them favoured performance management and termination of employment. It was interesting that most of the interviewees suggested going to higher level leaders or HR for advice when there is unethical or unfair treatment by leaders or supervisors (answers to Question 5). However, later when the interviewees answered and discussed Question 7 of Theme 1, it emerged that the suggestion of going to higher level leaders for advice is ineffective. Further, this theme showed that fifty percent of the interviewees (translated to employees at all levels which include leaders as well) believed to leave or move to another job or area when they have been treated unethically or unfairly by their leaders or supervisors. Another eight suggested considering legal options, contact unions or HR for advice.

Additionally, this theme's discussions strongly proved that leadership behaviours impact on employees and thus support to employees improves the workplace. Remarkably, the interview questions and discussions proved to be very effective that by reaching the Question 10 answers three employees changed their views on leader–employee relationship from the time they started the interview. And, most of the interviewees argued that leaders should first look after employees and their needs then consider tasks and meeting deadlines.

Theme 4 was a general question providing the interviewees with an opportunity to express their final comments. This theme produced very interesting and informative final comments reconfirming the importance of leadership behaviours and practices. Some of the interviewees took the opportunity to restate their support for the proposed new concept of cosmetic leadership.

As a follow-up on the Methodology chapter (3.2.9, Step 9), special attention was given to the attitudes and attributes that were mentioned during the interviews. There were sixteen interviews with fifteen questions each. In all these interviews, the total number of times that the attitudes and attributes were pointed out is summarised in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1    Summary/number of times attitudes and attributes used during the interivews*

| Sense related to attitudes & attributes | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Particulars* | *Acronym* | *Results* |
| Integrity | I | 5 |
| Honesty | H | 6 |
| Compassion | C | 6 |
| Trust | T | 16 |
| Courage | Co | 3 |
| Self-interest | S | 0 |
| Power | P | 2 |

Finally, the results of the interviews showed that towards the end of the interviews, some of the interviewees changed their views for the employees. These interviewees became more supportive and companionate towards support and better treatment of employees than they were in the beginning of the interviews.

# Chapter 5
# Analysis

## *An analysis of the interview results*

*"I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among men the greatest asset I possess. The way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement." —
Charles Schwab*

*"A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected." —
Amy Rees Anderson*

# 5      Analysis

## 5.1     Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a deeper analysis of the identified themes and the interview results provided in Chapter 4. The interviewees presented similar answers and they were confident in responding to most of the questions. However, some of the politicians were somewhat cautious in their responses, compare to other groups (government, not-for-profit and private sector). For example, one of the politicians despite few prompts provided five questions with an unclear and open-ended answer.

The examination of data with reference to the literature review discussions reaffirms with the realist research paradigm explained in the Chapter 3 (3.2). That is explaining observations from the social world by using theory (Fincher, 2007). A research approach based on realism can facilitate access to members' views that can assist the understanding of social world (Stiles, 2003 cited in Fincher, 2007). Identifying social mechanisms in the world that influence actions of the individuals may offer a bridge between "ideas and reality" (Symons, 1994 cited in Fincher, 2007, p. 48). Ideas refer to plans, suggestions, opinions, believes or possible course of actions (Collins, 2018). Additionally, reality arises from our consciousness as we live in a world that is the cause of our conscious life, which leads us to wonder if we can know the world beyond our perceptions (Philosophy Now, 2018).

The anti-positivism paradigm with its three schools of thought (phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism) is explained in Chapter 3 (3.1.4). These three schools of thought in social science research favour a qualitative approach (Dash, 2005) matched with the methodology of this dissertation which is aimed to operationalise the research question. Therefore, data gathered in interviews and knowledge and understanding gained by previous researchers discussed in literature review will assist in the analysis and understanding of the themes of this dissertation (ethics and fairness, leadership, and employee and workplace) identified in Chapter 4 (noting that theme four was related to a general question, which provided opportunity to the interviewees to have their final comments). As such, this chapter will break down the first three themes into two sections each (issue/s and issue resolution), aimed at analysing interviewees' concerns and suggestions that might help in addressing the major gap of unethical and unfair leadership practices' impact on employees and workplaces. Any considerable comment provided in Theme 4 will be combined in the first three main themes. Finally, this chapter will look into factors impacting leader–employee relationship.

## 5.2    Ethics and fairness

### 5.2.1    Issue/s

This study intends to fill a significant gap of unethical and unfair leadership practices and their impact on employees and workplaces (Chapter 2, 2.1). As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2, 2.1), unethical and unfair practices (behaviours and treatments) by leaders create negative impact on employees and workplaces (Chen, & Wang, 2017). As a general principle, people respond to negative more than positive behaviours (Liu, Liao, & Loi, 2012). Therefore, 'ethics and fairness' were important topics to be discussed with the interviewees.

From the discussions shown in Chapter 4 (4.2.4), thirteen out of sixteen interviewees encountered unethical and unfair behaviours and practices committed by their leaders. All thirteen interviewees showed reaction but no outcome was reached (six left their work, one had more trouble, concerns of five interviewees

were ignored, and only one unethical business partner was fired). The issue of employees not feeling confident to rely on their higher level leaders/supervisors when they encounter unethical and unfair behaviours can be seen clearly in the following extract:

> *"… a senior leader, his behaviour was quite wrong over an extended period of time the way he treated people basically he was a bully and he is a, he was very unfair on people, he impacted me personally to a degree, … so number of people just left and yeah but there were fair few people that were burnt on the way … a lot of that individual's peers at the senior level were aware of it but really they didn't do much about it, or even those who did try to do things about it nothing much came of it because this person was someone quite clever and he had play a game and avoid re precautions of their behaviour…" (B1).*

Thus, it is natural for employees to react when they are faced with unethical and unfair treatments even though most of the reactions could be negative. As noted in Chapter 4 (4.2.4 and 4.2.5), the emergence of mistrust or discomfort among employees towards their leaders when they confront unethical or unfair behaviours or practices is alarming.

## 5.2.2   Issue resolution

By referring to the Literature Review chapter (2.3.1 & 2.2), ethics refers to a well-founded standard of right and wrong, complemented by honesty, compassion, and loyalty (Velasquez et al., 2015). Ethics is the science of morals or rules of behaviour (Midgen, 2015). Fairness/justice's basic principle is that people should be treated equally unless there are situations that make them to be treated differently (Velasquez et al., 2014). It is human nature to expect to be treated well, ethically and fairly. Regardless of how well employees do their job, they will not have job satisfaction or willingness to go to work if they are treated unethically and unfairly (Geoffrey, 2013; El Din & El Ghetany, 2016; Koh & Boo, 2004; Mintz, 2011). Therefore, ethical behaviours not only benefit the employees and organisations they work for (workplaces), but also benefit the society (Schminke et al., 2015).

Similarly, the interviewees referred to ethics as doing the right thing, having honesty and set of values and what is deemed to be acceptable in society (Chapter 4, 4.2.2).

> *"Ethical behaviour and practices… those things that stand up to scrutiny … by comparison to what society expects from people in particular those in leadership in business, certainly is got be lawful and moral …" (D3).*

> *"I guess that's an ethical meaning based on you doing the right thing not taking advantage of anyone …" (D1).*

> "I guess acting *with standards and honesty, and doing the right thing…"*
> *(E3).*

> *"… people subscribing to behaviours that give fair and equal treatment and opportunity. People who have a set of values or convictions that they ascribe to and work towards and I guess setting frameworks either for yourself in the workplace or a boss or a leader …" (A4).*

The most common comment interviewees made in their discussions when referring to fairness and fair treatment was 'treating people equally and the same' (Chapter 4, 4.2.3).

> *"I think fairness is treating people equally as much as possible whilst also being aware of their different drivers in people's lives. Fair treatment … Just being objective, not letting your own feelings colour how you treat people" (E2).*

The discussions related to equity theory presented in the Literature Review chapter (2.3.2) matched with the results from the research/interviews (Chapter 4); therefore, it is clear that employees are able to evaluate whether they are treated fairly (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2006). Avoiding or minimising unethical and unfair behaviours and treatments of employees by their leaders may assist in increasing the level of trust and confidence among employees towards their leaders. Trust will make employees at all levels feel emotional security (Lu, 2014). Finally, from the discussions presented in Chapter 2 (2.2) and responses provided by the interviewees, it is evident that ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviours and

practices not only impact on individuals and workplace but also impact on society (Schminke et al., 2015).

## 5.3 Leadership

### 5.3.1 Issue/s

It is noted in the literature review that leadership is an important theme of social science and can be related to the different subjects of people's work or social life (van Vugt & von Rueden, 2017; Boaks, 2014). Ethical leadership theory refers to leaders' ethical and moral behaviour expected from both leaders and employees (Anderson et al., 2017). According to SLT, people learn appropriate or inappropriate behaviours by noticing others' behaviours (Mayer et al., 2012). Further, people deeply care about how they are treated (Demirtas, 2015) and FT indicates that employees can determine whether they have been treated fairly (Cropanzano et al., 2001), although further studies are needed to know how to hold leaders accountable (Chapter 2, 2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2 & 2.6).

Literature does not provide specific theory for unethical/unfair leadership (Chapter 2, 2.3.2), while philosophers have used theoretical ways to show right and wrong and how to act ethically (Panza, & Potthast, n.d.). However, the issue is that there is a clear disconnect between theory and what people believe and practice (Chapter 4, 4.3.6). Only one out of sixteen interviewees was able to touch on a frequently talked-about leadership style (Chapter 4, 4.3.6 & 4.3.7). From the responses received during the interview discussions, it is obvious that most of the leaders are unfamiliar with the leadership literature and popular concepts. Therefore, considering the SLT leaders' behaviours and practices may be transferred to their employees, even though these behaviours might be unethical and unfair, which will negatively impact on workplace (Liu et al., 2012).

In the Literature Review chapter (2.7), it is mentioned that a lack of responsible leadership will guide people/employees into the difficult or harsh territory at present and future (Broadbelt, 2016). This view raises another issue, which is dealing with cosmetic leadership. Cosmetic leadership (Chapter 2, 2.6) is a new

concept referring to leaders who come to a leadership position either by having connections or showing technical skills while lacking the leadership skills to lead employees from the human point of view. Cosmetic leaders' behaviour and treatment of employees is often seen as unethical and unfair, and based on selfishness just to stay in their leadership position (Golden, 2011). Recent research found that Australia's political and business leadership and executive culture is dominated by people from an Anglo-Celtic background. That is 95 percent of senior leaders in Australia have an Anglo-Celtic or European background and only 5 percent have a non-European background (Murphy, 2018). The finding examined by Murphy (2018) can be seen as an indication of having at least some cosmetic leaders in workplace because of their background, whereby the background reinforces social ties and the reason for connection (Chiu, Balkundi, & Weinberg, 2017). The existence of cosmetic leadership was strongly evidenced through the interviews conducted for this dissertation (Chapter 4, 4.3.4).

From the responses provided by the interviewees (Chapter 4, 4.3.4) it is clear that dealing with cosmetic leaders is an issue. Out of sixteen interviewees, twelve of them strongly agreed with the new concept of cosmetic leadership (supported in theme four as well – see Chapter 4, 4.5.2), two seemed doubtful, and one didn't want to call the cosmetic leaders as leaders at all. Although the question asked from the interviewees did not disregard the technical aspect of leadership one interviewee liked to see leaders with technical skills (Chapter 4, 4.3.4).

> *"… I think I have come across few people that came to leadership roles perhaps for the wrong reasons. And, they weren't really good and strong leaders …" (E1).*

> *"… But the reality is that behind the scene, they are not the leaders of caliber (quality, ability, talent, standard, competence) you should be following…" (D3).*

> *"…it is not true leadership … They might be from the board's point of view … but it is very destructive in an organization for employees… I would say that it is true that are not true leaders" (C3).*

The above extracts and the extracts provided in Chapter 4 (4.3.4) demonstrate the employees' negative feelings about having their leaders as cosmetic leaders.

## 5.3.2   Issue resolution

The extracts provided in Chapter 4 (4.3.2) clarify the important qualities expected from leadership. In the interviewees' view, leaders should be communicative, set standards, set visions and bring people along, give and receive feedback, be fair and ethical, have courage, be honest with integrity, easily to approach, be humble and respectful with a sense of humour. And, the interviewees believe that leaders should understand how the business works, make employees feel valued and be part of organisational goals, inspire people, and set expectations and directions and look after people. While most of these qualities were presented in the Literature Review chapter (2.4 & 2.6), most of the people would agree that these qualities are noble. However, if these qualities were possessed or practiced by leaders, then an issue of unhappiness or mistrust among employees towards their leaders wouldn't exist. Therefore, leaders should be encouraged to advance their understanding and knowledge of leadership from the theoretical point of view to complement their practical skills, and overcome their unethical and unfair behaviours. Some people may think that personal traits may help on their way to become a good leader, but industry knowledge, experience and training are essential for success (Williams, 2013).

While eight out of the sixteen interviewees disliked seeing cosmetic leaders to continue in their role twelve of the interviewees believed that training can make a difference (Chapter 4, 4.3.5). The interview responses reaffirmed the discussions presented in Chapter 2 (2.6), where cosmetic leaders through trainings complemented by technical skills may have respectful and dignified leadership behaviour and practices that will benefit both employees and workplace (Taylor & Pattie, 2014; Mayer et al., 2012). Interestingly one of the interviewees' discussions went beyond the leader and employee relationship:

> *"… Depending on the situation, more training definitely … so it happened once before, with one position with that director, I know did go out of my way to get rid of him… now I am thinking of a lot of bigger scenarios. What can you do if you are in a country when there is a Minister, an ambassador … cosmetic leader? … go to the Prime Minister and say this guy is a cosmetic leader. Or, you just wait for time. Because these people just fall with time. They gonna make everybody's life hell" (B2).*

Finally, when a supplementary question was asked, ten out of the twelve interviewees believed that training cannot change a person's nature (Chapter 4, 4.3.5). This belief contradicted the literature (Chapter 2, 2.6), where it was noted that although leaders' personality has been developed during childhood and teenage-hood, cosmetic leaders can change their behaviour, attitude, character or personality (Kersting, 2003; Nowack, 2009; Radwan, 2017).

## 5.4    Employee and workplace

### 5.4.1   Issue/s

In the Literature Review chapter (2.4), it is noted that ethical and fair leadership makes a better workplace and motivated employees complete tasks faster and better (Damij et al., 2015). However, the issue is when there is a conflict or dispute between leaders and employees. Most of the time, the conflict is generated by unethical and unfair behaviours and treatments committed by leaders towards employees. This issue becomes more obstructive and damaging in workplaces when employees, especially low-level employees, are doubtful to take further actions. Not taking further steps to resolve the issues or not bringing the issues to the attention of others allows abusive leaders to continue with their unethical and unfair behaviour that can produce emotion and anger counterproductive to workplace (Midgen, 2015; Ferris et al., 2016). When personal values are disrespected or disputed, it can be viewed as an ethical dilemma (Crane & Matten, 2010).

This study revealed that there is an issue of mistrust among employees towards their higher level leaders, and this is a major issue (5.2.1). Most of the employees,

because of mistrusting their leaders, considered to leave the workplace (walk away, get another job or move to another area/section/organization) instead of trying to resolve the issues or conflicts, or rely on other avenues. For example, seek support from HR, union, or seek help from external sources or any other option that may be available in their workplace. Eight out of twelve interviewees who provided clear answers suggested 'leave' when confronted with leaders' unethical and unfair treatment (Chapter 4, 4.4.4). The following extracts are in addition to the extracts provided in Chapter 4:

> *"Well, when they are treated unfairly ... if you've got a narcissistic boss ... then could be putting yourself in a difficult position ... try to take action to remove yourself from that particular box as much as possible... go to another section ... take step leaving the organization" (D2).*

> Response to Question 15 (Chap 4, 4.5.2) of Theme 4: *"Back to an earlier question I think it was number 6, when you really are backed into a corner like where treated badly, it continues, worried about losing your job ... I also would say that if I was in that situation and I had any other option I would be looking to get out of this and walk away ..." (E1).*

> Response to Question 6 (Chap 4, 4.4.4) by C1: *"That's a really tough question has a really tough answer this one. There are procedures and policies in place to ensure that a person is protected if they raise an issue or unethical occurring. Sometimes people don't take that and they get to a point ... where they can't take it anymore and they can't see anything been done and they just move. I've seen that happen ..."*
> Interviewer: *"So, is that right for employees just to run away and move to another area?"*
> C1: *"no, no"*
> Interviewer: *"Or, to stay there and fight and make that situation known, probably that won't happen again or that leader or supervisor won't do it to another person. Of course that will be kind of victim spending all energy in that situation to be sacrificed or to do something good for others. I don't know, what is your view on that?"*
> C1: *"... I chose to leave that area.... if that was the situation now would I do some things differently, look I would, because I'm in a different personal situation to what I was then, ... and potentially those leaders may or may not be actually walking the walk ..." (C1).*

Another issue mentioned in section 5.3.1 is a clear disconnect between theory and what is believed and practiced, and this is a real issue. The majority of the interviewees were leaders/supervisors themselves. Three out of sixteen

interviewees when they reached Question 10 changed their views for a better and more supportive behaviour and treatment of employees (Chapter 4, 4.4.7). If an interview averaging forty-five minutes could change an interviewee's approach and views towards employees, encouraging connection between theory and knowledge with practice in workplace could work wonders.

## 5.4.2   Issue resolution

Based on the discussions provided in the Literature Review chapter (2.4), a great place to work is where employees trust and enjoy the people with whom they work, and pride themselves in what they do (GPW, 2016). It is indicated that organisations' greatest resources are employees and leaders play an important role in shaping employees' workplace attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, it is important for employees to work in a workplace that provides equity and diversity, and free of discrimination, bias and workplace aggression such as abusive supervision or ostracism (Ferris et al., 2016; Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Tolbert & Castilla, 2017).

The above points echoed the views of interviewees when they answered different questions related to this theme (Chapter 4, 4.4.1 – 4.4.8). Fifteen out of sixteen employees agreed that leadership ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviours impact on employees. And, fourteen interviewees agreed with the view that employees make workplace or organisations, and expressed their views on how leaders should treat employees to improve workplace for the better. See Chapter 4 (4.4.6) for the extracts of all the interviewees' responses pertained to the treatment of employees in order to improve workplaces for the better. In addition to the extracts provided in the Chapter 4 (4.4), the following are related to this theme:

> *"Underperforming employees, the first thing that I do personally is I look at myself before I look at the underperforming employee because I need to make sure that I've given that employ every opportunity to be able to succeed in what I expect of them. So I need to reflect on myself first. Have I given that person the opportunity to do their job properly, have I employed them because they have the right skills to be able to do that job properly, have I set them up for success so I need to step through a whole criteria of myself before I then go back to the employee and find out why they're underperforming … We are exactly like parents. Your child is the*

> *product of how you brought them up, okay. The same analogy applies to the workforce"* (B3).

> In response to the Question 8 (Chap 4, 4.4.5) A3 stated: *"I think it has a huge impact because it does define the culture of the workplace in many work environment what I have noticed is that the substantive work yes it is a big part of what brings you satisfaction and achievement but I think big aspect of what impacts on that is actually the people, the culture and how you get along the people you work with. Ultimately I think human beings are social beings. We are always going to be in a situation where we are working with different people ..."* (A3).

> *"Well ... you're looking after the employees' concerns and needs and they were happy, the tasks and meeting deadlines will follow... if everyone is happy, you get on, you work really hard and meeting all the deadlines, you are really proactive about doing that and so if you depressed, you don't want to be here ..."* (C3).

> *"... I'm a very logic based person and one of the reasons why I'm running this organisation is because I knew the organisation is not running the way that it should.  So, I was employed to pull it apart and put it back together again and unfortunately sometimes it's just basic what I consider basic, logic, people then just go oh, no no no no no they make things too complicated. Bring it back to a simple open communication and most of the time you can solve every problem very quickly. But you will never, if you never listen to their concerns and their need, you will never make tasks in time. And, to me that's logic"* (B3).

> *"I am a process driven person. So, I think tasks and deadlines are important. But in the end of the day employees and concerns and needs are more important. In a sense if you're not paying attention to employees' needs they are not going to be motivated to do the tasks and the deadlines. So I think employees concerns and needs comes before tasks and meeting deadlines"* (D2).

Thus, leader–employee relationships and their impact on workplaces/organisations are very important. Organisations are the people and are based upon humans and their social and moral phenomena (Bulatova, 2015). Therefore, a major part of leaders' work is dealing with people (Bulatova, 2015) that like to be respected and valued, and their dignity and respect should not be compromised (Dowd-Higgins, 2013; Chapter 2, 2.4 & 2.5.3; Chapter 4, 4.4.6).

## 5.5    Factors impacting leader and employee relationship

Following Theme 3 (Chapter 4, 4.4 & Chapter 5, 5.4) discussions as mentioned in the Literature Review chapter (2.5), the relationship between leaders and employees is so important that it directly and indirectly impacts on workplace and organisational objectives. Referring to Questions 5 and 6 extracts (Chapter 4, 4.4.3 – 4.4.6 & Chapter 5, 5.4) and explanations provided in Chapter 2 (2.5), it is clear that there is an issue when it comes to unethical and unfair treatments of employees by their leaders in workplace. When there is unethical and unfair treatment, often employees' words are against their leaders' words. There is a gap in the literature to investigate the impact of mistreatments by leaders on employees or the complexities of these relationships (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009; Demirtas, 2015), or show how should employees respond or what should they do, and that is an issue. When employees encounter unethical/unfair treatments, they often leave their job because they mistrust their leaders (Chapter 5, 5.2 - 5.3). Therefore, this is an issue that the policy-makers who design HR policies should think about. Because if the codes of conduct or other preventive measures available in organisations were effective, employees would have trusted their leaders and the system instead of leaving their job. Further, leaders wouldn't be treating their employees unethically and unfairly (Chapter 2, 2.3 - 2.3.2).

As per discussions presented in Chapter 2 (2.5), power, self-interest and trust are the main factors affecting leader and employee relationships. That is why in the Chapter 3 (3.2.9) it was suggested to pay special attention to attitudes and attributes of the interviewees in a broader sense (integrity, honesty, compassion, trust, courage, self-interest and power). None of these factors or attitudes and attributes was mentioned in the questions to test and see how often they will be raised by the interviewees or how important they are for the interviewees (Chapter 4, 4.6; table 4.1). During the sixteen interviews conducted in this study with fifteen questions each (average time of each interview forty-five minutes = total of twelve hours), the number of times that the main factors mentioned were power (twice), self-interest (nil) and trust (sixteen times) (see table 4.1).

Most of the time when there is unethical/unfair behaviour towards employees, leaders seem to feel they have power to exercise their practice (Mayer et al., 2012); otherwise their self-interest wouldn't allow them to abuse their power (Chapter 2, 2.5.1 - 2.5.2). Interestingly interviewees in twelve hours of interviews only mentioned power twice and didn't mention self-interest at all. Disregarding these two important factors was it because they didn't seem to be important to the interviewees? Or, perhaps the interviewees didn't think about these factors at that time or perhaps the interviewees were hesitant to refer to them? Ardman (2016) explains that it doesn't hurt humanity to admit self-interest as it just illustrates human nature.

On the other hand trust was mentioned sixteen times during the whole interview sessions (see table 4.1). Trust in leader–employee relationships is so important that it impacts on workplace interactions. However when trust is broken, it will leave leader and employees with damaged relationship and will negatively impact the workplace (Delgado, 2008). The importance of trust is so obvious that its demonstration in this study was no exception. Even though trust is regarded as a result of fairness, very little is known about the relationship between ethical and fair leadership and trust, and their impact on employees and workplaces (Chapter 2, 2.5.3).

## 5.6   Conclusion

This chapter analysed discussions presented by the interviewees in Chapter 4 (Results) and linked its discussions to the topics and arguments provided in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). This approach facilitated a deeper analysis of the themes identified in Chapter 3 (Methodology). This chapter, through its analysis aimed at providing answers to the research question and through its discussions, contributes to the leadership literature.

The analysis intended to contribute to the study's intention of closing the gap of little knowledge about the impact of unethical and unfair leadership practices on employees and workplaces. As such, 'ethics and fairness' were important topics to

be discussed with the interviewees. It emerged that there is a mistrust or discomfort among employees towards their leaders when they confront unethical or unfair behaviours or practices. These negative behaviours or practices impact on employees, workplace and the society.

The second theme was about leadership linked to SLT and FT. It emerged that there is a clear disconnect between theory and people's beliefs and practices. The interviews revealed that most of the leaders are unfamiliar with leadership literature and popular concepts. Similarly, while most interviewees strongly agreed with the new concept of cosmetic leadership, the interview responses made it clear that dealing with this type of leaders is an issue. Most of the interviewees provided a list of good leadership qualities expected from the leaders (5.3.2) and they believed that training can assist in overcoming the leadership issues. However, a considerable number of the interviewees believed that training cannot change the leaders' nature, which contradicted the literature.

In the theme 3 (employee and workplace), it was revealed that issue of mistrusting leaders cause employees to leave their job instead of trying to resolve the issues/conflicts. Also in this theme, it was noted that three interviewees by reaching Questions 10 changed their views for better support and treatment of employees. Therefore, if an average of forty-five minutes in an interview can change a person for the better, connection between theory and knowledge with practice in workplace could work wonders. Further, the discussions of this theme reaffirmed that workplaces/organisations are made of human beings/employees, and human beings like to be respected and valued.

The analysis of this study made it obvious that there is a gap in the literature investigating the complexities of leader–employee relationships when there are employees' words against their leaders' because of unethical and unfair treatments. When employees encounter unethical/unfair treatments, they often leave their job because they mistrust their leaders. This study revealed that codes of conduct and HR policies may not be as effective as previously thought. Because if the codes of conduct or other preventive measures were effective, employees wouldn't be

leaving their job in a conflict situation and leaders wouldn't be treating their employees unethically and unfairly.

This analysis demonstrated that trust is one of the main factors impacting leader and employee relationship. Despite the importance of trust, it is very little known about the relationship between ethical and fair leadership and trust, and their impact on employees and workplaces.

Finally, this chapter noted the importance of the research question of this study and highlighted the areas that need further investigation.

# Chapter 6
# Conclusion

## *Would this research better the leader and employee relationship?*

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."* — *John Quincy Adam*

*"No man will make great leader who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit for doing it."* — *Andrew Carnegie*

## 6 Issues, resolution, research question, limitations, contributions, findings and future research

## 6.1 Introduction

This study undertook a qualitative research approach and used literature review to investigate literature pertaining to the study's question. This study produced a methodology to operationalise its project. The methodology adopted a balanced approach between theory and practice. To address this study's question, the literature review facilitated possession of knowledge and understanding gained by previous researchers, while the interviews assisted in having the views of leaders and employees currently working in the workplace. The interview results were discussed in Chapter 4 and consequently they were analysed in Chapter 5.

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the dissertation. In doing so, the chapter will touch on the major issues and related issue resolution identified in this study. Section 6.4 of this chapter will look into the response to research question as the research question being the main objective of this study. Finally, the limitations of this study, contributions and what is identified for future research will be specified, and section 6.8 will conclude the chapter.

## 6.2   Issues

The literature review complemented by the research undertaken for this study enabled the author to obtain valuable information to address the study's question: *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* While the information gathered showed the importance of leader–employee relationships and leaders' behaviour and practices in the workplace, the author evidenced issues and gaps/shortfalls in the research literature.

As noted in the literature review, the research literature does not provide much detail about leaders' unethical and unfair practices. Little is known about fair/unfair leadership, broken trust or mistrust resulting from unethical and unfair leadership behaviour or practices. There is little attention paid in the leadership or social science studies to investigate the complexities of unethical and unfair treatments of employees or to provide answers on how employees should respond to these treatments. As such, in the research literature, unethical leadership is neglected.

Chapter 4 (Results) and Chapter 5 (Analysis) identified some considerable issues raised during the interviews. The research of this study revealed that there is a mistrust or discomfort among employees towards their leaders when employees face unethical and unfair treatment. These behaviours or practices create a negative impact not only on employees and workplaces, but also on the society.  Further, the research revealed that the issue of mistrust among employees towards their leaders cause employees to leave their job instead of trying to resolve the issues or rely on other avenues. For example seek support from HR, union, or seek help from external sources or any other option that may be available in their workplace.

Additionally, during the research, it emerged that there is a clear disconnect between theory and what leaders believe and practice. As discussed in the literature review, the philosophers have used theoretical ways to show right and wrong and how to act ethically. However, leaders' disconnect with leadership literature and theory is a major issue. Considering FT, employees can determine whether they have been treated fairly. Additionally, SLT suggests that leaders' behaviours and

practices may be transferred to their employees. Therefore, if leaders believe their unethical and unfair behaviour and practices are right, employees can determine leaders' unfair treatment (FT) and leave their job, or employees will adopt the wrong practice (SLT). Either way, the result is negative to both the workplace and society.

As per discussions in the Literature Review chapter the author saw it necessary to propose the new concept of cosmetic leadership in order to highlight some of the related leadership's unethical and unfair behaviours and practices. In doing so, this study looked at different circumstances (for example connection or technical expertise with inability to lead from the human point of view) that aid this type of leaders to become leaders and continue with their behaviours and practices. Consequently, the research of this study raised the issue of dealing with cosmetic leadership. While the new concept of cosmetic leadership was well-accepted by the interviewees, dealing with cosmetic leaders is viewed as an issue and negative. Cosmetic leaders' behaviour and practices were seen as unethical and unfair. Finally, in this study, trust was highlighted as one of the main factors impacting leader–employee relationships.

## 6.3    Issue resolution

The results of the literature review indicated that employees make organisations. The literature review also indicated that employees are human beings and like to be treated as human beings and compassionately, fairly and ethically, and they like to be respected and valued. Otherwise the trust in the leader–employee relationship will be damaged and the result of negative behaviours or practices will be transferred throughout the organisation. As suggested by SLT, values of leaders are transformed into organisational values. If leaders work toward building trustful relationships with subordinates, this translates throughout the entire organisation. Therefore, while ethical leadership develops a strong organisational culture, it contributes to strengthening the organisational trust (Trevion et al., 2003; Fukujama, 1995 and Lamsa & Pucetaite, 2006 cited in Bulatova, 2015, p.28). Thus, to improve leader–employee relationships and build trust among employees, leaders

should treat employees in a manner where employees are respected and valued, and treated ethically and fairly. When there is trust, employees feel emotional security and therefore they work better (increase work performance). So, if trust exists, when employees determine there is unethical or unfair treatments committed against them, instead of leaving their job, they will most probably try to discuss the issues with their leaders or seek support to resolve the issues. Resolving issues not only will benefit the individuals and workplace, but will also benefit the society.

Further, a connection between leadership literature and leaders' behaviour and practices will benefit leader–employee relationships and organisations. Similarly, this connection will be beneficial to cosmetic leaders as it will raise their level of knowledge and awareness in treating employees ethically and fairly from the human point of view. According to the research results, training can assist in overcoming the disconnection between the theory and leadership practices or issues related to cosmetic leaders' behaviours and practices. Thus, organisations should provide training to leaders. According to the SLT, leaders should practice the knowledge gained through training. So, the right behaviours and practices (ethical and fair) will be promoted among employees and hence in their workplace.

Finally, leaders should bear in mind that even though they might exercise their power and their version of self-interest to treat employees unethically and unfairly, their negative treatment of employees will benefit no individual, no workplace and no society. Leaders should take positive steps to eliminate any known or perceived unethical or unfair behaviours and practices. Further, leaders should intend to create a trustful and emotionally secure workplace where employees enjoy their work and have pride in what they do.

## 6.4    Response to research question

This study investigated the research question: *How do ethical and fair leadership practices impact on the workplace?* In doing so, in addition to reviewing relevant research literature, sixteen leaders/employees currently working in workplaces were interviewed through a series of questions. The results and analysis clearly showed

that ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices impact positively on employees. Hence, the impact on employees would equally impact on workplaces and society.

According to SLT, individuals learn by noticing others and FT suggests that employees can determine whether they have been treated fairly. When there is a disconnection between theory/research literature and leaders, then leaders mostly behave and practice based on what they believe. Therefore, leaders' behaviour and practices impact on employees/workplaces and, from there, to society, and this impact can be ethical and fair, or unethical and unfair.

While most organisations/workplaces have similar noble codes of conduct and HR policies, there is mistrust among the employees towards their leaders when the employees face unethical and unfair treatments. Further, this study confirmed that there are cosmetic leaders practising leadership in organisations. As such, when leaders ignore the codes of conduct and HR policies or, being cosmetic leaders, the employees view their leaders being unethical and unfair. Thus, the level of mistrust among the employees increase, which this often results in employees leaving the workplace.

Although all the questions asked in this study's interviews were designed to address the research question, one question was specifically asked to find out interviewees' views on how to treat employees to improve a workplace for the better. Interestingly, all the responses were favouring magnificent and honourable treatment of employees (Chapter 4, 4.4.6, Question 9). While the responses were favouring ethical and fair leadership behaviours and practices, the question remains, why is there mistrust among employees and why do they leave the workplace when there is a conflict?

According to SLT and FT discussed in the Literature Review chapter, these theories matched with the research of this study in terms of the impact of ethical and fair leadership practices on workplace is significant. Yet, considering that most of the Australian departments' headquarters including parliamentarians are based in

Canberra or ACT, the analysis of this study clearly shows the existence of cosmetic leadership on Australian organisations. The findings pointed out and explained by Murphy (2018) illustrated one of the causes of cosmetic leadership in Australian workplace. The results and analysis of this study demonstrate that employees have negative feelings about having their leaders as cosmetic leaders. While there is little known about unethical and unfair leadership, unethical leadership refers to leader dishonesty, corruption, egocentrism and falsification. Additionally, unfair leadership refers to unfair or unjust behaviour or actions meeting the conditions explained in fairness theories. Cosmetic leaders who come to leadership positions because of having connections or their technical skills do not have leadership skills to lead employees from a human point of view and often act based on selfishness to secure their position. While employees view cosmetic leaders as unethical and unfair, cosmetic leaders do not necessarily have all the attributes of unethical and unfair leaders. Cosmetic leaders possibly can improve their leadership behaviour and practices by undertaking leadership training, although they should be aware of their lack of leadership skills and be willing to undertake such training.

Considering the nature of cosmetic leadership, the author can eliminate the compatibility of this new concept with ethical leadership, spiritual leadership and authentic leadership styles. Further, cosmetic leaders cannot be viewed in the category of transformational leaders and servant leaders where these leaders in contrary to cosmetic leaders have the interest of employees in mind. Certainly, cosmetic leadership cannot meet the markers of responsible leadership, which are rooted in justice, not seeking glory for oneself, support people, ready for rejection for the sake of justice and open to criticism. Even though most of these popular leadership styles discussed in the Leadership Review chapter are regarded as ethical, they don't adequately address the concerns of unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices. Thus, the proposal of the new concept of cosmetic leadership highlights some of the reasons for leadership's unethical and unfair behaviours and practices that previously were not addressed by the leadership literature or were ignored by the policy-makers.

If cosmetic leaders exist in the Australian workplace, and if employees view cosmetic leaders as unethical and unfair, then how should employees trust their leaders to behave ethically and fairly? How should employees who want to be treated as human beings, respected and valued turn a blind eye to their leaders' unethical and unfair behaviour? Considering the large portion of employees' lives spent with others at work, when there is a conflict at the workplace, how should they go home happy or act happy in their social life?

The above questions are dilemmas for Australian employees and workplaces and for any country that adopts similar workplace policy/culture. These leadership dilemmas impact negatively on employees, workplace and society. To address these problems, new studies and research should encourage the policy-makers to acknowledge unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices. Further, the policy-makers should attempt to encourage and implement cultural changes aimed at informed, right, ethical and fair leadership practices.

## 6.5    Limitations

Ethics is hard to understand as specific behaviour or actions may be ethical to some and unethical to others, or ethical in some cultures and unethical in other cultures. This may impact on readers' views and understanding of the key message of the research question.

The research interviews were limited to the ACT environment. It may have been beneficial if there were enough resources available to aid a larger sample size beyond the ACT, supporting interviews in other countries/continents.

## 6.6    Contributions

This dissertation is one of those studies that contributed to leadership knowledge by facilitating a better understanding of unethical and unfair leadership behaviour and practices and the related impact on employees and workplaces. As such, this study pointed out both the positive and negative impacts of leaders' ethical/unethical and

fair/unfair behaviours on employees, workplace and society. Further, this study, as part of its findings, suggested a connection between leaders' beliefs and practice with leadership theory and literature for better leadership practice. This dissertation revealed the impact of mistrust and the importance of enhancing trust among employees towards their leaders.

By discussing ethical and fair leadership behaviour and practices and developing and proposing a new concept called cosmetic leadership, some leaders would be encouraged to look at the human side of the leader–employee relationship. The discussions of cosmetic leadership will encourage and initiate leaders' evaluation and improvement of their own behaviours and practices, which will not only benefit organisations but also benefit the society. Also, the discussion of cosmetic leadership will set the scene for future leadership studies in this area anticipating a positive contribution to both the leader–employee relationship and the leadership literature. Further, the author believes by discussing the impact of leadership unethical and unfair behaviour and practices, this study not only encourage the Australian policy-makers, but also encourage the policy-makers of other parts of the world to revisit the effectiveness of their guiding principles such as codes of conduct. Finally, this study supported the notion of respecting and valuing employees as human beings aimed at contributing to a good society of which people want to be a part of it.

## 6.7    Findings

This research revealed the following major findings:

- There is a mistrust or discomfort among employees towards their leaders when they confront unethical or unfair behaviours or practices. As a result, employees leave their job;
- There is a disconnect between theory/leadership literature and leaders' beliefs and practice;
- Training may not be capable of changing the nature of leaders. This belief contradicted the literature. However, by the end of interviews, three

interviewees changed their views toward a better support and treatment of employees;

- Codes of conduct, HR policies and other preventive measures may not be as effective as previously thought. Because, if they were effective, employees wouldn't be leaving their job in a conflict situation and leaders wouldn't be treating their employees unethically and unfairly; and

- Trust is one of the main factors impacting leader–employee relationships.

The author believes the findings of this dissertation would draw attention and pave the way for further consideration by leaders, policy-makers and leadership scholars. Thus, this consideration can positively impact leader–employee relationships and ultimately benefit workplaces and society.

## 6.8    Future research

During the literature review and research analysis of this study, some notable shortfalls and issues arose. In the author's view the following topics or questions may need further research:

- How should employees respond to the unethical and unfair leadership and how can they hold leaders accountable?

- If the codes of conduct and HR policies are effective, why do employees leave their job when there is a conflict?

- How to reduce cosmetic leadership in workplace?

- How to improve connections between leadership literature and leaders' beliefs and practice?

- What is the relationship between leadership behaviour and practices, and factors such as power, self-interest and trust?

- What is the impact of mistrust among employees towards their leaders on the society?

These studies will not only improve the leader–employee relationship, but will also have a great contribution to leadership literature. Practicing ethics and fairness may

be challenging for some leaders, but leaders' behaviour and practices go much beyond the leader–employee relationship as it impacts on families and societies. Therefore, the author believes the introduction of cosmetic leadership, complemented by highlights of the impacts of unethical and unfair leadership behaviours and practices would contribute to the improvement of leader–employee relationships. The future studies on these discussions (cosmetic leadership and ethical/unethical and fair/unfair leadership behaviours and practices), including addressing or studying each of the above-mentioned research questions, could positively contribute to the leadership literature and leadership theories as it may challenge some policy-makers and old views on leadership. The author believes that policy-makers should bear in mind that having a fair workplace cannot be only justified in rhetoric, but it needs to be supported and evidenced in action and reality. Although the research for this study was conducted in the ACT, the existence of unethical and unfair behaviour and practices is widespread in the country. Thus, further studies are needed to address the above issues.

## 6.9    Conclusion

This chapter concludes the dissertation. The author believes ethical behaviour and fairness are noble concepts. Even those who are unfair may not deny the value of ethical behaviour and fair treatment. Therefore, this dissertation has challenged the previous thoughts against employees when there was a conflict or mistreatment committed by their leaders. Despite the arguments related to ethics, the author agrees with the generally accepted view that human nature dictates people to be treated well and, certainly, treating employees well should be no exception. Finally, in the author's view, if this study could merely influence one leader for the better, it has achieved its objectives.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Interview Guide

Detailed information regarding this interview has been provided in the attached Participant Information Statement which it is expected participants will refer to it. The interview involves 15 questions that will take somewhere between 30 to 45 minutes. The questions are designed to provide a better understanding and assistance in addressing the research question of "How do ethical and fair leadership impact on workplace?". Therefore, your participation in this interview complemented by your views is highly valuable. As such, it will contribute in a better understanding the leader/employee relationship, its impact on workplace and leadership literature.

### Interview questions

1. What is your understanding of ethical behaviour and practices?

2. What is your understanding of fairness and fair treatment?

3. What leadership qualities are important to you?

4. In your view how should leaders treat the underperforming employees?

5. How should employees react when despite their well performance and dedication they have been treated unfairly by their leaders/supervisors?

6. When there is unethical and unfair treatment of employees by leadership often there is employees' word against their leaders. Often it seems the word of employees against a leader/s will not get employees too far. The perception could be that when leaders do/practice unethical and unfair behaviours or practices have fewer problems or explanations to do than employees when similarly commit unethical behaviours or practices. When there is a conflict, often employees are worried to lose their job or have unpleasant time among colleagues or in workplace if continue fighting unfair treatments. So, in your view what should employees do?

7. Have you been in a situation that you either considered your leader or your employees to be unethical and unfair? If 'yes' go to question 7.1.

    7.1 Did you show any reaction or did you do anything about the situation?

    Yes – go to question (a)

No – go to question (b)

(a) What did you do? What was the outcome?

(b) Why not?

8. In your understanding would leadership ethical/unethical and fair/unfair behaviours impact on employees?

9. Is it fair to say that employees make workplace or organisations? Then, how should leaders treat employees to improve workplace for the better?

10. In your view which one of the following points is more important than other?

(a) Tasks and meeting deadlines

(b) Employees, their concerns and needs

11. In your experience what makes to be a good leader or boss?

12. Is it fair to say that these types of leaders are Cosmetic Leaders as oppose to real and strong leaders?

*Note: Before answering the question 12 the interviewees will be provided with an explanation related to the new concept of Cosmetic Leadership.*

13. In your view is it fair to allow Cosmetic Leaders continue in their leadership role?

If 'Yes' what should employees do when they are reporting to Cosmetic Leaders?

If 'No' would the proper leadership trainings with proven acceptable leadership behaviours and practices help? What else do you think it will be helpful to Cosmetic Leaders?

14. Do you have any favourite leadership style?

15. Do you have any comment that you would like to add?