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Exploring the Impact of Communicative Leadership on Employee Engagement: The Mediated Moderated Effect of Employee Perceptions of Communication and Leaders' Intention to use ChatGPT

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Abstract

Employee engagement is recognized as an integral part of organizational vitality. Enhancing such engagement is a critical factor for any leader seeking to develop a positive work environment and performance within the organization. The study explores the intricate relationship between communicative leadership and employee engagement, with a focal mediating variable of how employees perceive communication. Building on the technology acceptance model (TAM), which emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use, the current study also evaluated the potential moderating impact of leader intention to use ChatGPT between communicative leadership and employee engagement, as well as between communicative leadership and employee's perception of communication. A survey distributed to public sector employees in Fiji Island yielded a response of 345 participants through cross-sectional and purposive sampling. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to determine the model fit. The findings of the study show that communicative leaders significantly enhance employee engagement through employee's perception of communication. This suggests that when employees perceived leader communication well, they are more likely to engage in collaborative decision-making and demonstrate greater mutual obligation and commitment in the organization. Additionally, by encouraging dialogues, communicative leaders establish a safe environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their voice ensuring they are listened to and valued. Based on TAM factors, the leader's intention to use ChatGPT partially moderates the relationship. This suggests that having perceived AI technology as user-friendly, leaders could leverage ChatGPT to streamline the flow of communication and provide a real-time solution. Finally, the current study offers both theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for research directions.

Keywords: *Communicative Leadership, Employee Engagement, Employee Perception of Communication, Chatgpt, Social Exchange Theory.*

Introduction

Employee engagement, a heartbeat of organizational vitality, encompasses emotional investment and enthusiasm toward their work, promoting a sense of purpose and connection. Employees with high engagement are catalysts for organizational success, competitive advantage, innovation, and substantiable growth (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Highly engaged employees are more inclined to exhibit passion in their work energetically connected with the organization's goals, and job, and develop emotional ties with the organization (Kahn, 1990; Bal et al., 2013). As such, employee engagement (hereafter EET) refers to emotional, cognitive, and physical attachment toward the organization. It hinges upon the integrity, trust, and value shared between employees and the organization, fostering a greater sense of commitment, and stimulating their well-being (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010; Johnson et al., 2018). Therefore, EET garners significant interest for compelling reasons: First, there is a growing body of research that suggests a strong positive link between EET and organization performance. Engaged employees are inclined to go the "extra mile" to achieve organizational goals, making them invaluable assets (Braine & Roodt, 2011; Shantz et al., 2013; Obuobisa-Darko, 2020). Understanding the factors that impact EET allows the organization to implement strategies to engagement level. Second, EET has been associated with several facets of employee well-being including job involvement, job satisfaction, and psychological health (Grant et al., 2007; Bakker and Schaufeli 2014: Vasantha & Manjunathan, 2014). High EET is associated with lower turnover and high talent retention (Schneider et al., 2009). Exploring the factors

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influencing EET can help cultivate a conducive workplace and increase stability within the organization. Third, the efficacy of leadership practice is pivotal in shaping the level of EET through support for the development and decision-making process within the organization (Kingir & Mesci, 2010; Parent & Lovelace, 2018). Examining the relationship between leaders' behavior and EET can identify the areas for improvement in terms of training and development initiatives for leaders and enhance managerial practice. This understanding is crucial for devising strategies that could foster an engaged workforce, retention, driving productivity, and long-term organizational success. This research argues the crucial role leaders play in fostering EET. Therefore, it is imperative to explore strategies that can strengthen EET within the organization toward sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) initiated by the United Nations provides a blueprint for achieving sustainable business development comprising seventeen distinctive objectives. These objectives are designed to establish partnerships and cooperation across sectors and countries for sustainable development (Gunasekaran et al., 2015). The objective is to promote organizations' alignment with the sustainable development goal, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice. To effectively push such an agenda, the organization's functional competencies need to be built on communication competencies. In accordance with the current SDGs framework, the current study highlights industry, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG09). The current study investigates how communicative leadership (hereafter CCL) can lead to long-term employee engagement.

Existing studies have discussed different leadership styles that influence EET. A group of researchers have examined the relationship between transformational leaders and EET. The findings revealed that high-quality relationships can boost the level of engagement and result in improved performance (Mauno et al., 2016; Gyensare et al., 2017; Obuobisa-Darko, 2020; Ancarani et al., 2021). Another study highlighted the significance of servant leadership and EET. The finding highlighted factors such as employee empowerment, team centered approach and leaders' proactive personality increases employee official responsibilities (Canavesi and Minelli, 2022). Malik et al. (2019) and Baquero, (2023) and explored that authentic leadership positively correlates with EET, highlighting its focus on building trust within the organization. Furthermore, Ancarani et al. (2021) noted an insignificant effect between laissez-faire and EET. Canvesi and colleagues demonstrated a significant relationship between servant leadership and EET. The finding of the study showed that when leaders value opinion, delegate responsibilities, and acknowledge their contributions with rewards, employees are inclined to embrace new challenges (Canavesi et al., 2022). Although many authors have highlighted the significant role of leadership style in fostering EET. Yet there remains more to understand in the mechanisms that can further foster EET, particularly with an emerging economy like Fiji Island. The primary purpose of this empirical study is to explore whether communicative leadership (CCL) can promote a high level of EET within the public sector. Additionally, this research seeks to analyze the mediating role of employee perception of communication on the relationship between CCL and EET, while simultaneously it also analyses the moderating role of a leader's intention to use ChatGPT between CCL and employee perception of communication (hereafter EPCOM), as well as between CCL and EET. As such, the present study will investigate the subsequent research questions:

RQ1. What is the impact of communicative leadership on employee engagement?

RQ2. What is the mediating role of an employee's perception of communication?

RQ3. What is the moderating role of a leader's intention to use ChatGPT?

From the social exchange theory (SET) perspective (Blau, 1964), when leaders actively initiate dialogues with employees by sharing valuable information and engaging them in decision-making, employees become energetically engaged in their work. This, in turn, positively improves organizational performance (Kahn, 1990; Nordblom & Hamrefors, 2007). Accordingly, CCL has been characterized by concepts such as "dialogue and feedback", "communication that satisfies different needs", and "co-ordination and synergy" (Hogstrom et al., 1999, p. 8). Where leaders establish a culture that cultivates an employee-friendly environment, yielding positive attitudes and behavior among them. Because SET posits a reciprocal

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connection, social interaction between leader and employee can lead to a win-win situation. According to Blau (1964), when a leader provides relevant resources, the employees tend to reciprocate by demonstrating commitment and engagement. When employees recognize the support and value of the leader, they are likely to contribute constructively toward their goals. Furthermore, the research also explores the mediating role of employee's perceptions of communication. Landsberg (2000) emphasized that effective communication from the leader involves disseminating information, that is clear, consistent, relevant, credible, tailored to meet employees' needs and expectations, and accurate and easily understandable (Ecklebe & L€offler, 2021; Mendy et al., 2020; Bickman & Francis, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023). Such communication fosters the perception among employees that leaders genuinely care about strengthening relationships with their employees (Lee and Li, 2020). Lee and Li (2020) further postulated that high-quality communication from leaders positively enhances the employee's perception of the leader's endeavor to cultivate a strong relationship between the leader and employees.

Additionally, the current study also explores how leaders' intention to use ChatGPT can moderate its impact on communication effectiveness. Despite growing popularity, there is limited literature on how leaders could integrate ChatGPT as a communication tool. ChatGPT an AI-driven conversational chatbot, is seen as a valuable technology due to its perceived usefulness and user-friendliness, which can streamline and enhance real-time communication (Kohnke et al., 2023). The technology acceptance model (Davis et al., 1989) provides a framework for understanding how users come to accept and adopt new technology. AI tools like ChatGPT can enhance leaders' communication by offering personalized support and timely response. This model is valued for its simplicity, empirical support, and applicability to various fields (Lee et al., 2003; Bouwman et al., 2005). As such, the emergence of ChatGPT has undoubtedly transformed the relationship between the user and the audience by lowering the cost of accessing information and accelerating the speed of retrieving information (Ai et al., 2023; Kasneciet al., 2023). Leaders who consider ChatGPT as a useful and user-friendly tool can leverage it to enhance communication style and positively influence employees. Integration of ChatGPT could assist leaders in providing a real-time solution that could enhance their communicative strategies in improving team dynamics. As a user-friendly technology, ChatGPT can supplement leaders' communicative behavior while simultaneously enhancing employee's perception of the leader's effort to establish high-quality relationships which are primary drivers of EET (Einwiller et al., 2021; Lee & Li. 2020; Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015; Hoon Song et al., 2014). When employees receive valuable information and communication from the leader, they will accurately interpret the leader's message and feel obliged to reciprocate through heightened engagement levels

In Figure 1, the findings illustrate that the association between CCL and EET can be enhanced through employees' perception of communication, and this can be strengthened by the intention to use ChatGPT.

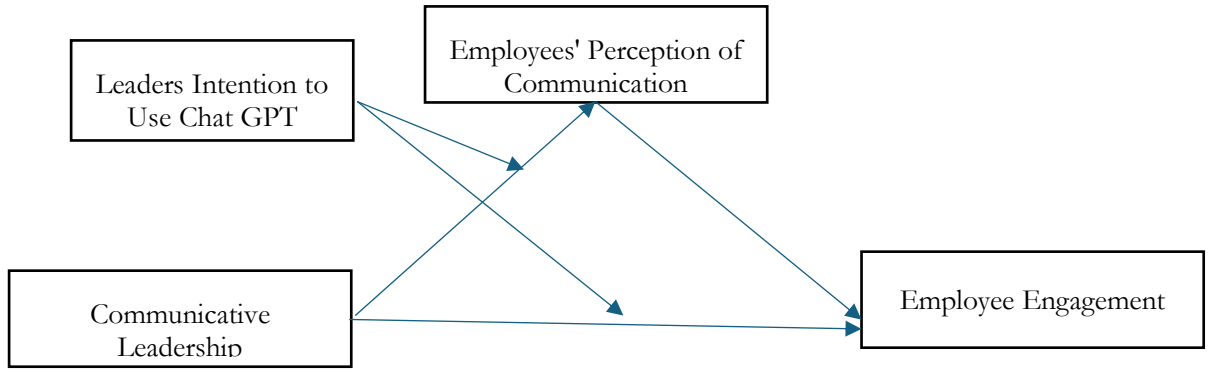

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

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To effectively engage employees in the future, the leaders must generate additional knowledge that could gain a competitive advantage and promote organizational growth. Finally, the current study offers both theoretical insight and practical implications.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Communicative Leadership and Employee Engagement

To thrive and expand, organizations worldwide strive to optimize the use of their diverse resources. However, human resources stand out to be the sole dynamic resource among all other active resources within the organization. This signifies that, unlike other available resources, human resources possess unique capabilities such as creativity and increased productivity. These qualities contribute to stronger organizational identification and EET (Sun et al., 2023). Engaged employees exhibit passion, and energy and are positively connected to their work. This is because, the concept of EET entails emotional participation, fostering emotional connection, alongside cognitive involvement including employees being fully informed about prevailing work conditions in their organization (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). Consequently, engaged employees exhibit passion, energy, and a positive connection to their work stems from their combination of emotional participation, which fosters an emotional connection, and their cognitive involvement, ensuring they are fully informed about prevailing work conditions in their organization. Therefore, it is imperative to explore the factors that can facilitate increased EET. We propose one such factor as CCL which could significantly enhance EET. Despite a clear definition, the concept of CCL invoked notions such as "dialogue and feedback", "communication that satisfies different needs", and "co-ordination and synergy" (Hogstrom et al., 1999, p. 8). While Eriksen and Weigard (1997), characterized CCL as accenting greater openness and fostering frequent dialogue with the employees. Therefore, social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) can be used as a theoretical framework to understand how CCL can enhance EET.

According to the tenet of SET (Blau, 1986), when employees perceive supportive organizational behavior, they feel compelled to reciprocate by contributing positively (Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015). Thus, this study aligns well with SET, indicating a positive connection between CCL and EET. Drawing on SET, it can be argued that communicative leaders convey significant messages to employees, indicating that their efforts are being valued, fostering a heightened sense of obligation and encouraging a high level of EET. As per Kahn (1990), employees are inclined to engage in their jobs when their leaders bridge the gap through "close-up communication" which entails knowledge sharing and involving them in decision-making. This fosters trust, better understanding, and a profound impact on employee's well-being, attitude, and performance (Nordblom & Hamrefors, 2007; Hogstrom et al., 1999). Likert, (1967) emphasized that involving employees in decision-making enhances their understanding of real issues thus boosting their commitment. Working on joint goals, employees become more collaborative. Based on the tenet of SET, Blau (1986), scholars have highlighted that when leaders and employees make decisions together, their reciprocal commitment to one another is heightened (Kanji, 2008; Miller & Monge, 1986).

Additionally, communicative leaders encourage dialogues and establish safe environments where employees feel encouraged to express their thoughts and experiences, ensuring they are listened to and valued (Benn et al., 2015b; Noah, 2008; Miller & Monge, 1986; Fairhurst, 2001). Providing a sense of purpose, identity, and direction can contribute to creating a healthy work environment and may positively affect EET. Therefore, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1. CCL is positively related to EET.

Communicative Leadership and Employees' Perception of Communication

A communicative leader fosters open communication by providing and soliciting feedback. They establish functional structures and procedures that empower employees to accomplish their tasks while exhibiting a willingness to adapt to change (Johansson et., 2014). Consequently, CCL facilitates dialogue, decision-making involvement, goal setting, performance evaluation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing

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(Nordblom & Hamrefors, 2007). In other words, effective communication fosters the belief that the leader genuinely cares about strengthening the relationship among employees (Lee & Li, 2020). Establishing a workplace atmosphere where employees feel valued, encouraged, and supported can foster a sense of mutual benefit leading to increased loyalty, productivity, and creativity. A study by Sun et al. (2023) emphasizes the significance of quality of communication increases employees' supportive behavior and contributes to a stronger sense of belongingness.

Based on the principle of SET (1964), frequent communication between leaders and employees promotes greater social exchange, a process portrayed by ongoing interaction that builds obligation, trust, and appreciation (Blau 1964; Emerson 1976; Ruck & Welch 2012). Studies have shown that CCL influences employees' values, trust, control mutuality satisfaction, and commitment (Rothenberg 2003; Ryynanen, et at., 2012). As such, symmetrical communication between leader and employee can enhance employee relational satisfaction and foster better understanding among employees. Moreover, communicative leaders play a pivotal role in facilitating interaction between the leader and the employees, cultivating social relationships based on significance and values. As a result, this nurtures employee attitude and increases productivity (Cropanzano & Mitchell 2005; Kumar et al., 2021). Such sharing of information is consistent with social exchange theory, where employees cognitively filter information into positive or negative actions. When perceiving conversations from leaders are relevant, well presented, consistent, credible, accurate and reliable, tailored to employee's needs (Ecklebe & L€offler, 2021; Mendy et al., 2020; Bickman & Francis, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023), they feel valued and empowered, encouraging them to actively participate towards addressing the needs and concerns of the team. Based on this, we hypothesized the following:

H2. CCL is positively related to EPCOM.

Employee Perception of Communication and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a significant focus area for leaders seeking to retain talent and enhance productivity. Central to EET lies effective communication, which holds a critical role in shaping employees' attitudes and perceptions toward their work environment. According to Hui et al. (2007), open and transparent communication positively impacts employee's perception of trust and fairness, contributing to an enhanced level of engagement. When employees perceive transparent communication and feel that their opinions are acknowledged and valued, they are more likely to engage in their tasks and exhibit commitment toward organizational goals. Similarly, having perceived quality interaction, employees develop a sense of belongingness and identification with the organization, resulting in increased motivation and engagement (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kumar et al., 2021).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that employees engage in relationships based on the principles of reciprocation, they reciprocate for the favorable treatment they receive from each other. The mutual exchange of behavior establishes social balance within the group. In the context of the workplace, employees perceive that their leaders invest in effective communication practices and value feedback, they reciprocate by engaging in discretionary behavior (Kumar et al., 2021). Researchers have also highlighted that when employees evaluate the messages from leaders to be complete, easy to understand, and from reputational sources, they develop an appropriate attitude that is required for improving performance (Avery & Kim, 2009; Avery, 2010; Kingir & Mesci, 2010). Subsequently, the leader instills confidence in the employees, they come to believe in the leader's dependability, competence, and integrity (Hon & Grunig, 1999). Therefore, drawing from the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. EPCOM will have a positive correlation with EET.

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The Mediating Role of Employees Perception of Communication

In the contemporary organizational landscape, the effectiveness and relevance of CCL behavior are crucial in fostering EET. CCL is perceived as a dynamic and circular interaction where both employee and leader actively participate in making sense of conversation (Kramer & Crespy, 2011; Barge & Hirokawa, 1989). Leaders who frequently engage in communication are perceived as inviting and nurturing connections that establish collaboration, and empowerment, and satisfy the needs of the employee (Barge, 2004; Skiba & Wildman, 2019). Providing timely, relevant, understandable, and complete information fosters employees' acceptance of the leader's decisions influencing various facets of EET, including discretionary effort, satisfaction, and commitment (Lee & Li, 2020; Ecklebe & L€offler, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Einwiller et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023). This suggests that an employee's perception of communication serves as a mechanism by which the benefits of CCL are transmitted to EET.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) offers a theoretical framework through which the mediating role of an employee's perception of communication could be understood within the organizational context. Drawing from Blau's seminal work in 1964, when a leader shares valuable resources, employees often feel a sense of obligation to repay them (Shore, 2006; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Based on this finding, we argue that leaders who engage effectively can pave the way for creating opportunities for employees, consequently developing a culture of trust within the organization. Scholars have also emphasized that employees' level of trust increases when they perceive high-quality communication, developing high organizational identification (Lee & Li, 2020; Sun et al., 2023; Woo & Kim, 2019). On the contrary, social exchange also suggests that when employees perceive an imbalance when they feel that leaders are not fulfilling their obligations. This happens when leaders withhold critical information confronting the organization or fail to address the issues, leading to decreased morale and trust within the organization (Barge, 2004). To maintain the balance, communicative leaders should effectively use networking to collect and disseminate valuable information, foster a positive climate, facilitate meaning-making, and provide direction. This approach fosters robust social exchange relationships, which is crucial for better performance and enhanced engagement levels (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Kingir & Mesci, 2010; Sun et al., 2023; Tao et al., 2022; Men et al., 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H4. EPCOM will Mediate the relationship between CCL and EET.

The Moderating Role of a leader's intention to use ChatGPT

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, where technology is at the forefront of innovation, the role of communication in fostering a productive and engaged workforce has become increasingly critical. As such, the interaction of leaders and technology holds ever-growing importance and among the arrays of leadership styles, communicative leadership (CCL) distinguishes itself through transparent, open, and inclusive communication, which encourages them to work towards more outcome-oriented (Mone & London, 2018). The advent of artificial intelligence (AI), exemplified by ChatGPT, has introduced new opportunities for improving workplace communication and collaboration. The current study employee technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) factor to explain the moderating role of leaders' intention to use ChatGPT between communicative leadership and employees' perception of communication. According to TAM, leaders' intentions to use technology are influenced by their perception of usefulness and its perceived ease of use to explain technology usage behavior.

Perceived use (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU) are two different user behaviors. PU is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance their job performance". In the organizational context, perceived usefulness can lead to improvement in both financial and non-financial benefits either directly or indirectly. If leaders have a strong intention to use ChatGPT, it could enhance the way communicative leaders could impact the employees' perception of communication. For instance, if leaders effectively commit to using ChatGPT, employees might perceive communication more favorable as it helps meet their goal-driven needs (Huh, 2023: Kutela et al.,2023; Biswas, 2023). Due to perceived usefulness, scholars have highlighted that users find ChatGPT capable of generating in-depth knowledge, unbiased decision-making reports, and accurate and detailed responses enabling organizations

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to be more informed (Elbanna & Armstrong, 2023; Kundalia, 2023). If leaders perceive ChatGPT as useful and contribute to better performance, they are likely to develop trust and continue using ChatGPT (Fernandes & Oliveira, 2021; Gansser & Reich, 2021; Pitardi & Marriott, 2021). This suggests that by utilizing ChatGPT, leaders can effectively identify cumbersome and ineffective communication within a managerial system and streamline administrative operations.

Perceive ease of use (PEU) has been described as "the extent to which a person perceives that using technology would require minimal effort" (Venktatesh and Davis, 2000). Drawing on the technology acceptance model, the perceived ease of use of ChatGPT as a communication tool can help shape employee's receptiveness to communicative leaders and enhance their engagement. Researchers have highlighted that easy access to required information has emerged as a driving factor in users' intention to use ChatGPT (Wijesundara and Xixiang, 2018; Alsaleh et al., 2019; Alshurideh, 2019). This growing trend demonstrates how the leader's intention to use ChatGPT could enhance easy access to information and promote positivity and transparent communication. As such, this will instill trust and eliminate any element of mistrust. Similarly, Neely and Mosley, (2018) Leaders' intention to leverage these AI-powered tools may influence employees' perceptions of the communication process, potentially impacting their overall engagement and commitment to the organization. Creating an environment where employees are valued, empowered, provided with real-time information, and immediate response, and manage to-do lists, has the potential to bring unprecedented improvements (Shrivastava et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Cotton et al., 2023; Kushwaha et al., 2021; Biswas, 2023). Another research highlighted that when leaders are inundated with a large amount of information, ChatGPT can assist in streamlining communication to help employees better comprehend and facilitate interaction and engagement with the organization (Kim et al., 2011; Huang & Rust, 2018: Wirtz et al., 2018). A finding of a systematic review of 25 studies revealed that the perceived ease of use of AI-integrated technology can help the willingness to communicate better because of its unique functionality and keeps the flow of communication (Huang et al., 2021; Grudin & Jacques, 2019). Having perceived effective communication increases employees' compassion, social support, and trust, instilling a sense of pride and obligation to reciprocate higher levels of discretionary behavior and engagement (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Tao et al., 2022; Men et al., 2022). Therefore, based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5. Perceived usefulness of ChatGPT will moderate the relationship between CCL and EET

H6. Perceived ease of use of ChatGPT will moderate the relationship between CCL and EPCOM.

Method

Participation and Procedure

This study examines the research paradigm of positivism. Positivism aligns well with the hypothetical deductive model of scientific study, which includes formulating hypotheses, experimental designs and rigorously testing hypotheses to systematically redefine knowledge. The current study adheres to a positivist approach by utilizing the quantitative method and concentrating on big sample sizes to obtain empirical results. To examine the hypothesis, data comprising 345 was collected through a combination of random and purposive sampling. The data was gathered from educators within the Ministry of Education in Fiji through cross-sectional and self-reported questionnaires. To evaluate communicative leadership, employee engagement, and employees' perception of communication, random sampling was used to include academic staff in primary and secondary schools around Fiji Island. In evaluating a leader's intention to use ChatGPT, the research utilized purposive sampling to identify and select the sample, who were prepared to share information based on their experience (Adabre et al., 2021). The respondents included: the head of school, assistant head of school, and head of departments. The study reported no missing data. The retrieved data from fieldwork was entered into SPPS and eventually transferred to AMOS. To build a robust research model, the statistical significance of all constructs was thoroughly assessed. The p-value was set at 0.5, indicating that there is a 95% likelihood that the mean population lies within the specified range of values. The study included age, occupational experience, and salary scale as a control variable (see Table 1). Gender

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was coded as a dummy variable (0 = male, 1 = female). Males added up to 43.9% of the participants while 56.1% were females.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Age	**20-25**	**26-30**	**31-35**	**36-40**	**41 years and over**
	15.4%	36.3%	20.8%	7.3%	20.2%
Occupational experience	1-7 years	8-15 years	16-23 years	24-31 years	32 years and over
	19.2%	40.1%	15.0	3.9%	21.8%
Salary scale	FJD ≤ 10,000	FJD 10,000-20,000	FJD 20,000-30,000	FJD 30.000-40,000	FJD 40,000 and over
	4.0%	29.2%	57.0%	1.1%	8.7%

Measures

The respondent voluntarily answered the questionnaire consisting of multiple items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). CCL was evaluated through a self-completed questionnaire. The instrument consists of twenty items as suggested by Bornman and Puth, (2017). The items were modified to suit the current studies. The sample items for this scale are "Our leaders expect high-performance standards of followers" and "Our leaders communicate well in a group situation" with Cronbach's α of 0.97. EET consisting of six-item scales was adapted from Barrick et al. (2015). The sample items included "I feel a sense of commitment to this organization" and "I feel inspired to go the extra mile to help this organization succeed" with a Cronbach's α of 0.95. The assessment of EPCOM consists of five items drawn from previous research known to be suitable for the evaluation of this construct (Rawlins, 2008; Avery & Kim, 2009; Einwiller et al., 2021; Appelman & Sundar, 2016). The sample item for the study includes "relevance" and "well presented," which had an acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach's α of 0.85. We used the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 1996) to measure leaders' intention to use ChatGPT. Technology was measured using two constructs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use with each construct evaluated through four items. These items were specifically designed to be administered to the leaders only. Among these items were "I intend to use ChatGPT application for my work in the future" and "Chat GPT applications make my work more interesting" exhibiting another acceptable internal reliability with Cronbach's α of 0.89 and 0.92.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The validation procedure and process were used to scrutinize the validity and reliability of four variables. SPSS 27.0 version was used to carry out descriptive analysis. Similarly, analysis of moment structure (AMOS 27.0) version software was used to construct SEM through structural and measurement models. The model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ascertain the relationship between CCL, EET, EPCOM, and leaders' intention to use ChatGPT, as well as validation of the research data's validity and reliability. To establish Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the four variables was first computed (see Table 5). For this study, the reliability coefficient was ranging from 0.85 to 0.97, demonstrating excellent reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed both discriminant and convergent validity. Following the recommendation of Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity and average variance extracted (AVE) were evaluated and found to exceed the squared correlation between the construct (Table 5). The finding of this study indicates that each measurement construct is suitable for investigation (Cheung & Lau, 2008). The proposed research model aligns well with observed data and was evaluated using structural equation modeling (SEM). Various indices were used to evaluate the goodness of fit, which included root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), chi-square (x^2), root mean residual (RMR), incremental fit index (IFI), Comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis (TLI) (Anderson &

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Gerbing, 1988). Hu and Bentler (1999) proposed the threshold value of these indices; TLI, CFI, and IFI to be ≥ 90, whereas RMSEA should be in the range of 0.05 and 0.08. The findings of the study are presented in Table 2. The conditional process (Hayes, 2018) was employed to evaluate the mediation effect of EPCOM.

Table 2 The Model Fit

x^2	df	RMSEA	RMR	TLI	IFI	CFI	NFI
406.329	193	0.060	0.034	0.941	0.948	0.948	0.931

Common Method Bias (CMB)

The issue of common method bias (CMB) is prevalent in behavioral research, and this poses challenges, especially when solely relying on one type of data collection method (Podsakoff et al., 2012). However, this potential threat can be alleviated through statistical tools as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2012). To address these issues, the predictor variable was isolated from other observable variables, and careful attention was given to crafting the wording of individual items. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to eliminate CMB. Bagozzi, et. (1991) suggested that the existence of CMB is demonstrated by a correlation exceeding 0.90 between the focal constructs. The finding of the study revealed a correlation of 0.72 between the measured constructs as shown in Table 3. Furthermore, Table 3 serves to further validate the discriminant validity. The proposed research measurements standardized regression weight was evaluated using a common latent factor (CFL) with little variance. The statistical analysis showed no risk of common method bias. The measured construct was reliable with Cronbach alpha greater than 0.8. As suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), both composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the threshold values of 0.5 and 0.7. The findings show that the values of AVE exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5, ranging from 0.63 to 0.73 (refer to Table 5). Additionally, Table 5 shows the mean, standard deviation, intercorrelation of observed variables, and factor loading.

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of Variables for the Study

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	2.80	1.35	1								
2. Gender	2.00	1.01	0.019	1							
3. Ocp exp	2.07	1.41	0.747**	0.143**	1						
4. Salary	2.81	0.88	0.257**	-0.031	0.307**	1					
5. CCL	3.79	0.66	0.007	-0.075*	0.018	-0.001	1				
6. EET	3.74	0.82	0.029	0.044	0.058	0.000	0.602**	1			
7. EPCOM	3.35	0.80	0.011	-0.176**	-0.037	0.093**	0.472**	0.310**	1		
8. PU	3.77	0.66	0.038	0.078*	0.110**	-0.017	0.694**	0.569**	0.357**	1	
9. PEU	3.67	0.64	0.048	0.067	0.124	-0.018	0.721**	0.657**	0.427**	0.489	1
Discriminant validity							0.849	0.851	0.842	0.805	0.807

Note: *p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

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Communicative leadership (CCL), Employee engagement (EET), Employee perception of communication (EPCOM), and Perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived ease of use (PEU).

Table 4 Matrix of Cross Loading

Item	CCL	EET	EPCOM	PU	PEU
CCL	0.796**	0.516**	0.647**	0.581**	0.572**
CCL	0.830**	0.591**	0.603**	0.614**	0.514**
CCL	0.818**	0.649**	0.622**	0.571**	0.563**
CCL	0.815**	0.577**	0.507**	0.571**	0.544**
CCL	0.795**	0.547**	0.573**	0.529**	0.531**
CCL	0.766**	0.591**	0.559**	0.528**	0.522**
CCL	0.764**	0.598**	0.567**	0.541**	0.530**
CCL	0.743**	0.559**	0.543**	0.557**	0.541**
CCL	0.726**	0.504**	0.510**	0.553**	0.533**
CCL	0.709**	0.513**	0.514**	0.583**	0.555**
CCL	0.700**	0.566**	0.522**	0.526**	0.531**
CCL	0.754**	0.542**	0.595**	0.564**	0.551**
EET	0.514**	0.803**	0.542**	0.513**	0.521**
EET	0.539**	0.823**	0.579**	0.549**	0.532**
EET	0.565**	0.836**	0.590**	0.515**	0.505**
EET	0.558**	0.816**	0.573**	0.512**	0.516**
EET	0.589**	0.816**	0.538**	0.524**	0.552**
EPCOM	0.573**	0.501**	0.723**	0.558**	0.539**
EPCOM	0.566**	0.514**	0.812**	0.328**	0.482**
EPCOM	0.501**	0.527**	0.812**	0.652**	0.553**
EPCOM	0.657**	0.507**	0.815**	0.467**	0.512**
PU	0.627**	0.535**	0.536**	0.815**	0.421**
PU	0.586**	0.518**	0.596**	0.818**	0.512**
PU	0.551**	0.563**	0.563**	0.819**	0.444**
PU	0.578**	0.549**	0.525**	0.747**	0.517**
PEU	0.588**	0.517**	0.543**	0.423**	0.812**
PEU	0.527**	0.613**	0.551**	0.431**	.0825**
PEU	0.612**	0.622**	0.594**	0.467**	0.811**
PEU	0.621**	0.514**	0.561**	0.502**	0.815**

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Communicative leadership (CCL), Employee engagement (EET), Employee perception of communication (EPCOM), and Perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived ease of use (PEU).

Table 5 Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Item	Mean	SD	Item total correlation	Loading	Error	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
CCL 1	3.83	0.844	0.754**	0.748	0.025	0.97	0.92	0.73
CCL 2	3.79	0.838	0.783**	0.708	0.020			
CCL 3	3.75	0.847	0.765**	0.713	0.024			
CCL 4	3.77	0.823	0.747**	0.713	0.011			
CCL 5	3.69	0.840	0.728**	0.743	0.010			
CCL 6	3.61	0.928	0.722**	0.782	0.012			
CCL 7	3.76	0.889	0.706**	0.703	0.017			
CCL 8	3.75	0.913	0.704**	0.743	0.026			

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CCL 9	4.00	0.798	0.772**	0.754	0.028			
CCL 10	3.83	0.891	0.773**	0.704	0.027			
CCL 11	3.91	0.803	0.772**	0.779	0.017			
CCL 12	3.72	0.946	0.796**	0.771	0.015			
EET 1	3.81	0.879	0.773**	0.819	0.021			
EET 2	3.74	0.914	0.707**	0.813	0.028			
EET 3	3.72	0.928	0.720**	0.817	0.028	0.95	0.91	0.71
EET 4	3.67	0.882	0.706**	0.817	0.020			
EET 5	3.74	0.879	0.739**	0.814	0.028			
EPCOM 1	2.89	0.888	0.604**	0.732	0.021			
EPCOM 2	3.52	0.952	0.681**	0.769	0.023	0.85	0.82	0.65
EPCOM 3	3.57	0.941	0.607**	0.767	0.028			
EPCOM 4	3.42	0.912	0.685**	0.781	0.021			
PU 1	3.74	0.843	0.750**	0.706	0.029			
PU 2	3.83	0.755	0.703**	0.724	0.021	0.89	0.82	0.63
PU 3	3.78	0.804	0.795**	0.762	0.022			
PU 4	3.69	0.811	0.751**	0.745	0.019			
PEU 1	3.80	0.737	0.752**	0.729	0.019			
PEU 2	3.71	0.831	0.740**	0.704	0.021	0.92	0.90	0.69
PEU 3	3.79	0.801	0.701**	0.716	0.020			
PEU 4	3.81	0.802	0.755**	0.743	0.019			

Communicative leadership (CCL), Employee engagement (EET), Employee perception of communication (EPCOM), and Perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived ease of use (PEU).

First, CCL was hypothesized to correlate positively with EET. The findings of the analysis (see Table 6) show that CCL is positively correlated with EET ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < 0.001$), supporting *H1*. Second, the findings ($\beta = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$), also confirm full support for *H2*, showing a positive correlation between CCL and EPCOM (Table 6). Third, as anticipated, EPCOM will positively correlate to EET. The findings ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$), fully support *H3* (Table 6). Fourth, it was further hypothesized that EPCOM will strengthen the relationship between CCL and EET. The subsequent outcome indicates that EPCOM partially mediates the relationship between CCL and EET with a direct effect of ($\beta = 0.519$, $p < 0.001$), the indirect effect of ($\beta = 0.226$, $p < 0.001$), and total effect of ($\beta = 0.746$, $p < 0.001$), supporting *H4* (Table 6).

Table 6 Mediation of EPCOM between CCL and EET

Parameter	Dependent	R^2	F	P	Coefficient	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	EPCOM	0.282	17.923	0.000	1.120	0.105	7.105	0.914	1.329
CCL					0.697***	0.027	12.105	0.276	0.823
Constant	EET	0.635	44.635	0.000	0.519***	0.139	3.427	0.430	0.609
CCL					0.519***	0.045	10.526	0.430	0.609
EPCOM					0.324***	0.047	10.526	0.238	0.409
Direct effect of X to Y									
					0.519***	0.271	10.525	0.430	0.609
The indirect effect of X to Y									
					0.226***	0.037		0.153	0.298
The total effect of X to Y									
					0.746***	0.251	11.263	0.677	0.815

Communicative leadership (CCL), Employee engagement (EET), Employee perception of communication (EPCOM).

Table 7 Moderating effect of PU and PEU

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Parameter	Dependent	R^2	F	P	Coefficient	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	EPCOM	0.460	21.232	0.000	2.283	0.215	10.570	2.065	3.641
CCL					0.229***	0.106	6.599	0.021	0.437
PU					-0.463***	0.107	-4.296	-0.674	-0.252
CCL*PU					0.123***	0.027	5.225	0.069	0.176

Conditional effect of focal predictor at the value of the moderator

PU	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	UCLI
3.000	0.598	0.036	7.674	0.525	0.671
4.000	0.721	0.032	7.009	0.659	0.783
4.160	0.741	0.033	7.097	0.674	0.805

Constant	EET	0.641	41.636	0.000	1.004	0.514	1.952	-0.005	2.014
CCL					.330	0.132	0.132	0.070	0.589
EPCOM					.314	0.044	0.044	0.227	0.401
PU					-.075	0.135	0.135	-0.340	-0.190
CCL*PU					.040	0.034	0.034	-0.026	0.107

Conditional direct effect of X on Y

PEU	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	UCLI
3.000	0.450	0.052	8.516	0.346	0.554
4.000	0.490	0.050	9.724	0.391	0.589
4.160	0.497	0.052	9.530	0.395	0.599

Index of moderated mediation

	Index	SE	LLCI	ULCI
PU	0.038	0.017	0.010	0.180

Constant	EPCOM	0.257	21.000	0.000	3.592	0.684	5.250	2.249	4.935
CCL					-0.046	0.173	-0.267	-0.386	0.294
PEU					-0.624	0.180	-3.465	-0.977	-0.271
CCL*PEU					0.118	0.045	4.1922	0.100	0.276

Conditional effect of focal predictor at the value of the moderator

PEU	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	UCLI
3.125	0.547	0.041	13.020	0.460	0.623
3.625	0.635	0.029	21.796	0.578	0.693
4.250	0.7533	0.342	22.051	0.683	0.820

Constant	EET	0.406	61.521	0.000	2.118	0.872	2.427	0.405	3.831
CCL					0.133	0.217	0.610	-0.294	0.559
EPCOM					0.313	0.044	7.026	0.225	0.400
PEU					-0.412	0.227	-1.811	-0.858	-0.034
CCL*PEU					0.104	0.056	1.823	0.108	0.215

Conditional direct effect of X on Y

PEU	Effect	SE	t	LLCI	UCLI
3.125	0.456	0.057	7.949	0.344	0.567
3.625	0.508	0.046	11.001	0.418	0.599

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		4.250	0.574	0.373	10.543	0.466	0.680		
Index of moderated mediation									
				Index	**SE**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**		
			PEU	0.058	0.019	0.0238	0.199		
Constant	EPCOM	0.473	142.533	0.000	4.4491	0.737	6.035	3.002	5.896
CCL					-0.2476	0.185	-1.341	-0.609	0.114
PU					-0.3389	0.109	-3.083	-0.554	-0.123
CCL*PU					0.0852	0.028	3.039	0.030	0.140
PEU					-0.5300	0.183	-2.898	-0.889	-0.171
CCL*PEU					0.1596	0.046	3.462	0.069	0.250
Constant	EET	0.411	92.042	0.000	2.156	0.947	2.277	0.297	4.015
CCL					0.066	0.023	0.286	-0.389	0.522
EPCOM					0.310	0.044	6.946	0.222	0.397
PU					-0.057	0.138	-0.416	-0.330	0.214
CCL*PU					0.035	0.034	0.992	-0.034	0.104
PEU					-0.327	0.231	-1.418	-0.781	0.126
CCL*PEU					0.076	0.058	0.310	-0.038	0.191
Index of partial moderated mediation									
				Index	**SE**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**		
			PU	0.026	0.016	0.002	0.166		
			PEU	0.049	0.020	0.009	0.187		

Communicative leadership (CCL), Employee engagement (EET), Employee perception of communication (EPCOM), and Perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived ease of use (PEU).

Fifth, the study further examined the moderating role of a leader's intention to use ChatGPT based on perceived usefulness (PU) between CCL and EET and CCL and EPCOM. The findings showed that the conditional indirect effect of the value of moderator increased from low effect ($\beta = 0.450$, $p < 0.001$) to high ($\beta = 0.497$, $p < 0.001$) supporting *H5*, (refer Table 8).

$$\beta = 0.450, SE = 0.052, 95\% CI = (0.346, 0.554)$$

$$\beta = 0.490, SE = 0.050, 95\% CI = (0.391, 0.589)$$

$$\beta = 0.497, SE = 0.052, 95\% CI = (0.395, 0.599)$$

Finally, the study also investigated the moderating role of a leader's intention to use ChatGPT based on perceived ease of use (PEA) between CCL and EET and CCL and EPCOM. The findings showed that the conditional indirect effect of the value of moderator increased from low effect ($\beta = 0.456p < 0.001$) to high ($\beta = 0.574$, $p < 0.001$) supporting *H6*, (refer to Table 8).

$$\beta = 0.456, SE = 0.020, 95\% CI = (0.344, 0.567)$$

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$\beta = 0.508$, SE = 0.024, 95% CI = (0.418, 0.599)

$\beta = 0.574$, SE = 0.025, 95% CI = (0.466, 0.680)

The Index of moderated mediation confirms the partially moderated mediating role of the leader's intention to use ChatGPT based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use to be significant at all levels of the moderator and becomes more significant at high levels of PU and PEA (Table 8).

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to explore how CCL can foster greater EET by promoting a culture where employees are encouraged to actively contribute ideas and energy. Hence, this confirms *H1* and suggests that when leaders are approachable and open to sharing information and listening to suggestions, this can create a highly dedicated, enthusiastic, and engaged workforce (Redding, 1972; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Chen, 2017). This study also examines the mediation effect of employee's perception of communication in the relationship between CCL and EET. Moreover, consistent communications from leaders can foster greater trust among employees and high identification with the organization **(**Sun et al., 2023; Kim & Woo, 2019), confirming *H2*. While having transparent communication from the leader, employees are engaged in work resulting in higher efficiency, innovation, and better work performance (Parent & Lovelace, 2018), further supporting *H3*. Previous research indicated that leadership is developed through interaction and communication. When relevant, reliable, and understandable information is provided, employees can achieve optimum performance by dedicating their heart, mind, and soul to the work (Barge & Hirokawa, 1989; Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Hogan et al., 2018), supporting *H4*. Finally, the study also evaluated the two TAM factors, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as a moderating role to determine the role of the leader's intention to use ChatGPT between CCL and EET, as well as CCL and EPCOM. The Findings supported *H5 and H6*. This approach offers a creative way of organizing information, allowing employees to quickly understand and analyze the problems from different perspectives. Previous research has suggested that the technology acceptance model (TAM) can serve as an effective tool for improving communication in the organization. For instance, providing innovative ways of knowledge transmission, quick solutions for complex issues through ChatGPT, making it valuable for employees to comprehend (Hu, 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2022).

Theoretical Contribution

Effective communication is an essential component of a successful leader in fostering a positive work environment. This study attempts to empirically confirm the relationship between CCL and EET by considering EPCOM as a mediating variable. Moreover, the current study also introduces TAM factors of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as a mediated moderated variable to evaluate leaders' intention to use ChatGPT within the theoretical framework which significantly contributes to understanding leadership style. Furthermore, the current study provides a strong theoretical foundation by incorporating social exchange theory and the technology acceptance model (TAM) to confirm the above relationship. As such, this study contributes to extant literature in several ways. First, no research has conclusively determined the relationship between CCL and EET through EPCOM by validating social exchange theory (SET). According to SET, employees establish commitments when they are engaged in several interrelated actions When an individual shares cherished resources with counterparts, this generates a reciprocal effect from recipients (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). For instance, Johansson et al. (2014) confirmed that communicative leaders facilitate work structures, are approachable, encourage self-manage, address employees' concerns, and assist in problem-solving. These approaches instill trust, and confidence and urge employees to work at the highest level of ability with a focus on outcomes. Second, the finding confirms the partial moderation mediation role of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of

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use in evaluating leaders' intention to use ChatGPT. Based on the technology acceptance model (Davies, 1989), perceived usefulness and ease of use are key factors in determining leaders' intention to use Chat GPT. By leveraging interface, leaders can effectively address issues concerning employees promptly through personalized advice, responses on demand, tailor-made answers to queries, and stories and reports on a range of topics that are well-understood by non-experts (Sifat, 2023; Huh, 2023; Kutela et al., 2023; Kundalia, 2023). Similarly, Javaid and colleagues (2023) postulated that the perceived ease of an AI-generated tool such as ChatGPT can provide a tenfold increase in accessible knowledge, presented in a digestible manner replacing the traditional method of knowledge accumulation and acquisitions (Javaid et al., 2023). Finally, Leaders' intention to use ChatGPT can enhance trust and boost overall engagement and performance, ultimately helping employees to achieve organizational objectives and goals more effectively.

Practical Implication

The current study demonstrates some practical implications for leaders in the public sector, specifically in the Fijian context. First, with the ongoing transformation of the public sector in Fiji, continuous communication from leaders is imperative to engage employees in dialogue, decision-making, sharing and seeking feedback, and being open and involved in maintaining a competitive edge. For instance, Hamrin and colleagues highlighted that communicative leader, being proficient communicators, attain better results compared to other leadership styles Hamrin et al., (2016). Researchers have identified Volvo as an organization that intensively invests in training programs aimed at fostering a leader's communicative skills. Consequently, having perceived valuable information, employees are cognizant of their responsibilities, motivate peers, foster trust, and loyalty, and fulfill obligations effectively (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006; Saks, 2006; Ugaddan & Park, 2017; Saks, 2019). Second, the divergent leadership framework and employee indicates that the leader-centric approach only partially elucidates for CCL relationship in the organization. To enhance communication competence and promote better understanding and engagement among employees, ChatGPT could act as a knowledge companion by providing suggestions for areas of improvement and constructive feedback. A study by Burton-Jones and Hubona, (2006). demonstrated that TAMs construct of perceived usefulness (PU) and ease of use positively influence user behavior and attitude by reducing anxiety. Similarly, another research also revealed that when AI technology is user-friendly, it enables users to create more supplementary resources that expand on know-why, know-how, and know-that knowledge (Huang et al., 2021; Muzam, 2022; Polanyi, 1967). Having perceived clear communication from the leader will reduce misconceptions and ultimately lead to better collaboration and productivity in the organization

Limitation and Future Research

The findings drawn from the present study must be approached with certain limitations. First, it is crucial to note that the hypothesized connections are evident in the cross-sectional data set. However, we cannot assert any causal relationship based on our research findings. Future research may consider employing longitudinal studies to ascertain deeper into the findings of the current study. Second, the study focuses on the CCL as an antecedent of EET, it is imperative to note that there can be other variables that could enhance EET, and since Fiji is a developing economy and hub for future talents, future studies may examine other antecedent variables like benevolent leadership and ambidextrous leadership, to ascertain if the positive result can be reproduced with the EET as an outcome variable. Third, the outcome of the study centers on employees working for the public sector in Fiji and the outcome of the current study can spark debate regarding the appropriateness of the findings. Therefore, researchers may conduct research in other sectors including private and non-governmental organizations. Last, the present study uses single-source data. Explicitly, only employees provided an evaluation of CCL, EPCOM, and EET. Thus, common method bias (CMB) may increase the correlation strength. Despite using statistical tests to minimize the CMB, future research may incorporate multiple sources of concepts. For instance, supervisors can assess their own CCL style while employees could assess their intention to use ChatGPT.

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