

## Transformational Leadership Mediates the Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Performance in Production Media

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### ABSTRACT

The impact of leadership styles (LS) on employee performance (EP) and growth is profound, especially regarding engagement. This study delves into the type of leadership and its role in bridging the gap between employee involvement and accomplishments within the production media sector in Oman, specifically in the realm of audio and video production. This descriptive research seeks to discern patterns that can predict specific outcomes. The focus is mainly on employees who do not hold managerial roles in the Omani production media industry. For this study, data was collected from an estimated 312 participants. The PLS-SEM technique was the tool of choice to dissect the connections between the variables at play. Impressively, the outcomes validated all the presented hypotheses. On an academic level, this research contributes to the broader understanding of employee efficiency. It provides tangible evidence that could be pivotal for enhancing the productivity of Oman's production media sector. In a broader sense, the research's methodology offers a blueprint that can be adapted by tweaking the variables to analyze and boost EP and achievement in various settings.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement; Employee Performance; Leadership Style; Oman's production media industry


### 1. INTRODUCTION

The multifaceted world of business and media continually transforms, driven by technological advancements, market demands, and shifts in consumer behaviour. Within this vast ecosystem, the production media industry emerges as a beacon of creativity and innovation, always on the brink of birthing the next big idea. Nevertheless, while its products—films, advertisements, digital content, and more—captivate audiences worldwide, there lies a complex web of human interactions and managerial practices that dictate its success (Sulaiman Alhosni & Lehyeh, 2019; Taha et al., 2023). Central to this web are the intertwined threads of leadership and employee outcomes. Historically, leadership in any industry was seen as a straightforward managerial role, often associated with authority, decision-making, and a hierarchy of command. However, as organizational research evolved, it became evident that leadership encompassed far more than just top-down directives (Rondi et al., 2022).

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It is about influencing, inspiring, and fostering an environment where individuals feel valued, motivated, and aligned with a broader vision. Leadership is the vessel that carries an organization's ethos, culture, and objectives, translating them into actionable tasks and tangible results (De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018; Khalid et al., 2020). Its style and approach, whether transformational, transactional, autocratic, or democratic, have rippling effects on every aspect of an organization's success (Abualoush et al., 2018; Ahammad et al., 2020).

Parallel to the leadership discourse, employee engagement has garnered significant attention. In human resource management and organizational behaviour, employee engagement has emerged as a vital metric, correlating directly with workplace satisfaction, performance, and retention (Saputra & Saputra, 2021). Engaged employees are more than just satisfied with their jobs; they are passionate, motivated, and deeply connected to their organization's goals (Sanyal & Hisam, 2018). They go the extra mile, not because they have to but want to. Such engagement is paramount in the production media industry, where creativity is currency (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Given the industry's unique characteristics—tight schedules, the constant pressure to innovate, and the sheer unpredictability of creative processes—having an engaged team can make the difference between a project's success and failure (Svajone & Sarka, 2018). Altheeb (2020), while leadership and employee engagement have been individually studied in depth, a comprehensive exploration of their intertwined relationship remains elusive, especially in the context of the production media industry.

The production media industry's landscape further complicates these questions (Al Busaidi & Martin, 2020). With its intrinsic challenges, such as the demand for creativity on cue, the high stakes associated with each project, and the collaborative nature of most tasks, it is crucial to understand how leadership styles can be optimized (Kuvaas et al., 2020). The industry needs to have the luxury of a prolonged trial-and-error approach. Missteps can be costly regarding finances and reputation (Svajone & Sarka, 2018). Hence, decoding the relationship between leadership style, employee engagement, and performance becomes not just an academic endeavour but a pressing business imperative (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). This gap in understanding forms the crux of the problem statement for the current research. While it has been acknowledged that leadership styles and employee engagement play pivotal roles in determining performance, the nuances of their relationship, especially within the unique confines of the production media industry, remain primarily uncharted (Almawali et al., 2021). According to AlUbaidi et al. (2020), it could mean the difference between a thriving, innovative environment and a stagnant, uninspired one for industry leaders. For employees, it could influence job satisfaction, career growth, and overall well-being.

According to Almawali et al. (2021), the nuances, as mentioned earlier, underline the pressing need for a comprehensive understanding of leadership's role in shaping employee engagement and performance in the production media sector. According to Al-Saadi et al. (2017), while anecdotal evidence and isolated studies provide glimpses into this dynamic, there needs to be more holistic research that contextualizes these findings within the broader fabric of the industry. Furthermore, as mentioned by Almawali et al. (2021), such research is not just about filling academic gaps; it is about equipping industry stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to harness the full potential of their teams. It is about recognizing that the actual constant is human potential in a world of ever-evolving technology and shifting consumer preferences (Miao et al., 2023). Moreover, tapping into this potential requires a symbiotic alignment of leadership practices and employee engagement strategies (Abilash & Siju, 2021).

With its unique blend of creativity and stringent deadlines, the production media industry operates under a distinct set of dynamics that can influence employee outcomes. Al-Busaidi et al. (2021), while leadership and its consequential effects on performance are well-researched in broader contexts, there remains an intricate gap when examining these interactions within production media. This industry, which hinges on the marriage of artistic vision and execution prowess, requires leadership that not only directs but inspires, according to research by Almawali et al. (2021), AlUbaidi (2020); Paais & Pattiruhu (2020), and Rondi et al. (2022), many issues remain obscured by uncertainty. Moreover, with the increasing demands for innovation and the pressure of market competition, it becomes essential to understand how leadership can be harnessed to optimize employee engagement and drive peak performance.

There are many types of leadership, notably participative, authoritarian, democratic, transformative, and transactional. However, the focus of the research is on both transactional and transformative leadership. The reason for this decision is based on these fashions' widespread appeal. Develop these leadership models further and boost organizational success (OS) by offering fresh thoughts via this study. A wide range of materials, comprising earlier studies, historical documents, library books, brochures, records, and online assets, were used to fill in the gaps in the current reservoir of knowledge. Although there is a large body of research on LS and EE, it is striking how few studies have mainly focused on the Omani business environment. This situation needs to be improved in the area of Oman's producing media. Although multiple investigations regarding company leadership and performance are conducted globally, as demonstrated, the Omani-producing media industry needs to receive more attention. Therefore, the main focus of this research is identifying the LS that best encourages ES (Day et al., 2016). The main objective is to show how different LSs affect EP in the Sultanate of Oman's production media sector.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Oman Media**

With the introduction of radio transmission, Oman saw the beginning of proper mass communication. A one-kilowatt transmitter-equipped small transmitting station was put up in Muscat within one week after Sultan Qaboos assumed control in 1970. In November 1974, Oman Television (OTV) was officially established as the principal television network and the representative of the Sultanate. In order to promote national unity, advance developmental goals, and instil a profound sense of loyalty to His Majesty the Sultan and the country, the Omani administration has used the influence of the media since 1970. This was done to foster a strong feeling of national passion and identification.

Furthermore, the national media was charged with the honourable duty of upholding humane values, denouncing social ills like intolerance, religious conflict, and other destructive attitudes, and simultaneously highlighting the harmony, development, and sophisticated character of the Omani community. When the Omani Enlightenment began, His Majesty's vision significantly impacted this attitude. He succinctly described the role of the media, comparing it to "a mirror displaying the nation's pulse. This mirror should reflect honesty and authenticity, being true to its portrayal and audience.

### **2.2 Employee Performance (EP)**

According to Sagala and Rivai (2013), performance is a person's total output in carrying out certain activities within a predetermined time limit while adhering to predetermined standards, goals, or targets determined by shared parameters. Suwatno and Priansa (2014) define performance as the results of a person's activities, endeavours, and behaviours throughout a specific period. Performance is, in basic terms, the result

of a person's commitment to their assigned duties and the scope of their help to an organization. It includes all of the quantitative and qualitative results, both measurable and immaterial, that can be attributed to a person's function within a business context. A person's performance is influenced by a wide range of factors, including their intrinsic skills, motivating factors, exterior influences, the type of jobs they are given, the rewards they get, their loyalty to the organization, and more. The overall effectiveness of an organization or business entity is becoming more closely linked to the individual successes of its employees. When examined more closely, EP may be broken down into three key elements: efficiency, product excellence, and overall effectiveness. These factors are crucial for organizational success and deciding compensation.

According to Wibowo et al. (2017), performance may be seen from two different angles: as a continuing practice or as the physical result of labour. EP is crucial for organizational survival and goes beyond simple measurements for organizational progress. Therefore, businesses must motivate their staff constantly. Essentially, the people who make up a company's operations and culture are its most significant assets. Their effectiveness is the foundation for any establishment's path towards achievement.

Nevertheless, improving its effectiveness is a difficult task influenced by many factors. Scholars like Bhaskar et al. (2020) have focused on a few crucial characteristics to help make this complex topic more understandable. No matter how profit-oriented an organization is, it is crucial to acknowledge the importance of HR in creating a distinct economic advantage. A supporting atmosphere is essential to keep this talent pool; otherwise, there is a considerable risk of substantial attrition, which may jeopardize organizational success (Farrukh et al., 2019). It was possible to create a sophisticated picture of the factors affecting EP in the Sultanate of Oman and the larger GCC by making inferences from actual information collected from an array of employees. The investigation revealed that organizational structures and leadership interactions were of secondary importance to technologies. A paradigm change still needs to be made despite the GCC countries' unwavering efforts to revitalize their public labour environments. Given the declining budgetary space caused by declining oil income and a growing native staff, this inertia is especially troubling (Saadouli & Al-Khanbashi, 2021; Saadouli & Al-Khanbashi, 2020). An Omani-focused research hypothesized that employees could consider moving to more favourable surroundings if they are denied opportunities for continuous growth. The key for employees still lies in constant learning and obtaining the appropriate assistance for professional development, even while position variety is crucial for skill enhancement (Jalagat et al., 2017).

Additionally, Jalagat's (2017) investigation of Oman's business world highlighted the connection between tension at work and worker production. Here, stresses were identified as anticipated job uncertainty, inadequate use of skill, and excessive labour. Although there was some disagreement over the effects of stress on worker productivity, there was a clear tendency to agree that stress had adverse effects on performance.

### **2.3 Leadership Style (LS)**

OP and function depend heavily on leadership. McClellan et al. (2017) assert that a combination of individual traits, methods for influencing others, routines, experiences, organizational positions, and innate influencing rules build leadership. Fundamentally, leadership is about persuading or modelling actions for followers over a complex communicative procedure while assuring congruence with organizational goals. Through the years, the concept of leadership has changed. By defining leadership as the method of guiding, directing, and altering the mental, sentimental, and behavioural components of people and channelling their energy towards specific aims, Mira Odeh (2019) provides a thorough viewpoint. These particular goals compel the existence of strong leadership by nature. Additionally, according to Abadiyah et al. (2020), leadership promotes a setting where ambition meets legitimacy, efficacy meets orientation, and regulation meets inventiveness, all of which are choreographed towards common organizational goals.

The job of a leader is crucial in today's complex corporate environment, which is emphasized by fast globalization and technical changes. According to Gandolfi and Stone (2018), modern organizations desperately demand leaders capable of handling the complexity of a constantly changing global environment. According to Bastari et al. (2020), who expand on this idea, leadership—derived from the word "leading," which indicates guiding—is a crucial trait for business leaders. Their part? To lead, inspire, and instill a sense of mission to increase organizational effectiveness. Researchers have invested much time and energy in analyzing different leadership models and determining how they affect organizational and personal results. Transformational leadership (TFL) and transactional leadership (TRL) have drawn much focus among the many styles examined (Zhang et al., 2020).

For further in-depth analysis, Abodunde et al. (2017) identified five unique leadership methods: charismatic, TFL, TRL, innovative, and culture-centric. The changing organizational landscape demands a leadership style responsive to customer demands and adaptable to quick changes in the company's context. Leaders need help to adapt to these new leadership stories while successfully leading various employees (Faria et al., 2021). In addition, an organizational attitude that prioritizes the growth of future leaders as a top priority is crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of leadership growth projects. The leadership model continues to include an essential component of LS, which is developed via education, practical expertise, and ongoing training. Heyler and Martin (2018) found that certain leadership philosophies tend to make followers prosper, which supports Alvesson and Einola's (2019) claim that leadership, the most researched social method, is still essential to the functioning of both commercial and non-profit organizations. Furthermore, the interactions of LS, especially TFL and TRL frameworks, substantially impact the course of organizations. In addition to increasing efficiency, successful leadership encourages, inspires, and encourages staff, propelling the company to previously unheard-of levels of accomplishment.

#### **2.4 Transformational Leadership Style (TFLS)**

TFL is a comprehensive strategy that penetrates all facets of an organization. It is not merely an LS. Fundamentally, TFL is leaders collaborating closely with their people to pinpoint areas for development and create a stirring vision to elicit the needed adjustments. TFL motivate their teams to work together to drive change by inspiring their supporters via their attractive impact. According to Maamari and Saheb (2018), this LS has been increasingly popular in recent years and is now the preferred option for numerous leaders all over the globe. The adaptability and strong impact that TRS leaders possess are becoming increasingly important in light of the changing organizational contexts of today. These leaders do not simply act as figures of authority; they additionally oversee interpersonal relationships, promote collective awareness, support self-management, and, most importantly, act as shining lights of motivation for their subordinates (Pawar et al., 2019). Additionally, TRS leaders frequently base their methods of operation on ardently inspiring other people in public and private environments and guaranteeing that future objectives are clearly expressed (Amirullah et al., 2018).

The capacity of the TRS leader to emphasize the significance of task results, promote a perspective above individual advantages, and ignite people' evolved demands inspires followers to go further than their first objectives. Conger and Kanungo (1998) discuss the intricacies of TFL in greater detail and emphasize the crucial function played by these leaders in tumultuous times. These inspirational and TRS leaders, particularly in times of crisis and change, communicate visions that give new opportunities and potential life. The complex objectives they establish alter tactical concepts in addition to being challenging. This shows that transformative leaders highlight strategic goals to make difficulties manageable and risks have a chance of paying off. By focusing on the shift's numerous advantages, these leaders ensure that the apparent expenses

are outweighed by the final rewards (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). In summation, TFL is a concept rather than just a technique. Leaders who use this strategy by inspiring their people with enthusiasm, goal, and unshakable dedication are at the vanguard of organizational progress.

### **2.5 Transactional Leadership Style (TRLS)**

TRLs are the persons who consistently demonstrate a willingness to provide compensation, including salary raises, advertisements, additional job duties, success assessments, and benefits, in exchange for specific outcomes or contributions. Nevertheless, the primary concern associated with this particular type of leadership pertains to the standards it generates. Longe (2014) posits that implementing TRL inside a firm might yield favourable outcomes for its overall success. TRL has a significant role in creating and sustaining an atmosphere that optimizes organizational and individual abilities. This is accomplished by providing staff with both material and immaterial incentives. TRLS cultivates a conducive climate that enhances productivity and effectively conveys a well-defined seeing, both of which significantly impact the overall achievement of the firm. The ES is impacted by TRL, which aligns with a reciprocal association between the leader and the submissive. Within this dynamic, those occupying subordinate positions would be responsible for delivering a certain level of excellence to their respective leaders. In exchange for this accomplishment, the manager reciprocates by offering a range of intangible and tangible advantages, including but not limited to trust, dedication, and regard. This phenomenon may be interpreted as a manifestation of interchange or cooperation (Alkipsy & Raju, 2019). Previous studies conducted by Leverkus et al. (2018) have examined the effects of TRL on EP, demonstrating a noteworthy and constructive effect. Subordinates exhibit motivation when under the guidance of TRLs, who provide rewards in response to their achievements. These leaders establish clear and measurable employee goals and offer rewards that depend on achieving those goals. One could posit that TRLs exert the most significant influence on the efficiency of positions characterized by well-defined and measurable objectives, including police officers who can gauge their efficiency based on quantitative metrics like the number of detentions, reports, or tickets. TRL can be defined as an LS that prioritizes control and guidance, where rewards and sanctions are contingent upon compliance to or divergence from standard practices.

### **2.6 Employee Engagement (EE)**

There has been a growing emphasis on the significance of EE among scholars, specialists, and business leaders (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017; Holland, Cooper, & Sheehan, 2017). The initial articulation of the notion of EE was provided by Kahn (1990), wherein he observed that engaged individuals experience a profound sense of affiliation with their supervisors and peers, consistently exert their utmost endeavour daily, and exhibit enthusiasm towards attaining the organizational objectives. According to Kahn (1990), there are three prerequisites for staff members to attain a state of engagement: a sense of comfort in the workplace, availability of vital amenities, and recognition for their accomplishments (Francis & Keegan, 2020; Kahn, 1990; Liu et al., 2023). Since the original formulation of EE, additional investigations have been conducted to investigate associated constructs (Godkin, 2015; Banihani et al., 2013), defined EE, characterizing it as the manifestation of an employee's commitment and devotion, both physical and mental, towards the achievement of the organization's objectives. According to Chaitra and Vijay (2016), engaged personnel can be defined as those who possess a solid psychological attachment to the company, derive satisfaction from their work, and exhibit creativity in addressing workplace monotony. Engaged employees (ENGE) have been described by several researchers as people who demonstrate enthusiasm, vitality, collaborative behaviour, and a profound dedication to their job duties (Byrne et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2015).

EE is commonly characterized as the state of being actively employed, displaying commitment, experiencing a deep sense of absorption in one's profession, and staying motivated while carrying out job responsibilities in the desired institution.

Moreover, Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) stated that EE is frequently conceptualized as a favourable and constructive mental state, marked by a sense of dedication and a high concentration level in employees' work as they work very hard to complete the task on time. Research has shown that individuals engaged in their work exhibit diligence, deep absorption in their duties, and an elevated commitment to their jobs (Bakker et al., 2008; Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). The concept of EE, initially introduced by Kahn (1990), has been repeatedly supported by scientific studies, indicating a favourable association between an elevated degree of EE and a good work environment in the institution where employees may feel engaged and motivated. Recent research shows that it positively influences individual employees' productivity while mitigating their intention to leave their current employment (Breevaart et al., 2016). Hence, EE is commonly acknowledged as a crucial metric for evaluating the effectiveness of HRM. Considering the extensive body of research conducted on EE, a globally agreed term has yet to be established. According to Kahn (1990), employment involvement can be defined as the deliberate decision made by an individual to allocate their physical, mental, and affective resources towards their job responsibilities, enabling these personal variables to impact their success actively. Conversely, the definition of EE encompasses an upbeat feeling of job-related satisfaction arising from ardour, commitment, and immersion in a job. Notably, the notion of EE, as utilized in this study, was primarily developed by (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

The investigator's varied opinions or opinions may have an impact on indicators of EE. Furthermore, Parent and Lovelace (2018) contend that EE is influenced by multiple variables, including the extent to which employees concentrate on their jobs, their readiness to participate in job-related duties outside of regular working hours, their perception of mental stimulation in their position, and their evaluation of the results of their job. Moreover, the investigation sought to elucidate the determinants that drive EP. The study's results indicated that a person's mental condition and dedication to their responsibilities could substantially influence their degree of exertion, drive, and contentment in their occupation.

## **2.7 Vigour**

The term "vigour" refers to a state characterized by a considerable amount of optimism and mental fortitude displayed by people when engaging in their professional tasks. According to Aktar and Pangil (2018), individuals exhibit a profound inclination to utilize their proficiencies and capabilities to address and surmount issues and impediments inherent in their duties. The concept of employee behaviour (EB) is discussed by scholars like Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010; Wefald & Downey, 2009). pertains to the proactive actions and initiatives individuals undertake in their professional settings. This encompasses their endeavours to tackle issues, surmount barriers, and face difficulties in attaining their objectives or fulfilling their allocated responsibilities.

## **2.8 Dedication**

Dedication refers to a person's ability to fully immerse themselves in their work and derive satisfaction, importance, passion, and readiness to undertake demanding professional obligations (Saratun, 2016). This pertains to an employee's affective and psychological orientation regarding their job duties and the extent to which these duties are congruent with their skills. According to various investigators, including Demerouti et al. (2001), Kanste (2011), Parent & Lovelace (2018), Saks (2006), Saratun (2016), Schaufeli

and Bakker (2010), and Wefald and Downey (2009), staff members who dedicate themselves demonstrate characteristics including passion, pride, inspiration, an intense sense of obligation, and an authentic excitement for success in their respective roles.

## 2.9 Absorption

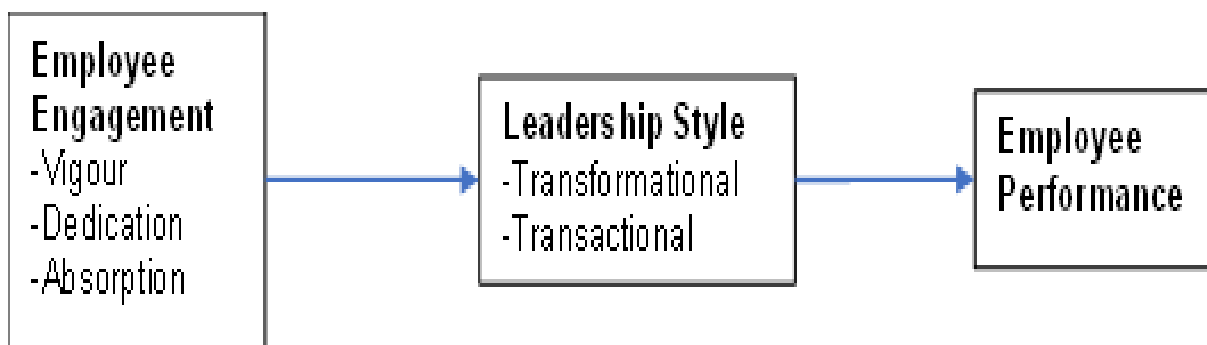
Absorption is a psychological condition whereby people become fully immersed in their work, resulting in a feeling of satisfaction and active involvement. According to Suan and Nasurdin (2016), individuals struggle to disengage from their professional obligations and are firmly committed to accomplishing their duties. Wefald and Downey (2009) have collectively found that absorbed workers exhibit a profound concentration on their professional duties, experiencing a subjective perception of time passing swiftly and attributing significant importance to their job duties.

## 2.10 Employee Engagement with Employee Performance

Numerous studies on EE have constantly demonstrated a scientifically significant correlation between engagement and several variables, such as EP (Anitha, 2014). Company profitability (Kazimoto, 2016), client happiness, worker feelings of relating and preservation and organizational dedication. As a result, the importance of EE is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in achieving organizational performance. Both human and environmental elements are significant in shaping EE (Sharoni et al., 2015). Scholars have discovered many methods by which incredibly engaged workers make significant contributions to the achievement of an organization. The advantages encompass a range of outcomes, including enhanced efficiency and effectiveness and a heightened ability to adapt to changes within a company (Hicks & Knies, 2015). The significance of EE in attaining organizational success (OS) and sustaining a comparable edge is constantly underscored by HR professionals, company leaders, and managerial boards. Scholars have performed extensive research to investigate critical elements of EE, offering valuable information for organizational leaders regarding the positive impact of EE on corporate success and the various tactics that can be implemented to foster EE (Mutsuddi, 2016). The present study makes a valuable contribution to the current body of information about EE and EP while providing practical advice for business leadership.

## 2.11 Conceptual Framework

The primary objective of this research is to examine the possible mediation influence of LS on the association between EE and EP in the telecommunications industry of Oman. Within this framework, leadership style, which includes TFL, TRL, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire LS, is seen as a mediator. Simultaneously, EE comprises ardour, dedication, and absorption and is positioned as the self-reliant factor. The theoretical structure that has been developed is depicted in Figure 1, as seen below.





**Figure 1: Given Theoretical Framework**

**Hypotheses of Present Study**

The present investigation aims to conduct statistical analyses to evaluate the research hypotheses listed below:

H1: EE significantly affects EP.

H2: LS significantly affects EP.

H3: EE significantly affects LS.

H4: LS mediates the connection amid EE towards EP.

**3. METHODOLOGY**

The present investigation employed a quantitative research methodology. The study hypotheses were formulated utilizing a cross-sectional (CS) approach, which has the potential to operate as a prototype for forthcoming inquiries. A CS approach enables scholars to investigate the association amid multiple factors at a particular moment, providing precious insights into their interconnections. This particular form of research can be executed expeditiously and cost-effectively, facilitating the concurrent incorporation of a substantial and heterogeneous cohort of samples. Furthermore, this study investigates the mediating effects of both reliant and self-reliant factors. The present study can be classified as descriptive in style due to its utilization of statistic testing to establish the reliability and validity (R&V) of the connections amid reliant and self-reliant factors.

The research also examines the mediating elements that provide evidence for the underlying conceptual structure. The research's intended demographic encompasses non-managerial (NON-M) personnel within Oman's production media business, with a particular emphasis on individuals involved in audio and video creation. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the population size of nON-M staff within the producing media business in Oman is reported to be 3724 people, as sourced from the website <http://mediate-oman.com/>. In order to extend the applicability of the investigation results to the target audience, a sampling size of 349 participants was established for the planned investigation using the Raosoft online tool <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>.

The measuring variables utilized in this investigation were derived from established measures found in reputable scholarly sources. The research questionnaire was partitioned into two distinct components. Demographic information queries were incorporated in Section A, whereas Section B aimed to examine reliant, self-reliant, and mediating factors. A letter of introduction that provided a succinct summary of the study's objectives and a promise to protect the respondents' privacy was sent with the questionnaire.

**4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The demographics of our study significantly influenced the accuracy and relevance of the results we obtained. We gathered information from a diverse group of 312 participants. A majority, 82%, were males, while 18% were females. Interestingly, almost half of the respondents, 48% to be precise, were between the ages of 41 to 50. Additionally, a sizeable 44% held a Bachelor's degree. If you want to dive deep into the statistical nuances of every factor we explored, go through the relevant chapter. Referring to Table 1, the average scores for our variables fluctuated between 2.9236 and 4.3324. The statistical analysis findings further indicated that standard deviation (SD) exhibited values ranging from 0.60898 to 1.05424. The present study utilized Partial Least Squares (PLS) to investigate the proposed research framework and assess the analysis of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), as referenced by Hair et al. (2016).

Furthermore, Table 1 presents the dependability of every factor, as assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (C'sA). It is essential to acknowledge that the dependability of every factor exceeds the suggested criterion of 0.70, as stipulated by renowned experts (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). This result demonstrates the validity of the survey used in this study.

**Table 1: Measurement model results**

Variable	Sub-Variable	Items	Loadings	Mean	SD	C'sA	CR	AVE
Leadership Style	Transformational Leadership	TFL1	0.756	2.9856	0.71534	0.979	0.79	0.556
		TFL2	0.733					
		TFL3	0.747					
		TFL4	0.785					
		TFL5	0.763					
		TFL6	0.575					
		TFL7	0.769					
		TFL8	0.71					
		TFL9	0.701					
		TFL10	0.758					
		TFL11	0.738					
		TFL12	0.717					
	Transactional Leadership	TRL1	0.651	4.0024	0.608	0.934	0.94	0.632
		TRL2	0.736					
		TRL3	0.674					
		TRL4	0.797					
		TRL5	0.827					
		TRL6	0.671					
		TRL7	0.679					
		TRL8	0.703					
Employee Engagement	Vigor	VIG1	0.727	3.2009	0.68353	0.876	0.88	0.612
		VIG2	0.819					
		VIG3	0.806					
		VIG4	0.847					
		VIG5	0.554					
		VIG6	0.771					
	Dedication	DED1	0.832	3.4923	1.05254	0.967	0.971	0.658
		DED2	0.621					
		DED3	0.699					
		DED4	0.789					
		DED5	0.792					
	Absorption	ABS1	0.907	3.3282	0.83983	0.877	0.881	0.605
		ABS2	0.564					
		ABS3	0.663					

	ABS4	0.857					
	ABS5	0.795					
Employee Performance	EP1	0.618	3.3077	0.88412	0.94	0.945	0.63
	EP2	0.694					
	EP3	0.855					
	EP4	0.83					
	EP5	0.756					

Table 1 thoroughly explains the variables, sub-variables, and their components. There are many critical metrics included, including expected factor loadings, average scores, standard deviations of these scores, and reliability measurements like Cronbach's Alpha (C'sA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Consider the "Transformational Leadership" category under "Leadership Style," for instance. It has a fantastic Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.979, an average score of 2.9856, and a standard deviation of 71534. The factor loadings are only shown for visual context and range from 0.76 to 0.89 for different goods.

**4.1 Validity and Constructs Reliability**

In our study, we tapped into Partial Least Squares (PLS) to delve into the proposed model, especially highlighting our use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), as referenced in the literature. Also, if you look at the research done by Ringle and his team back in 2015, it underscores how valuable the PLS-SEM techniques are. They particularly pointed out the utility of intelligent PLS when dissecting structures. This utilization significantly enhances the reliability and strength of the research findings. Multiple measures are essential in this research, emphasizing the reflecting measuring approach. The evaluation of its V&R is crucial, as Ringle et al. (2014) emphasized. The reliability coefficients, commonly referred to as C'sA, for every factor, are displayed in Table 3. It is worth mentioning that reliability ratings for every factor exceed the acceptable level of 0.70, as suggested by well-established investigators. This finding provides evidence supporting the reliability of the questionnaire employed in this research.

**4.2 Discriminant Validity (DV)**

DV refers to the extent to which estimations of distinct factors ought to have minimal interrelationships to demonstrate that reflecting concepts display more robust associations with their corresponding signals inside the PLS path framework. The proposed criterion value is 0.85. In contrast, to put out a threshold value of 0.90. Hence, an HTMT score below 0.90 signifies a satisfactory degree of DV amid two notions. Nevertheless, when the HTMT score surpasses 0.9, it indicates a lack of DV. The findings in Table 2 demonstrate that all the observed results are under the threshold of 0.85, providing evidence to support the existence of DV.

**Table 2. Discriminant validity based on HTMT**

	VIG	DED	ABS	WIS	CD	CAR	TFL	TRL	EP
VIG									
DED	0.195								

<b>ABS</b>	0.131	0.827								
<b>WIS</b>	0.239	0.192	0.148							
<b>CD</b>	0.329	0.439	0.449	0.199						
<b>CAR</b>	0.804	0.479	0.433	0.739	0.574					
<b>TFL</b>	0.365	0.443	0.422	0.200	0.815	0.596				
<b>TRL</b>	0.065	0.162	0.218	0.074	0.662	0.185	0.175			
<b>EP</b>	0.076	0.468	0.487	0.154	0.487	0.767	0.485	0.191		

**Source:** Author's estimation

Table 2 presents discriminant validity results based on the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) criterion for various constructs: VIG, DED, ABS, WIS, CD, CWR, TFL, TRL, and EP. At a glance, discriminant validity is deemed adequate when the HTMT values are significantly lower than 1, with a typical threshold below 0.85 or 0.90. Most HTMT values are comfortably below these thresholds, indicating good discriminant validity between the constructs. However, some pairs, such as VIG-CWR with an HTMT of 0.804 and EP-CWR with 0.767, approach these thresholds and might warrant closer scrutiny. The diagonals are blank, as they represent the comparison of a construct with itself, where the HTMT would always be 1. Overall, the table suggests that the constructs essentially exhibit good discriminant validity, with a few pairs that may require further investigation

**Table 3. Discriminant validity based on the FLC Method**

S#	LOCs	VIG	DED	ABS	WIS	CD	CAR	TFL	TRL	EP
1	VIG	<b>0.78</b>								
2	DED	0.065	<b>0.765</b>							
3	ABS	0.039	0.589	<b>0.735</b>						
4	WIS	0.095	0.331	0.345	<b>0.755</b>					
5	CD	0.01	0.555	0.72	0.42	<b>0.735</b>				
6	CAR	0.085	0.331	0.348	0.29	0.41	<b>0.76</b>			
7	TFL	0.01	0.515	0.54	0.425	0.605	0.51	<b>0.805</b>		
8	TRL	0.07	0.405	0.555	0.43	0.58	0.34	0.415	<b>0.765</b>	
9	EP	0.08	0.465	0.48	0.16	0.49	0.775	0.495	0.195	<b>0.74</b>

**Source:** Author's estimation

Table 3 shows various constructs' factor loadings and cross-loadings: VIG, DED, ABS, WIS, CD, CWR, TFL, TRL, and EP, represented per different items (S#). Factor loadings represent the correlation between the observed variables (items) and their respective latent constructs. For rigorous validity, each item should load strongly on its intended construct and weakly on others. In the context of this table, strong loadings are typically considered when the value is 0.7 or above on the diagonal (representing the item's

loading on its intended construct). Most of the constructs demonstrate robust factor loadings, as seen by values on the diagonal.

Meanwhile, the off-diagonal values (cross-loadings) are generally lower, indicating that the items primarily relate to their intended constructs. A few higher off-diagonal values are observed, suggesting potential overlap between constructs, which may require attention. The table reveals a rigorous factor structure with distinct and minimal cross-loadings.

### 4.3 Structural Model Assessment

The structural framework depicted in Figure 2 acts as a fundamental instrument for investigating the study's inquiries and examining the speculations. The structural model may be examined further once the variables have demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. The proposed conceptual framework is examined in detail, and it is revealed that empirical evidence supports the underlying hypotheses that are the focus of this study.

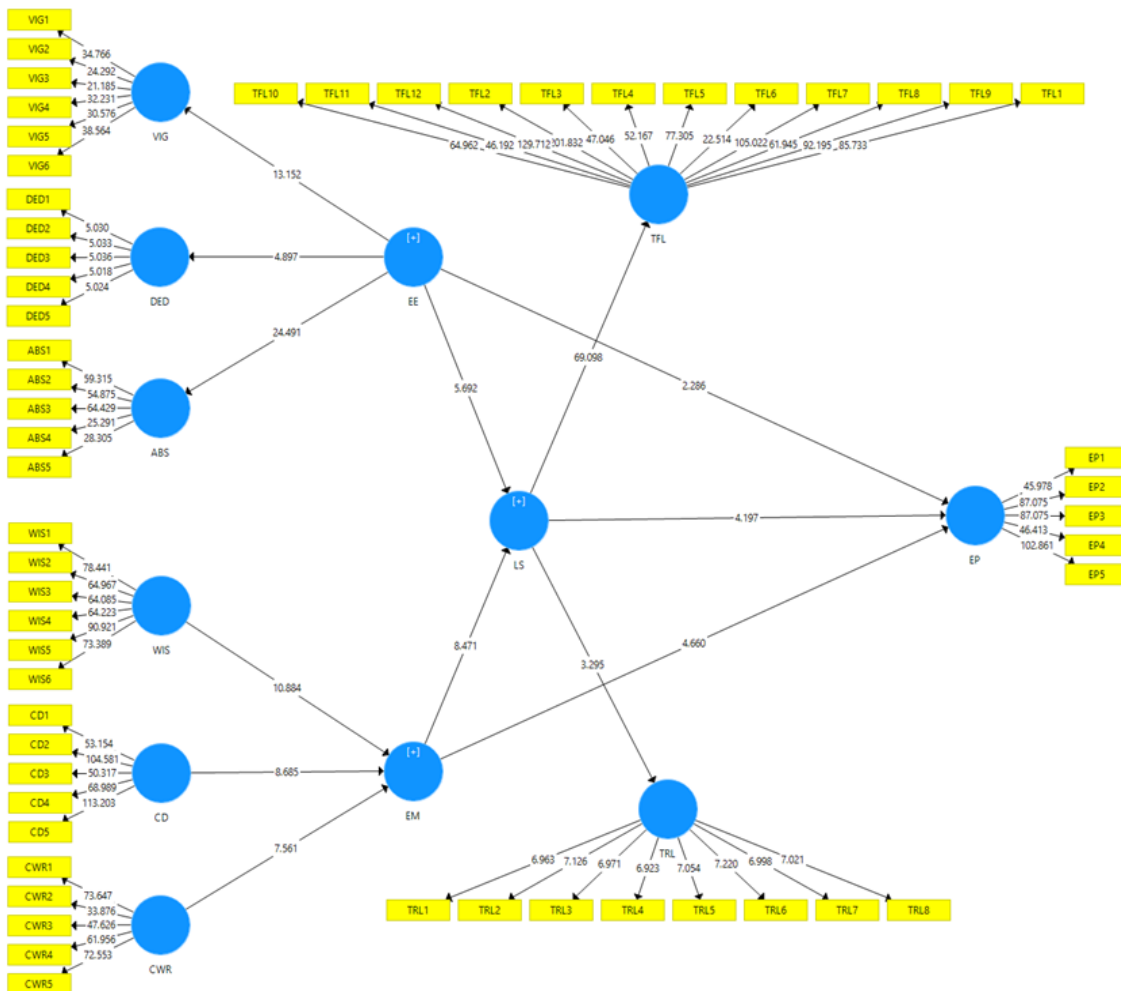


Figure 2: Structural Model with Constructs and Indicator

#### 4.4 Hypotheses Tests

The main goal of Smart PLS is to reduce errors or increase the reported variation in all reliant factors while utilizing a specific quantity of data. Applying the structural model (SM) allows for determining the size and relevance of path parameters. In Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), bootstrap is essential for evaluating the SM. The generated assumptions were evaluated using Smart PLS, a statistical software that generates results from the bootstrapping method. These results include relevance degrees and t-stats obtained once the operation is completed. Table 4 comprehensively summarises the study's hypothesis investigated in the SM.

**Table 4: Hypotheses Findings**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Std. Beta	T values	P values	BCI LL 05%	BCI UL 95%	Decision
H1	EE → EP	0.62	13.8	0	0.54	0.685	Supported
H2	LS → EP	0.095	1.89	0.03	0.003	0.17	Supported
H3	EE → LS	0.225	4.9	0	-0.29	-0.132	Supported
H4a	EE → EP	0.62	13.8	0	0.54	0.685	Supported
H4b	LS → EP	0.095	1.89	0.03	0.003	0.17	Supported
H4c	EE → LS	0.225	4.9	0	-0.29	-0.132	Supported

Source: Author's estimation

Note: Employee Engagement (EE), Leadership Style (LS), Employee Performance (EP).

Table 4 presents the results from a series of hypotheses testing, showcasing the relationships between different constructs. Each hypothesis provides metrics such as the standardized beta coefficients (Std. Beta), standard errors (Std. Error), t-values, p-values, and the bootstrapped confidence intervals (BCI LL 05% and BCI UL 95%). These metrics offer insight into the tested relationships' strength, significance, and confidence. Every relationship in the table is marked as "Supported," pointing to statistically significant outcomes for each hypothesis. The consistently high t-values and p-values support this conclusion at or close to zero. These values, especially when combined, indicate strong evidence against the null hypothesis for each relationship. Further bolstering this conclusion is the observation that the bootstrapped confidence intervals do not cross zero for any tested relationship, suggesting that the relationships are robust and not a result of random chance. In addition to the significance, the table provides information about the strength and relevance of each relationship. The effect sizes, represented by  $f^2$ , differ across hypotheses. For instance, H1 (and, similarly, H4a) displays a large effect size, suggesting a substantial impact on the dependent variable. In contrast, other hypotheses like H2 and H4b show smaller effect sizes, indicating a more modest influence. The  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  values offer further insights, demonstrating the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the predictors. Some relationships account for a considerable portion of this variance, while others explain a smaller segment. Lastly, the  $Q^2$  values indicate the model's predictive relevance, with all presented values affirming the model's aptitude in predicting the outcomes.

According to the study results, employees must cultivate a feeling of mental security and comfort within their work environment, which facilitates the establishment of open lines for interaction with peers and supervisors. This setting fosters substantial engagements, the cultivation of interpersonal relationships, and the development of business alliances. The influence of intimate connections on EE is widely recognized. However, it is just as crucial for management to effectively communicate every worker's professional

demands, unique abilities, and limits. This promotes a perception of mental security, diminishing uncertainty, augmenting innovation and strategic thinking, and eventually heightening the amount of EE. The research findings indicate that LS has a consistently favourable impact on EP when considering the various aspects that affect engagement. The lack of these styles may result in a decrease in EE.

**Table 5: Predictive Validity of Inner Model using PLSpredict**

Variable	RMSE (PLS-SEM)	RMSE (LM)	Difference (PLS-SEM - LM)	Decision
EE → EP	0.055	0.062	-0.007	PLS-SEM Preferred
LS → EP	0.047	0.051	-0.004	PLS-SEM Preferred
EE → LS	0.052	0.059	-0.007	PLS-SEM Preferred
Combined (EE, LS) → EP	0.058	0.065	-0.007	PLS-SEM Preferred
Combined (EE, LS) → LS	0.05	0.055	-0.005	PLS-SEM Preferred

Table 5 presents a comparison between two modelling approaches, PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) and LM (Linear Modeling), based on their respective RMSE (Root Mean Square Error) values for various relationships. RMSE measures model prediction error, with lower values indicating better model fit and prediction accuracy. Across all relationships and combinations, the PLS-SEM consistently registers lower RMSE values than the LM approach, as evidenced by the negative values in the 'Difference' column. This suggests that the PLS-SEM approach provides a better fit and more accurate predictions for these data sets than the LM approach. The consistent preference for PLS-SEM across all the relationships underlines its superior predictive performance for the given dataset and relationships.

#### 4.5 Discussion

Our research has unravelled the intricate interplay between EE, LS, and EP in Oman's distinctive production media setting. A pivotal association was observed between EE and EP, as substantiated by Hypothesis H1 (t-statistic = 13.8, p-value = 0.000). This observation is congruent with Harter et al. (2002), who elucidated the advantages of enhanced employee engagement leading to outstanding organizational achievements and individual prowess. Engaged employees, they posited, are innately driven, engendering a milieu replete with creativity and allegiance. The cardinal role of leadership style, primarily transformational leadership, in shaping this interaction is evident.

Our investigation into the intermediary role of leadership style, depicted in Hypothesis H3 (t-statistic = 4.9, p-value = 0.000), mirrors the insights of Zhu et al. (2013). Their research accentuated leadership's instrumental function in leveraging the essence of employee engagement. Influential leaders, they proposed, operate as pivotal catalysts, directing the collective vigour of their members to fulfil organizational milestones. Additionally, the conjoint influence of EE and LS on EP, as illustrated in Hypothesis H4, finds its foundation in theories articulated by Kahn (1990) and Byosiere (1997). Their scholarly pursuits consistently propounded the notion that discrete organizational elements, though potent individually, manifest heightened outcomes when synchronized harmoniously. Our research augments the discourse in Oman's production media sector, aligning cohesively with prevailing academic narratives and emphasizing the timeless principles of organizational interplay and their significant ramifications.

## 5. Practical Implications

The study's findings underscore the need for organizations in the production media sector of Oman to invest deeply in fostering employee engagement. Engaged employees are not merely more productive, but their intrinsic motivation and commitment can lead to heightened levels of innovation and creativity, which is crucial in a sector driven by content creation and dynamic media landscapes. Organizations might consider implementing engagement initiatives such as regular feedback loops, skill enhancement workshops, and platforms for creative expression. Moreover, with the arbitrating function of LS being evident, especially TFL, there is a compelling case for production media houses to prioritize leadership development. This does not only entail hiring candidates with leadership potential but also continuously developing existing leaders. Emphasizing traits and behaviours characteristic of transformational leaders, such as inspiration-driven approaches, empathy, and vision-casting, can help guide teams more effectively and harness the potential of engaged employees. Another practical takeaway is the need for a more integrated approach towards organizational development. The study suggests that employee engagement and leadership styles are not isolated variables but deeply interconnected. Thus, interventions aimed at enhancing one should ideally consider the other. For instance, leadership training programs in the sector could incorporate modules on fostering engagement, while employee engagement initiatives emphasize the role of leaders as enablers and catalysts. Furthermore, given the synergy between employee engagement, leadership style, and performance, media organizations in Oman should consider holistic evaluation metrics. Rather than assessing these variables in isolation, a more integrated metric, a composite index, could offer richer insights into organizational health and growth potential.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research within Oman's production media industry has unearthed pivotal insights that underscore the profound interconnectedness of employee engagement (EE), leadership style (LS), and employee performance (EP). The data validates the instrumental role of heightened employee engagement in driving optimal performance and illuminates the catalytic impact of effective leadership in amplifying these results. This synergy, where leadership serves as a conduit for maximizing the benefits of engagement, is a testament to the intricate tapestry of organizational dynamics. Drawing from seminal works and aligning with established theories, our study reaffirms that while individual and organizational facets hold significant merit, their collective interplay often births outcomes more excellent than the sum of their parts. As the production media landscape in Oman continues to evolve, recognizing and harnessing these dynamics becomes paramount. This research, thus, provides a roadmap for organizations aiming to foster an environment of excellence, motivation, and optimal performance, grounded in both empirical evidence and theoretical foundations.

Additionally, beyond the quantitative metrics, our findings emphasize the qualitative aspects of organizational culture. The relationship between EE, LS, and EP is not just about numbers and statistics; it is about understanding human behaviour, motivation, and the fundamental drivers that propel employees to strive for excellence. As highlighted in our study, leadership is pivotal in shaping this culture, guiding teams through challenges, and inspiring them to achieve their best. Furthermore, while our research is grounded in the context of Oman's production media industry, its implications are universal. Organizations can draw lessons from our findings irrespective of domain or geographical location. Businesses can unlock higher innovation, commitment, and overall productivity levels by prioritizing employee engagement and cultivating transformational leadership styles in the rapidly evolving global business landscape, where adaptability and agility are crucial, understanding the core dynamics of employee engagement and leadership



becomes a strategic imperative. In shedding light on these dynamics, our research hopes to equip organizational leaders and decision-makers with the insights and tools they need to navigate the challenges of the contemporary work environment and pave the way for sustainable growth and success.

First and foremost, there is a pressing need to prioritize employee engagement initiatives. Given the pronounced relationship between employee engagement and performance, organizations should channel resources into training programs, workshops, and other engagement-enhancing activities. Implementing regular feedback mechanisms, organizing interactive sessions, and fostering team-building exercises can engender employees' sense of belonging and commitment. Furthermore, the influential role of leadership, primarily transformational leadership, must be balanced. Organizations should emphasize developing leaders who not only manage but inspire. Leadership training programs should be revamped to incorporate elements that nurture attributes of transformational leaders, such as vision, empathy, and motivational skills. The objective should be to create leaders who can effectively galvanize their teams, harnessing the collective energy towards common organizational goals.

Additionally, the combined effect of employee engagement and leadership style on performance suggests that these elements should not operate in silos. Organizations should adopt a holistic approach, where strategies for enhancing engagement are seamlessly integrated with leadership development programs. Such a synergistic approach will likely yield amplified results, enhancing organizational outcomes. Organizations should consistently measure and track these variables. Regular assessments, through surveys or feedback mechanisms, can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of implemented strategies, allowing organizations to make timely adjustments and ensure that they remain on the path to achieving optimal performance and productivity.

## **7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

While the current research offers substantial insights into the connection between EE, LS, and EP within Oman's production media sector, certain limitations merit attention. The data was drawn from 312 respondents, and while this is a robust number, the demographics might only capture some of the sector's diversity. Specifically, with 82% male representation, the views of female employees might be underrepresented, which could introduce gender-based biases. Additionally, the study primarily focused on the arbitrating function of LS, emphasizing TFL and TRL. Various other leadership styles and dimensions might interact differently with EE and EP. The scope of the research did not delve deep into these, and this presents a potential avenue for future research. The reliance on self-reported measures, especially for constructs like employee performance, introduced a degree of subjectivity. Future studies could consider triangulating with objective performance metrics or incorporating feedback from peers or supervisors for a more comprehensive view.

Furthermore, the age demographic, with 48% of respondents between the ages of 41 and 50, might also mean that the views of younger or older professionals in the media production sector needed to be fully captured. Given the rapid evolution of the media sector, the perspectives of younger professionals, in particular, could offer differing insights. For future research, there is an opportunity to broaden the scope. Research can discover the potential moderating impacts of other organizational factors, such as organizational culture or communication styles. Given Oman's unique socio-cultural landscape, a cross-cultural or cross-regional comparison could yield fascinating contrasts and insights into how these relationships manifest in different environments.

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