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Article

Exploring factors affecting Employee Loyalty through the relationship between Service Quality and Management Commitment a case study analysis in the iron and steel industry Al Ezz Dekheila Steel Company in Egypt

Cogent Business & Management

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Suggested Citation: Abd-El-Salam, Eman Mohamed (2023) : Exploring factors affecting Employee Loyalty through the relationship between Service Quality and Management Commitment a case study analysis in the iron and steel industry Al Ezz Dekheila Steel Company in Egypt, Cogent Business & Management, ISSN 2331-1975, Taylor & Francis, Abingdon, Vol. 10, Iss. 2, pp. 1-31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2212492>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/294441>

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To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2212492>



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Received: 12 October 2022
Accepted: 25 April 2023

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Reviewing editor:
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MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring factors affecting Employee Loyalty through the relationship between Service Quality and Management Commitment a case study analysis in the iron and steel industry Al Ezz Dekheila Steel Company in Egypt

Eman Mohamed Abd-El-Salam^{1*}

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to discover factors affecting employee loyalty through the relationship between service quality and management commitment from the employees' perspective on the iron and steel industry, specifically in Al Ezz Dekheila Steel Company (EZDK) (a Middle East steel producer with a global reach) in Egypt. The author employed an inductive qualitative research approach through semi-structured interviews with 15 employees from different managerial levels (top, middle, and divisional) to achieve the study aim. All interviews were conducted in Arabic, the mother tongue of all respondents. Data were gathered personally by the researcher and statistically analyzed using thematic analysis to determine the main ideas of the transcripts. Based on the analysis of the interviews, the study has identified main themes, which refer to the important factors identified by employees of EZDK. Through these themes, the conceptual framework of factors affecting employee loyalty is developed. Five main themes are presented, where each theme consists of many codes. Themes and codes could be represented as follows; theme of Corporate Social Responsibility (Environmental Impact, Helping the Government, CSR Projects, and Reducing Energy Consumption), theme of Quality of Service Offered to Employees (Safety Climate, Service Recovery Performance, and Policies), theme of Working Atmosphere (Friendly, Supportive, Teamwork, Fair environment, and obstacles of CRM), theme of Management Commitment (Management support, Supervisor Support, and Transparency) and theme of Employee Loyalty (Employees

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study aims to examine the relationship between service quality and management commitment to determine factors affecting employee loyalty. This relation is examined inside an iron and steel industry, with EZDK as a case study. Data are collected through interviews, where the final sample consists of 15 interviews held with individuals from different managerial levels. Thematic analysis is done to analyze the collected data and a group of themes is identified that represent the main noticed points. These themes are corporate social responsibility, quality of service offered to employees, working atmosphere, management commitment, and employee loyalty. Each of these themes contains several codes that give a deeper understanding of it. Finally, the discussion proved that the concluded results are significant with previous studies as well as the study has mentioned new variables that are not mentioned before (corporate social responsibility, and quality of service offered to employees).

Empowerment, Employees Satisfaction, Employees planning, and being a part of the company). This paper contributes by filling the gap in the business field in both marketing (service quality, internal marketing) and management (HR, CSR) in discovering the factors affecting employee loyalty from the employees' frame of reference, as it is considered as the first of its sort to develop a conceptual framework that explores the factors affecting employee loyalty in the iron and steel industry in the setting of one of the leading developing nations in Africa and the Middle East.

Subjects: Multidisciplinary Psychology; Work & Organizational Psychology; Business, Management and Accounting

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; service quality; working atmosphere; management commitment; employee loyalty; social exchange theory; resource-based theory; iron and steel industry; Egypt

1. Introduction

The growth of information and innovation in the second half of the 1980s forced businesses and academic experts to develop new techniques for estimating a company's worth and identifying new activities that produce value added (Rahimpour et al., 2020). The development of resource-based theory and social exchange theory in the 1990s demonstrated that a company's performance is not just dependent on its physical assets and that its ability to stand out from its rivals can be attributed to its intangible assets. According to research, it is possible to measure employee engagement, commitment, loyalty, innovation, and competitive advantage by combining resource-based theory and social exchange theory (Kassa & Tsigu, 2021).

The idea of employee loyalty has undergone significant changes as the relationship between employer and employee changes. In fact, a recent workforce survey found that almost 80% of participants said their view of loyalty in the workplace had changed (Albtoosh et al., 2022). According to Hawkins (2000, p. 18), if loyalty no longer has a philosophical foundation in a culture, people are left with only two goals—personal tranquilly and personal wealth—and these values undermine loyalty with their self-absorbed emphasis. Employees who just want to be left alone in order to pursue better jobs and experiences do not have room for enduring relationships, as a result. In other words, organizational performance and productivity will significantly improve if managers can help workers build a sense of attachment to their jobs and a sense of loyalty toward the company (Aboobaker et al., 2020).

Employee loyalty is at a crossroads in the Egyptian context and is challenging to establish, so the significant presence of working individuals who have a variety of characteristics such as skills in performance, high confidence, ongoing fulfillment, and commitment to work in the organisation are major investments and critical resources for all firms (Stojanovic et al., 2020). Furthermore, sustainable employee loyalty became a crucial issue for businesses in numerous domains, such as management, industrial marketing, accounting, economics, and strategic management. In addition, improving employee loyalty helps decrease employee attrition and migration rates (Albtoosh et al., 2022). Organizations that aspire to prosper in the current economic climate should make the necessary investments in intellectual assets to acquire personnel with greater talents than their competitors (Hasan, 2021). Highly qualified, skilled, and loyal employees act as an intellectual capital asset (i.e., internal customers) due to their ability to feel the internal conditions of the organization as well as their capability to interact with various innovations entering and leaving the organization, in which their responsibilities are broader and deeper (Mousa, 2021). Employee loyalty is characterized by a desire to work late, a low attrition rate, and improved service delivery. Organizations with a higher percentage of loyal employees have a significant competitive

advantage and a higher survival probability than those with a lower percentage (Gouda, 2018; Kim et al., 2016; Rice et al., 2017).

The first question that may emerge in any researcher's mind is why the iron and steel business? The simple answer is that the iron and steel sector is crucial to the development of the industry and the economy as a whole, making it a strategic industry for any given city. Globalization has significantly altered the Egyptian steel sector during the past ten years. Due to its connections to virtually all other industries that foster economic advancement, including building, housing, infrastructure, consumer products, and automotive, the Egyptian steel industry constitutes one of the pillars of Egypt's economic growth and development. The relevance and growth of the steel sector are crucial for the advancement of the Egyptian economy overall because all these industries rely largely on the steel industry (Flanders investment and trade, 2021). Furthermore, The Middle East and North Africa region's second-largest steel market in terms of production and third-largest in terms of consumption is the Egyptian steel industry. The largest company in the steel sector is EZZ Steel, which runs four specially constructed facilities in key locations across Egypt (Alexandria "EZDK," Sadat City, Suez, and 10th of Ramadan City), allowing for convenient access to raw materials and proximity to crucial transport networks for effective international distribution. Additionally, EZDK serves as both the corporate headquarters and the largest of the four plants. In addition to supplying long and flat steel products to numerous nations worldwide, EZZ Steel is currently the largest independent steel company in the Middle East and North Africa (<https://www.ezzsteel.com/steel-products>).

Another question that may emerge in the mind of any researcher is why EZDK was selected as an Iron and Steel Company? Numerous businesses that make various steel products are available on the Egyptian market. There are only four manufacturers of flat steel in Egypt, and they are: EZDK, which controls more than 53% of the market; Egyptian Iron and Steel Company, which controls 23% of the market; Ezz Flat Steel Company (also owned by the Ezz group and began producing flat steel in 2016) holds 13%; and Kandil Steel, which controls 11% of the market there (Alexandria steelmaking plant | Ezz Steel).

EZDK is the largest independent producer of steel in the Middle East and Africa region and is the market leader in Egypt. It was established in 1982 in Alexandria, Egypt, and in 2019, it has 3,756 employees. EZDK consists of different departments, which are; accounting, finance, human resources, operations, engineering, and others. Based on what was mentioned above, the author was motivated to pursue the study in EZDK which is the company leader in the Egyptian market.

To expect higher levels of employee loyalty, a firm must demonstrate a similar or even higher level of loyalty toward its personnel (Dhir et al., 2020). Lack of commitment from the top management is the main reason for failure (Haldorai et al., 2022). Furthermore, it may be claimed that an excellence strategy can only be achieved through an organization's capacity to foster a bond with its workforce (Hasan, 2021). In addition, the more individuals feel loyal towards their jobs, they will act in the best interest of their employer, exercise superior performance and behavior to deliver the brand's promise, create sustainable competitive advantage of good image and reputation, promote its product's quality, provide better brand than competitors and accept any change that is in the interest of the organization and its progress, believing that any prosperity of the organization will bring them well (Phuong & Vinh, 2020; Yan et al., 2022).

Employee commitment and loyalty are not the same even though they are frequently used synonymously (Tabrani et al., 2018). Loyalty is a quality of fidelity and truthfulness; it expresses a person's enthusiasm or devotion for a thing, which could be another person or group of people, an ideal, a duty, or a cause. Employees who are loyal to a company are those who would stay with it, feel a feeling of belonging, and serve as its ambassadors, regardless of any benefits that might be provided by other employers or good word-of-mouth (Aboobaker et al., 2020; Dhir et al., 2020). On the other hand, organizational commitment has multiple dimensions and includes a worker's

dedication to the company. Employee loyalty then evolves into a general emotional attitude toward the company, increasing a sense of devotion to the company (ZayasOrtiz et al., 2015). Personnel must therefore continue to exhibit a positive attitude, loyalty to the company, dedication, honesty, and cooperation with coworkers.

Despite substantial scientific research, the definition of loyalty and its roots are still unclear (Dhir et al., 2020). Numerous studies have looked numerically, but not from the employees' perspective, at the causes and effects of employee loyalty. Additionally, they focused on certain elements mostly in the service sector rather than the industrial sector. In light of the foregoing, the present study goal was to close a gap in the literature by examining the factors influencing employee loyalty through the relationship between service quality and management commitment from the perspective of the employees, a topic that has not previously been addressed or studied. Researchers as well as professionals in the field can benefit from the study. It offers tips and tricks that could help increase employee loyalty, which would then lead to better work output and long-term success.

This study aims to develop a framework that identifies factors that affects employee loyalty by examining the relationship between service quality and management commitment from the employees' perspective on the iron and steel industry. Accordingly, two main questions are developed, which are; what are the factors that affect employee loyalty? What is the relationship between service quality and management commitment? Accordingly, two main objectives are developed, which are; investigating factors that affect employee loyalty, and testing the relationship between service quality and management commitment.

The remainder of this essay is organized as follows: the author begins by summarizing the theoretical background and reviewing the literature, then moves on to the methodology, results, and lastly a discussion and the implications.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social exchange theory and employee loyalty

The voluntary practice of social exchange theory is inspired by the alignment of expectations and results (Blau, 1964). The fundamental tenet of social exchange theory is that the most common kind of human connection is the exchange of social processes and material resources. According to this theory, people can modify their behavior based on their expectations for the future and develop a sense of loyalty toward their organizations (Aristana et al., 2012). Social exchange is of particular importance to self-assured leaders who encourage interaction with subordinates. The behavior of subordinates will be influenced by leaders who provide the appropriate support, advise on significant choices, grant more autonomy, and remove unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles (Kim & Beehr, 2018).

2.2. Resource-based theory and employee loyalty

The structure-conduct-performance paradigm of the industrial organization (IO) view of the organization serves as the foundation for the resource-based theory of an organization (Porter, 1980). Internal competencies are now more valued than the external environment, contrary to the industrial organization (IO) concept of the company, which historically attributes performance to the external environment (Smith & Blakeslee, 2002). Where there is mobility and equal distribution, resource theory and loyalty converge. Not all firm resources possess the potential for a prolonged competitive advantage, according to Barney (1991, pp. 105–106). There cannot be any strategically equivalent substitutes for this resource that is valuable but neither rare nor imperfectly imitable, so a firm must possess all four of the following characteristics for it to have this potential: it must be valuable in the sense that it takes advantage of opportunities and/or neutralizes threats in the firm's environment; rare among the firm's current and potential competitors; and perfectly

imitable. These requirements are met by the loyalty of highly qualified personnel as a source of internal competency.

3. Literature review

The qualities that inspire people to stick with a firm and make employees loyal have been the subject of extensive investigation. Hirschman (1970) was the first to coin the phrase “employee loyalty.” He described a devoted worker as someone who endures hardships with confidence that things will become better in the future (Dutta & Dhir, 2021). Employee commitment to the company and commitment to its goals are key components (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Employee loyalty is the readiness to make a personal sacrifice for a connection, according to one definition (Mehta et al., 2010).

Every company uses a distinct approach to increase employee loyalty, and one of them is through work policies because it may produce employees who are more engaged to their work and profession. Demands that are incompatible with the workplace are addressed by workplace rules, such as flexible work schedules, family leave policies, and other measures (Stojanovic et al., 2020). The established work policies will result in more loyalty. The devotion of an employee to their work must also be considered when evaluating an employee’s loyalty. Employee job loyalty in a business over an extended time reduces their propensity to seek out and accept new positions (Ghosh and Itam, 2020).

Employee loyalty is also supported by a strong desire to stay employed by a company, work that is based on the company’s vision and values, readiness to put up extra effort, and a strong commitment to the interests of the firm. Every company is aware that the loyalty of its employees is what gives it value. On the other hand, low employee loyalty will damage and lead to problems including a lack of confidence, poorly done work, absenteeism, and high staff turnover intentions (M. Khuong & Linh, 2020; Martin et al., 2021). Examining the factors that might have an impact on employee loyalty has become a challenging area of research because employee loyalty is one of the major forces behind business growth and sustainability in many industries (Kalimuthuan et al., 2019). The diversity of perspectives reflects the range of background characteristics in the research foci: attitudes may vary according to work level and kind, as well as cultural background. Therefore, in the next two sub-sections, the factors that affect employee loyalty are explained.

3.1. Between theory and practice: factors that influence employee loyalty

Loyalty is when workers are committed to fulfilling their duties and trying to provide the company with their best effort (Darmawan et al., 2020). This section discusses previous studies that investigated the factors that could affect employee loyalty.

Chan et al. (2011) studied how job security, career advancement, the workplace, and the compensation for services and rewards affected employee loyalty, which can lower the employee turnover rate in Malaysia’s hotel business. They used questionnaires to carry out their research. The personnel in the hotel industry received questionnaires from the researchers. Additionally, they discuss the significance of personnel in the production and functioning of businesses. They came to the conclusion that in order to increase employee loyalty to the hotel business, the organization needed to place a greater emphasis on career development, pay and benefits, job security, and workplace culture. Additionally, there are some suggestions for encouraging employee adherence to the hotel sector, which may aid the business in maximising revenues and enhancing operations.

Ineson et al. (2013) looked at the relationship between employees loyalty to the company and job satisfaction among Hungarian employees. Through the use of a questionnaire, information was gathered from more than 600 hotel employees around the country about their views about loyalty and opinions regarding job satisfaction. Principal component analysis (PCA) found several critical factors that affect employee loyalty and job satisfaction, including participation and recognition,

social interaction, career advancement, and pay and perks (commitment to managers and company, job conditions, personal benefits, service element and location, career, and status). An analysis of the interactions showed that social advantages of workplace engagement and managers' treatment of staff had a higher influence on employee loyalty than monetary rewards.

Employee loyalty was studied by M. N. Khuong and Tien (2013) in relation to supervisor support, teamwork, the working environment, and job satisfaction. For the purpose of gathering information from personnel who worked in the banking sector, a questionnaire design was used. The study found that employee loyalty was significantly positively impacted by supervisor support, teamwork, the working environment, and job satisfaction.

Employee loyalty was explored by Murali et al. (2017) to determine its significance for organisational success and the chance that it will eventually be included in performance reviews. A questionnaire was created to gather information from survey participants who used the internet (restricted to the group of working people aged 20–60). The vast majority agree that being recognised for and rewarded for their commitment is important. Considering the respondent's views regarding its inclusion in performance reviews. Following the collection of the recorded replies, appropriate pie charts, bar graphs, and line graphs were created to assess the survey's findings and draw conclusions from them. According to the findings, employees generally view their loyalty to their employer as increasing with age. Employees in the upper age group are happier working for their current employer than those in the lower age group. Employees in the younger age group typically serve shorter terms of office since they are ambitious and frequently depart for positions paying more money. Since this directly affects the overall OP, firms must make loyalty a major consideration when evaluating employee performance.

The effects of the work environment, leadership style, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty in Parador Hotels and Resorts were studied by (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Data were collected from 642 Indonesian employees, then the Slovin algorithm was used to calculate the sample size, and 200 employees were included in the structural equation modeling (SEM) sample. Descriptive statistics and SEM-Partial Least Squares were the analytical techniques employed in this investigation. The findings indicated a positive significant relationship between work environment, leadership style, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty. This study examined four variables that could influence employee loyalty, although it was better to identify dimensions of these variables especially: work environment, leadership style, and organizational culture.

A. I. Khan (2018) tested the impact of ethical leadership on employee loyalty. The cross-sectional research design and the survey method were used. Khan concluded that employee loyalty is the desire of people to work for the company. Employee loyalty and ethical leadership are key factors in evaluating employees' performance. Ethical leadership evaluates the attitudes, actions, and loyalties of the workforce. Organizations can achieve their goals with the aid of loyal employees and ethical leadership. 200 top and intermediate-level individuals that work for high-tech, privately-owned companies in Lahore make up the sample. The findings indicated a positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee loyalty. The results showed a strong link between leadership and loyal employees. The only independent variable examined in this study was ethical leadership, which was investigated for its impact on loyalty. Testing more independent variables will therefore help the research be more valuable.

To determine whether job happiness has an effect on employees' loyalty and commitment is the goal of (Frempong et al., 2018). Work satisfaction is crucial for increasing and sustaining organizational productivity and employee loyalty because it fosters effective service delivery and exceptional performance. The study designs adopted were descriptive and exploratory. The study's target population was the whole workforce in Ghana's selected industries. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the accurate data from a sample of 150 people from the

manufacturing, banking, and mining industries. According to the study, employee loyalty is positively influenced by job satisfaction. The report also claimed that stakeholders should pay more attention to their employees' loyalty and dedication as this will promote improvement and help these industries survive the current competition. Job satisfaction is a key component that is highly tied to loyalty.

The effect of organizational commitment on employee loyalty was studied by (Mahalingam & Suresh, 2018). Commitment is a way of thinking that shows a worker's commitment to the firm and is a continuous process through which workers can exhibit their concern for the success and general well-being of the organization. Organizational commitment refers to a worker's level of identification with a particular organization and its goals and desire to stay a member of that organization. In order to gather information from IT sector in Coimbatore, an organized questionnaire was used. According to the conclusions, there is a strong link between corporate commitment and employee loyalty. This study's scope was restricted to looking at just two factors and how they related to one another.

Al-Edenat and Alhawamdeh (2018) illustrated the influence of empowerment on employee loyalty. Empowerment delivers notable benefits on both the corporate and individual levels. Empowerment is capable of meeting basic human needs like acceptance and ownership. Individual empowerment fostered a sense of participation in determining one's destiny; in addition, jobs become outstanding, inspirational, enjoyable, and significant. Employee loyalty has been found to benefit from empowerment. Through 31 SMEs in Jordan's IT sector, a survey was created to gather information from 350 employees and 66 direct supervisors of those individuals. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the valid data. According to the study, employee loyalty was significantly impacted by empowerment. Similar to the previous study, this one requires the addition of additional factors to produce more useful data.

Sharma (2019) outlined the relationship between leadership, training and development, the workplace environment, and employee loyalty. Employee loyalty is the desire and commitment of a person to stay with a business and actively take part in its operations. When an employee sees himself as the center of the organization and an indispensable component of it, that person is showing dedication and voluntary involvement toward that organization. The survey was done on the working professionals in the Noida NCR and Gurugram-based HR consultants. A convenience sampling technique was used with a non-probability sample size of 100. According to the study, training and development have little bearing on employee loyalty, however the working environment and leadership have a substantial impact. Despite the fact that this study looked at significant elements, more variables might be added to pinpoint the true reasons that influence employee loyalty, which is a crucial aspect that influences any company's performance.

Farrukh et al. (2019) illustrated the influence of mutual trust and leadership support on employee loyalty. An employee who is committed to the company puts in more effort at work to meet the objectives established by the company, which is a key element in keeping the employee on staff. Data was gathered from Saudi Arabian hotel workers in Jeddah, Makkah, Medina, Riyadh, and Abha. A total of 384 of the 700 questionnaires were delivered to workers in the hospitality sector and returned at the end of data collection. The study found that there was a significant direct influence of mutual trust and leadership support on employee loyalty. This study mentioned mutual trust and leadership support as significant factors that enhance loyalty. On the other hand, more dimensions related to support and trust could be added to the study.

In the four public hospitals situated in Egypt's October province, Mousa et al. (2019) investigated the impact of climate change on doctors' affective, continuing, and normative commitment with and without mediating the role of responsible leadership. They discovered that physicians' three methods to organizational commitment were negatively impacted by climate change (affective, continuance, and normative). Additionally, the statistical study demonstrated that the influence of

responsible leadership in hospitals on the connection between climatic change and affective, continuance, and normative commitment is insignificant.

To address job performance in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods sector, Qureshi et al. (2019) used a more comprehensive methodology. Their goal was to investigate the characteristics of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Data gathered from fast-moving consumer goods managers have been analyzed using structural equation modeling techniques. According to the findings of structural equation modeling, there is a strong correlation between all three types of commitment and increased employee work satisfaction. According to the findings, continuous commitment has the least impact on job satisfaction while normative commitment has the greatest organizational influence. Additionally, the findings revealed a strong correlation between workers' job performance and job satisfaction.

Escortell et al. (2020) look into any distinctions between internal employees and outsourced labor as well as the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction. Utilizing fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis, a novel approach was used (fsQCA). Sixty employees of four- and five-star hotels in Spain were surveyed using a questionnaire to get their opinions. Throughout the sample, it was found that having strong leadership in three out of the four transformational leadership aspects was sufficient to raise job satisfaction. Individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence were the three combinations of dimensions that work best. Other good combinations include individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence as well as intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.

Darmawan et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between quality human resources and employee loyalty. Human resource management placed more emphasis on addressing how people may achieve ideal goals. The success of a business is largely dependent on the quality of its human resources, the greater the quality, the more loyal its workforce will be and the better its output will be. An organization's ability to fulfill its goals will be greatly aided by effective personnel performance. A survey was created to gather information from 113 employees, and the valid information was examined using a path analysis tool and a simple tiered regression analysis. The results found that there was a significant influence of quality human resources on employee loyalty. Mentioning human resources and their quality represents a good way to measure the loyalty of employees but adding other variables away from human resources will help managers and decision-makers in getting a better understanding of loyalty.

Ansari (2020) used a questionnaire-based survey research approach to evaluate the interdependence between many variables, such as quality, loyalty, satisfaction, profitability, etc., by statistically assessing a well-supported set of extensive interconnected hypotheses. This questionnaire targets Telecom Service Industries. The results suggest that improving customer loyalty, contentment, and repeat purchase behavior is mostly driven by service quality and employee satisfaction.

Ansari (2021) funded a study to examine the relationship between service quality, employee loyalty, and profitability using the service profit chain (SPC) model in the Omani telecom service industry. An investigation on the effects of a company's internal assets on employee satisfaction and loyalty, operational effectiveness, and the impact on the turnover of the firm in terms of revenue and profitability was done using a questionnaire-based survey. The results suggest that to enhance a company's internal performance and foster stronger ties with clients and suppliers, employees' loyalty should be viewed as a significant asset within the firm. As a result, it is important to regularly assess service quality, employee loyalty, and SPC qualities.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, Abdullah et al. (2021) concentrated on the issue of staff loyalty at private hospitals in Pakistan. A correlational study design was combined with a causal research strategy. 250 nurses from various private hospitals in Punjab province made up the final sample.

The findings revealed that when nurses receive social and psychological benefits at work from their companies, they stay loyal to them despite having unyielding work demands and dealing with work-family conflict. This study focused on an internal and another external factor that can affect loyalty, accordingly the results are so helpful, but other independent variables are still needed to be added to this study to get a wider understanding.

Lai (2021) aimed to examine significant factors that could affect employee loyalty and establish the relationships between them in Vietnam as a case study of a developing mid-income country. Quantitative methods are utilized to collect data. The results showed that co-workers' support had the strongest effect on employee loyalty, while, salary ranked as the least significant factor in employee loyalty. This research assured of the significant role of support in enhancing employee loyalty, however, more factors need to be added for the aim of defining their role toward loyalty.

For IT workers in Vietnam, Phuong and Vinh (2021) sought to investigate the effects of the workplace environment, the possibility of pay and promotion, fairness, and workplace relationships on the degree of job satisfaction as well as the connections between job satisfaction, job performance, and employee loyalty. The findings demonstrated that the working environment, possibility for compensation and promotion, fairness, and interpersonal relationships at work all had an impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, job happiness has a significant favorable impact on both employee loyalty and job performance. Finally, it has been demonstrated that employee loyalty has a direct positive impact on job performance. Other elements might also be included, even though the focus of this study is on internal factors that influence loyalty.

Mousa et al. (2021) investigated the effect of narcissistic leadership on affective, continuance and normative commitment approaches with and without the mediating effect of academics' silence in four public universities located in Egypt. They found that narcissistic leadership positively associates with academics' silence. Moreover, their perceptions of the narcissism of their leaders alleviate academics' emotional attachments (affective commitment) and moral obligations (normative commitment) toward their universities, whereas the same perceptions of the narcissism of their leaders do not affect their continuance commitment. Finally, the authors discovered a significant role of academics' silence in mediating the negative relationship between narcissistic leadership and their affective and normative commitments.

Jin et al. (2022) looked into elements that influence loyalty; as a result, numerous linear and ordered logistic regression methods were applied, and active sport event tourists were the intended audience. The findings showed that loyalty was most influenced by satisfaction, with service quality and relationship investment quality having a direct bearing on loyalty. Additionally, several socio-demographic and behavioral traits were pull factors that affected loyalty. Additionally, while the focus of this research was on both internal and external elements that influence loyalty, other elements that needed to be examined were service quality and corporate social responsibility.

Fadhila and Sulistiyani (2022) investigated how motivation, the workplace, and career advancement impacted the loyalty of staff members at the PT Tawada Healthcare Semarang, one of the company's regional offices in Indonesia. A variety of sources, including questionnaires, literature reviews, and interviews, were used to obtain the data. Multiple linear regression, the goodness of fit regression equation, the coefficient of determination, and the T-test were the techniques employed in the data analysis. The findings demonstrated a favorable and significant impact of motivation, work environment, and career advancement on employees' loyalty. Increased employee loyalty was mostly influenced by the workplace. This study produced useful results, particularly after gathering information from many sources.

Supit (2022) will investigate the concurrent and limited effects of the workplace and the leadership style on employee loyalty. The investigation used a sample of 60 workers from Rumah Kopi Sarina

Kawangkoan, a well-known café in Indonesia, and a multiple regression analysis. The findings demonstrated that employee loyalty had an impact on both the work environment and the leadership style simultaneously and in part. According to the findings, leadership was important in increasing employee loyalty, and they felt at ease with a certain leadership approach. Additionally, it was advised that Rumah Kopi Sarina Kawangkoan should consider increasing the employee's pay. Rumah Kopi Sarina could offer greater bonuses since it is the component of the work environment that has the least impact on employee morale. In this study, it was suggested to examine the same relationship by collecting data from different places, as data was collected from a café with a small number of employees, so a larger sample helps in getting more accurate results.

Mousa and Chaouali (2022) looked into the relationship between individual and group job crafting and the affective commitment that gig workers form to the crowdsourcing platforms they sign up for. They discovered that proactive behavior included in both individual and collaborative job crafting may give gig workers a sense of purpose and, as a result, affective commitment to the crowdsourcing platforms they sign up for. Additionally, meaningfulness has a beneficial impact on gig workers' affective commitment to the crowdsourcing platforms they sign up with.

Ansari (2022) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the shortcomings in the current service quality and the obstacles to the adoption of total quality management (TQM) methods in the healthcare sector. According to research, TQM may be applied in the ideal setting with dedicated leadership and a helpful infrastructure, which would improve service quality, increase customer and employee loyalty, boost profitability, and boost shareholder value.

According to Rad and Vazquez (2023), the intention to use the services provided by professional associations to their members is psychologically and behaviorally influenced by involvement behavior, organizational commitment, perceived value, and attitudinal loyalty. An empirical investigation was carried out for this objective, and partial least squares was the method employed (PLS). The results emphasize the significance of commitment to membership and attitudinal loyalty, which have a sequential mediation influence on the relationship between perceived value and intention to use. Due to the lack of research on the links between psychological and behavioral characteristics associated to the member-association relationship, this study adds to the body of knowledge on professional associations. Furthermore, there is currently no complete study framework in the area of professional associations that incorporates the involved structures. Our findings offer novel approaches to enhance the intention to use the services of professional associations, which have management-related ramifications. The multiple antecedents of employee loyalty have been linked by numerous research on employee loyalty conducted by academics. Satisfied employees will remain loyal to their employer if they believe it offers opportunities for learning and development as well as a clearly defined career path they can take inside the business. He also found that training and development are important factors influencing employee loyalty (Costen & Salazar, 2011; OLONADE & OMOTOYE, 2021; Vi, 2017).

According to previous studies, satisfaction factors such as recognition and awards, teamwork, and cooperation, working environment, and relationship with supervisor have the strongest correlations between employee satisfaction and employee loyalty. All three dimensions of employee loyalty have a substantial correlation with the relationship with supervisor score (Pandey & Khare, 2012; Dhir et al., 2020; Turkyilmaz et al., 2011; Sanyal and Hisam, 2018). Employee loyalty is influenced by both the essential intrinsic and extrinsic job components of the job, such as the compensation, hours, and working conditions (Pitaloka & Sofia, 2014; Njambi, 2014).

3.2. Employee loyalty in an industry sector

Companies with high employee loyalty will provide better profits for the shareholders because it is a key component of any progressing and sustainable firm in any industry. This section presents previous studies that examined employee loyalty in the industrial sector.

Khan *et al.* (2020a) investigated the factors that affected employee loyalty in the industry sector. Employees' loyalty can be increased by providing them with the appropriate training. Employee loyalty can be significantly influenced by organizational commitment and employee happiness. It is safe to say that if an employee's performance on official tasks is highly regarded and appreciated, this will assist to increase the employee's degree of loyalty and will undoubtedly boost his working abilities and devotion to his work. A questionnaire was designed and collected data from Jeddah, Makkah, and Madinah in Saudi Arabia and the valid data was 390 questionnaires. The results indicated that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment had a significant effect on employee loyalty.

Given the numerous issues the healthcare sector faces, including those relating to human resources and their performance, M. Khan *et al.* (2020 b) explored the connection between financial incentives and work performance through the mediation of employee loyalty. The cross-sectional data was gathered from 302 employees (doctors and nurses) working at several hospitals in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan, using convenience sampling techniques. Smart PLS 3.2.7 was utilized in the study for the empirical analysis and findings. The statistical findings of this study demonstrate that financial incentives are one of the main drivers of employee loyalty to their companies, which in turn promotes improved job performance. Additionally, businesses must give employees premium financial incentives to keep them around for extended periods of time, which will improve their effectiveness on the job.

In the business sector, Maulidiani and Bhinekawati (2020) looked at the variables influencing employee loyalty. The study discovered that employee contentment, empowerment, and trust in management all had a substantial impact on employee loyalty by creating a survey and distributing it to 100 millennial employees at e-Commerce businesses in Jakarta. Organizational performance is anticipated as a result of the relationship between employee commitment and trust. "Trust in an organization" refers to the opinion staff members have of a company's dependability. Management must take into account how this affects employee attitudes and future contributions to the company, and organizations must foster management trust. Employee performance may increase with empowerment. Employees became more devoted to their employer as a result of being given the authority and duty to decide on every aspect of their employment. Employees are more likely to have a good attitude toward their work if they are extremely satisfied with their occupations. The drive and willingness of employees to show up for work each day and stick around is known as job satisfaction. Although this study connected employee loyalty to empowerment, employee satisfaction, and trust in management, other factors still need to be added to loyalty.

The elements that affect employee loyalty in the sector of the industry were made clear by (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). Data from 320 employees of SMEs in 5 districts of Tra Vinh City, Vietnam, were gathered for the study, and the valid data were then examined using the multivariate regression method. The following six variables influenced employee loyalty: coworkers, managers, job requirements, pay practices, corporate culture, and work environment. Although the focus of this study is on internal variables that influence loyalty, other variables, such as management commitment and the caliber of staff services, could also be considered.

Ismail and Puteh (2021) provided examples of the variables that affected employee loyalty in the industry sector. A cross-sectional design and a quantitative methodology were used. The survey of workers in Malaysia's manufacturing sector in Klang and Shah Alam provided the study's main source of data. The findings indicate that 384 population samples were needed. The research found that salaries and pay, organizational support, the working environment, training and development, and career growth were the five criteria that had the greatest impact on employee loyalty. Similar to the first study, this one requires the addition of more factors that influence loyalty.

At PT Agung Berkas Bintatar Abadi, an Indonesian firm that produces and manages wood processing, (Pulungan & Andika, 2022) sought to determine the impact that pay, the workplace, and collaboration had on employee loyalty. 78 participants made up the ultimate population, according to calculations. Salary, work environment, and teamwork all exhibited positive and significant influences on employee loyalty,

both partially and concurrently, according to the SPSS multiple linear regression study. Additionally, it was discovered that the most important element in predicting employee loyalty was salary. Employee loyalty can be linked to compensation, work environment, and teamwork 95.6 % of the time, with the balance attributed to other variables. Employee loyalty was inversely connected to salary, work environment, and teamwork. As this research depends on collecting quantitative data from employees at an industrial company in Indonesia, a larger sample is needed to be collected for the aim of reaching generalization.

4. Research methodology

Most researchers do not write much about their underlying assumptions directly and remain implied beneath the surface. However, their research leaves clues, especially in how they approach their research methods. Understanding them, help us understand and appreciate research in more sophisticated ways (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Research methodology is the way that the researcher understands the research topic and the strategy used to solve the research problem (Patel & Patel, 2019). The current study depends on interpretivism philosophy; which is the result of the ontological assumption that the truth depends on multiple versions of reality; what is real depends on the meaning you attached to the truth as truth, shaped by context and the epistemological assumption that reality needs to be interpreted to discover the underlying meaning; what loyalty means to them, how an employee understand loyalty from their thinking processes. This encouraged the author to explore the indicators or factors behind their loyalty from their reference who lived and experienced the phenomenon. In addition, the author chose a case study of EZDK company as its market share exceeds 60 % in Egypt, as well as using semi-structured interviews as a method to collect the data. The focus of qualitative research design is on non-numerical information, and the data used is qualitative, meaning it cannot be differentiated by numbers and instead consists of free-form or unstructured data like texts, experiments, or interviews (Almalki, 2016). The sample of the study consists of different managerial levels (top, middle, and divisional) working at EZDK, where the final sample stopped at 15 interviews due to duplicate information as information starts to be duplicated starting from interview ten.

5. Results and Findings

The current study aims to develop a conceptual framework that explores factors affecting employee loyalty through the relationship between service quality and management commitment from the employees' perspective in EZDK in Egypt. Accordingly, 15 interviews are held with individuals from different managerial levels (top, middle, and divisional) working in the iron and steel industry, specifically in EZDK in Egypt.

Each interview consists of 8 questions, which are;

- (1) Briefly, could you please tell me about your role/affiliation/position in EZDK steel manufacturing company (EZDK)?
- (2) Would you please tell me about what your DEKHILA steel manufacturing company (EZDK) is doing or has done to promote its commitment to the quality of service offered to you and your colleagues in the company?
- (3) Would you please tell me your feelings and opinion about the activities your manufacturing company (EZDK) is doing or has done to promote and enhance CSR?
- (4) How would you describe the atmosphere at DEKHILA steel manufacturing company (EZDK)?
- (5) How would you feel about working with your colleagues? What is the best part? What is the worst part?
- (6) How would you describe the relationship with your supervisor? What is the best part? What is the worst part?
- (7) Would you want to change anything about the current service program in the DEKHILA steel manufacturing company (EZDK)?
- (8) Give me a scale from 1 to 10 that present your satisfaction with your current job. Also, are you planning to find a better job in another company?

Interviews were done with 15 employees at EZDK in Egypt and the collected data were analyzed. Qualitative analysis is done to analyze the interviews. A study method known as qualitative research observes, comprehends, and evaluates occurrences without relying on numerical data. Instead of measuring a subject, qualitative analysis typically aims to characterize it. As a result, it is dependent upon the researcher's comprehension (Yilmaz, 2013). In the current study, qualitative analysis is done by conducting thematic analysis using the NVivo program. Thematic analysis is a suitable method of analysis that seeks to comprehend the experiences and ideas of a particular data set (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis was done by using several steps.

The steps of thematic analysis are; step (1) gaining familiarity with the data, step (2) creating coding categories or subcategories, step (3) generating themes, step (4) reviewing themes, step (5) labeling themes, and step (6) identifying exemplars (Scharp & Sanders, 2019).

5.1. Step (1) gaining familiarity with the data

In this step, the researcher writes the questions and answers from the interviews in Microsoft Word files, which are then imported into NVivo (Cruzes & Dyba, 2011). Table 1 depicts how the researcher organized the 15 interviews in NVIVO.

5.2. Step (2) creating coding categories or subcategories

In this step, the responses are extracted and compiled together. In addition, coding categories or subcategories are created (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). Table 2 shows this step in NVivo.

5.3. Step (3) generating themes

The themes are extracted from the codes in this step after the initial codes have been generated. As a result, the researcher must be familiar with the codes. There is usually a long list of codes. As a result, the researcher may gradually group similar codes into groups, name each group, and provide a brief explanation for each name individually. Some codes are themes, while others are subthemes, and still, others are codes that do not yet belong to any theme and must be temporarily written to later determine which themes they belong to; otherwise, they may need to be extracted. To make this step easier a word cloud is extracted (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). (Figure 1) shows the extracted word cloud.

5.4. Step (4) reviewing themes

This step entails some procedures that the researcher must follow, beginning with reading the transcripts written for the number of interviews (which aids in identifying the codes). The researcher then grouped similar codes and separated different ones from each other (this aids in categorizing similar codes under one theme and different codes under separate themes). The final procedure represents identifying the emerging themes and their relative weight concerning other themes (by counting the codes frequencies to sum them up for themes that emerged, in this case, if a code was mentioned by the respondent several times, it was counted by the number of being mentioned rather than the number of interviews that mentioned a certain code) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Through this step, three themes are generated, which are;

- (1) Theme of Corporate Social Responsibility
- (2) Theme of Quality of Service Offered to Employees
- (3) Theme of Working Atmosphere
- (4) Theme of Management Commitment
- (5) Theme of Employee Loyalty

Table 1. Imported File into NVIVO

| Internals | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Name | Nodes | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By |
| Interview1 | 9 | 10 | 8/4/2022 4:05PM | A | 8/4/2022 4:45 PM | A |
| Interview 10 | 11 | 12 | 2/2/2022 4:05 PM | A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview 11 | 6 | 6 | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview12 | 8 | 8 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview18 | 9 | 10 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview14 | 8 | 8 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:28 PM | A |
| Interview15 | 6 | 6 | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview2 | 9 | 10 | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview3 | 8 | 8 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview4 | 8 | 10 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview5 | 8 | 8 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview6 | 10 | 12 | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview 7 | 6 | 6 | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A | 6/2/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview8 | 9 | 10 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |
| Interview9 | 9 | 9 | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:05 PM | A |

5.5. Step (5) labeling themes

In this step, the major themes of the data are categorized under different sub-themes (codes) to understand the answer to the research questions (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). Table 3 shows the final developed themes and codes.

5.6. Step (6) identifying exemplars

This stage takes place after the topics have been sufficiently established and the final analysis has been written and reported on. It is critical to stress that the story of the themes is told correctly, consistently, and without repetition within or through the themes (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). This step is shown in the following sub-sections.

5.7. Theme of Corporate Social Responsibility

The first theme developed from the codes that appeared in the interviews is the theme of Corporate Social Responsibility, where the codes are Environmental Impact, Helping the Government, CSR Projects, and Reducing Energy Consumption. The codes of Corporate Social Responsibility theme are shown in (Figure 2).

Table 2. Extracted Responses from NVIVO

| Name | Sources | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By |
|---|-----------|------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Corporate Social Responsibility | 15 | 15 | 8/3/2022 4:08 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:28 PM | A |
| CRM Projects | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:21 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:23 PM | A |
| Environmental Impact | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:08 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:10 PM | A |
| Helping the Government | 5 | 5 | 8/3/2022 4:12 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:21 PM | A |
| Reducing Energy Consumption | 2 | 2 | 8/3/2022 4:10 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:12 PM | A |
| Employee Loyalty | 11 | 11 | 8/3/2022 4:40 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:45 PM | A |
| Being part of the company | 3 | 3 | 8/3/2022 4:44 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:45 PM | A |
| Employee Empowerment | 2 | 2 | 8/3/2022 4:40 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:41 PM | A |
| Employee Planning | 3 | 3 | 8/3/2022 4:43 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:44 PM | A |
| Employee Satisfaction | 3 | 3 | 8/3/2022 4:41 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:42 PM | A |
| Management Commitment | 8 | 11 | 8/3/2022 4:35 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:41 PM | A |
| Management Support | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:35 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:36 PM | A |
| Supervisor Support | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:36 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:38 PM | A |
| Transparency | 3 | 3 | 8/3/2022 4:38 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:39 PM | A |
| Quality of Service offered to Employee | 12 | 12 | 8/3/2022 4:38 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:28 PM | A |
| Policies | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:27 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:28 PM | A |
| Safety Climate | 6 | 6 | 8/3/2022 4:23 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:25 PM | A |
| Service Recovery Performance | 2 | 2 | 8/3/2022 4:26 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:26 PM | A |
| Working Atmosphere | 8 | 13 | 8/3/2022 4:29 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:36 PM | A |
| Fair Environment | 1 | 2 | 8/3/2022 4:32 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:33 PM | A |
| Friendly | 4 | 4 | 8/3/2022 4:29 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:30 PM | A |
| Obstacle of CRM System | 3 | 3 | 8/3/2022 4:33 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:34 PM | A |
| Supportive | 2 | 2 | 8/3/2022 4:31 PM | A | 8/3/2022 4:31 PM | A |

Table 3. Defining and naming themes

| Major Themes | Sub-themes | Reference | Total |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Theme of Corporate Social Responsibility | Environmental Impact | 4 | 15 |
| | Reducing Energy Consumption | 2 | |
| | Helping the Government | 5 | |
| | CSR Projects | 4 | |
| Theme of Quality of Service Offered to Employees | Safety Climate | 6 | 12 |
| | Service Recovery Performance | 2 | |
| | Policies | 4 | |
| Theme of Working Atmosphere | Friendly | 4 | 13 |
| | Supportive | 2 | |
| | Teamwork | 2 | |
| | Fair environment | 2 | |
| | Obstacles of CRM System | 3 | |
| Theme of Management Commitment | Management Support | 4 | 11 |
| | Supervisor Support | 4 | |
| | Transparency | 3 | |
| Theme of Employee Loyalty | Employee Empowerment | 2 | 11 |
| | Employee Satisfaction | 3 | |
| | Employee Planning | 3 | |
| | Being a Part of the Company | 3 | |

5.7.1. Environmental impact

From the interviews, it is assumed that EZDK pays great attention to the environmental impact of its products as well as it always works on producing products that have low harm to the environment. Additionally, from the quotations extracted from the interviews, it is noticed that environmental impact is a code that belongs to the corporate social responsibility theme. This evidence could be shown clearly in the following quotations; “I can give you an example of one of the recent CSR activities applied in my company, which is using more environmentally friendly means of communication as opposed to paper-based e.g. e-mails, WhatsApp, Facebook, —etc.”

Regarding this code, it is assumed that the company always works on reducing any harmful environmental impact that could be resulted from its products. It also works on increasing the awareness of employees regarding environmental issues and sustainability. The evidence regarding this point is shown as follows:

CSR gains great attention in our company, as the company attempts to identify community needs relevant to the workplace, raises public awareness as well as adopts green initiatives in the workplace

Our business takes part in initiatives to protect and enhance the quality of the environment. Additionally, our company has the tools needed to lessen its harmful effects on the environment. Additionally, the company actively solicits donations for company-supported charities and encourages staff to get involved in any welfare or social groups at work. It also encourages others to volunteer their time in the community

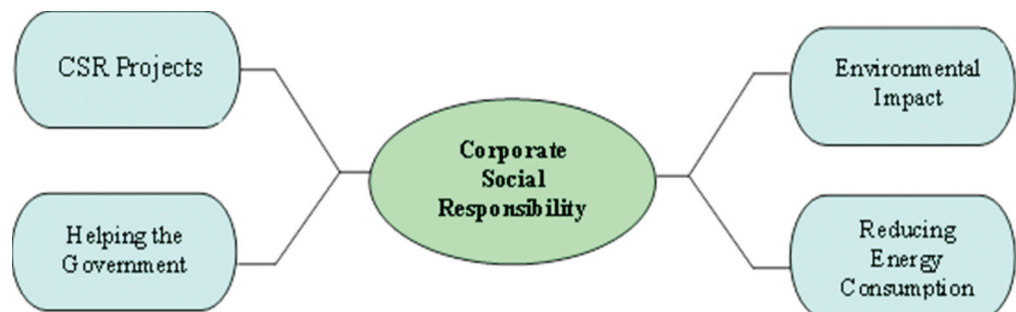
CSR is a major focus for our business, both internally and externally. The company employs appropriate waste management practices, workplace recycling, environmental sustainability education of others, and workplace charity events and fundraisers

From the quotations, the code for reducing energy consumption is extracted, as many practices related to consumption rationalization are mentioned, such as; turning off unused lights and using energy-saving light bulbs. From the interviews, it is also mentioned that this code is related to corporate social responsibility. This could be shown clearly in the following quotation “*The company works with the neighborhood to learn about its environmental concerns, hosts workplace fundraisers to help with disaster relief, and uses environmentally friendly products (like energy-saving light bulbs)*”.

By turning off unused lights, appliances, and electrical devices, the company reduces energy waste. Additionally, a lighting system that aims to lower energy consumption was recently installed.

5.7.3. Helping the government

Figure 2. Theme of corporate social responsibility.



The commitment to social responsibility is also represented in helping the government by obeying all rules and regulations as well as paying all required taxes, which is shown as follows:

Our company is aware of its social responsibility. This could be provably demonstrated by making an effort to create employment opportunities, always paying taxes on time and consistently, and promptly and fully adhering to all applicable laws

Since our company encourages its employees to participate in volunteer activities, I feel incredibly proud. It also takes into account every caution issued by governmental and non-governmental organizations

Our company acts legally on all matters, which refers to its great respect for social responsibility. In addition, the company targets producing products that comply with national and international standards

5.7.4. CSR projects

From the interviews, it is assumed that EZDK pays great attention to participating in CSR projects, especially projects that support the youth “My company puts great attention on making projects that support social responsibility. It also targets sustainable growth which considers future generations”. Therefore, CSR projects are developed as a code, which is integrated after that under the theme of corporate social responsibility.

Another way of commitment is being a part of CSR projects that benefits society, especially the youth. Evidence could be shown in the following quotations

As our company understands its social responsibility, it always makes sufficient monetary contributions to charities. In addition to the special discounts that are done to support youth housing projects

Our company collaborates with rival businesses on social responsibility initiatives, demonstrating how highly it values corporate social responsibility. In all business dealings, honesty is the guiding principle

Our company has a solid reputation for being reliable. Our business places a strong emphasis on its social obligations to the community. In response to societal needs, our company makes donations to parks, hospitals, and schools. Additionally, our business supports initiatives and campaigns that advance societal well-being

5.8. Theme of quality of service offered to employees

The second theme developed from the codes that appeared in the interviews is the theme of Quality of Service Offered to Employees, where the codes are Safety Climate, Service Recovery Performance, and Policies. The codes of Quality of Service Offered to Employees theme are shown in (Figure 3).

5.8.1. Safety climate

Safety climate is a code extracted from interviews, as the interviews assure that EZDK is always working to guarantee a safe climate for its employees. After extracting all the codes and merging them under suitable themes. The code of safety climate is suitable to be integrated under the theme of quality of service offered to employees, depending on the evidence provided in the interviews; “My company always works on promoting the quality of service through providing safety climate and taking regular feedback from its employees aiming to fix any feedback”

One of the priorities that the company always works on is providing a safe climate for its employees. Moreover, it uses to take feedback from the employees to identify their opinions. Evidence could be shown as the following:

Our company is willing to provide extra funds and resources to improve safety procedures such as safety equipment, initiatives, safety clothes, helmets, safety shoes, shield safety faces, etc.

Safety has the main focus in our quality procedures. Our company provides a copy of its written safety program, safety is focused on preserving the health and safety of workers, reducing injuries, and healing injured people

As stated in the written safety program, the company listens to worker suggestions but does not have a formal process to ask for worker input on safety improvement. In addition, the business has adjusted as necessary, but it provided no concrete examples of how worker suggestions had improved company safety

The business has a designated safety person who is in charge of the written safety program, monitors safety in all company operations, and performs project audits, among other duties

“In particular after an accident or injury occurs or at our request, “the company has a formal meeting to discuss company safety issues regularly with representation from management and workers (including foreman)”

5.8.2. Service recovery performance

Service recovery performance represents a system adopted by the company to guarantee to provide the best safe service to the employee. Accordingly, it is really important to develop a code called service recovery performance. Also, the theme of quality of services provided to employees is the best theme to integrate service recovery performance under it. The evidence of this code could be shown as follows;

Our management and HR team depends on service recovery performance, which ensures providing the best service to employees

Our company offers safety environment with empowerment and service recovery performance

5.8.3. Policies

Policies code is extracted from the interviews, as interviews assured that the company has easy policies that have no complication, which aims to achieve great benefits to the employees; *“To help its employees maintain a healthy balance between work and life, our company adopts flexible policies. Additionally, the business constantly strives to create a secure and healthy workplace”*. In addition, this code is suitable to be integrated under the theme of quality of service offered to employees.

The company has flexible policies that aim to guarantee satisfaction to its employees, all evidence has assured of this point. On the other hand, other evidence has assured that new employees are not informed well about safety policies.

Figure 3. Theme of quality of service offered to employees.



Numerous indirect benefits are offered by our company to enhance the lives of employees. Our company pays its workers a fair wage so they can maintain a respectable standard of living. All of our employees have a safe and healthy work environment thanks to company policies. Our business encourages staff members who want to pursue higher education

Because our company policies encourage employees to advance their careers, we always have enough opportunities to learn new skills relevant to our current jobs

For new hires, there is no online or offline orientation training that reviews the company safety policies and programs. The written safety program is only submitted to them and requires them to sign a statement that it has been received

5.9. Theme of working atmosphere

The third theme developed from the codes that appeared in the interviews is the theme of Working Atmosphere, where the codes are Friendly, Supportive, Teamwork, Fair environment, and Obstacles of CRM. The codes of the Working Atmosphere theme are shown in (Figure 4).

5.9.1. Friendly

A friendly environment is provided inside the company, which helps in creating a good working atmosphere. This code is developed depending on some evidential quotes; “We have such a friendly environment that makes it so hard to identify bad parts inside our work environment”.

The company is known for its friendly atmosphere. All employees use to help each other as well as solve any problem that faces one of them. Evidence below shows this point as follows:

We have a very friendly atmosphere, which colleges use to resolve any small conflicts that happened with others. In addition, employees always provide their expertise to others

A really friendly and supportive one that always encourages employees to participate in the relevant training and development activities at work

We have a competitive atmosphere, but at the same time a friendly one. So the competitive atmosphere only helps us to perform better

5.9.2. Supportive

The company also has a supportive environment; this support comes from the employees themselves, the leaders, and the management. Evidence has assured of the importance of offering a supportive atmosphere that enhances employee performance. Accordingly, supportive is developed as a code, where the working atmosphere is a suitable theme to be developed under it.

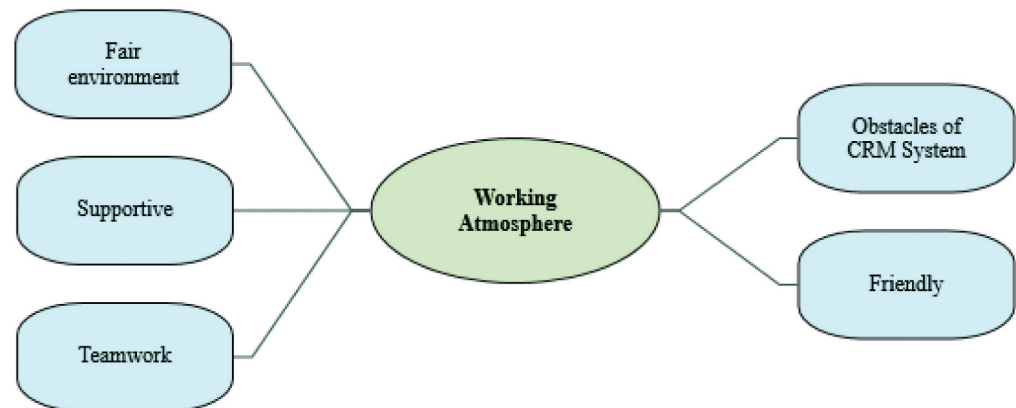
A wonderful atmosphere that is full of competitiveness and support at the same time. The competitiveness is done in a peaceful way that helps in increasing our productivity. Moreover, we have a reward system that uses to encourage employees to perform their tasks perfectly

The relationship with my colleagues is supported by our leadership support, which enhance resolving conflicts with others, participating efficiently in daily tasks, engaging in positive word-of-mouth communication about the company, share skills with others

5.9.3. Teamwork

Teamwork is an important factor in success in any workplace. EZDK has already a successful environment of teamwork, which make the employees very satisfied with their working environment. Examples are extracted from interviews and according to these examples, it is shown clearly that teamwork code is suitable to be developed under the theme of the working atmosphere;

Figure 4. Theme of working atmosphere.



The best part is the teamwork, while the worst part is the lack of commitment in some of the employees. Me as a Chairman of the Human resources department, I try to solve this problem

I feel so comfortable while working with my team, I do not exaggerate if I say that there are no bad parts in our team. About the best part is our interactive teamwork that is based on giving support and help to each other

5.9.4. Fair environment

One of the good points also in EZDK is that they have a fair environment as all employees are treated in the same way and they feel very pleased with that. This could be shown in the following evidence:

We have a fair environment towards all the employees, our company also does not deceive others in the workplace. Which makes our company characterized by its wonderful atmosphere

I feel very comfortable and pleased as we have such a fair environment. The best part is assisting colleagues who are struggling with their workload. On the other hand, it is really difficult to identify a bad part

From these evidential codes, a fair environment is developed as a code, where it is developed under the working atmosphere theme.

5.9.5. Obstacles of CRM system

Although the company has a CRM System, some obstacles affect the perfectionism of CRM operation. These obstacles are related to a lack of training and a lack of understanding of the system. Three of the interviews showed that some obstacles face the company regarding CRM systems, from this evidence, obstacles of CRM systems are developed as a code. Once these obstacles are related to the employees themselves and the work environment, the code of obstacles of the CRM system is included under the theme of working atmosphere. Evidence is shown in the following quotations;

There are some obstacles that still face the implementation of customer relationship marketing management system. The main obstacle is represented in not providing proper training to all the users at the company, which affects the efficiency of the CRM system

I believe that the sales and marketing teams need a better understanding of how the CRM system should behave to achieve future goals, as these departments are the primary users of the customer relationship marketing management system

I hope the company puts more focus on supporting employees to engage in and use the CRM system. This could be done through their leaders support

5.10. Theme of management commitment

The fourth theme developed from the codes that appeared in the interviews is the theme of Management Commitment, where the codes are Management support, Supervisor Support, and Transparency. The codes of the Management Commitment theme are shown in (Figure 5).

5.10.1. Management support

Management support represents a significant factor that enhances the performance of employees. Lots of evidence has assured of the importance of management support, such as; *“The best part is our working environment that is known by many positive features, such as; knowledge sharing, management support, and leadership support”*. Accordingly, management support is developed as a code and once it is related to the commitment between the employees and the management, it is developed under the theme of management commitment.

Employees are also satisfied with their management and the support they provide to them. Another point discussed in the interviews is the job site inspections done by management. Evidence could be shown as the following:

We have great management support that helps up in sharing our skills with others, be helpful with each other (e.g. colleagues and customers), and be attentive to the needs of each other

Satisfied with our relation and commitment that is characterized by its teamwork, knowledge sharing, supervisor support, management support, and leadership support

Our top management provides us with transparent and honest information at work, which provides a satisfying environment to all employees

We can alert our top manager or another relevant party about any suspicious activity or problem noticed at work

With our top management support, we succeeded in having a friendly environment, that is characterized by knowledge sharing, teamwork, and leadership support

5.10.2. Supervisor support

Supervisors are the strongest supporter of employees. From the interviews, there are no bad points or complaints about the supervisor at the company. On the other hand, evidence assured that supervisors always provide support to employees. According to that, supervisor support is developed as a code depending on the following evidence;

My supervisor uses to handles any complaints face me at work effectively

It is a really good relationship, the best part is that we have very good communication as well as we use it to exchange feedback with each other. Finally, my supervisor always uses to support me

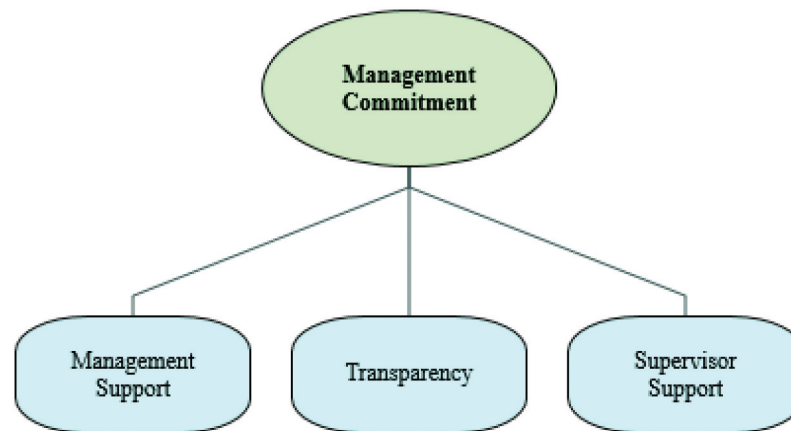
My supervisor usually aims to take proactive steps to acquire new skills for all employees including me of course. Another good point is he values the opinion of others

We have a clan environment with a supportive and participative role of our supervisors

5.10.3. Transparency

Transparency between management and employees is the main feature offered in the company. The interviews have assured us of the importance of transparency, accordingly it is important to develop a code under the name of transparency. The evidence from the interviews could be shown in the following quotations;

Figure 5. Theme of management commitment.



Our top management provides us with transparent and honest information at work, which provides a satisfying environment to all employees

We can alert our top manager or another relevant party about any suspicious activity or problem noticed at work

The relationships between management and employees are characterized by honesty and transparency

5.11. Theme of employee loyalty

The fifth theme developed from the codes that appeared in the interviews is the theme of Employee Loyalty, where the codes are Employees Empowerment, Employees Satisfaction, Employee planning, and Being a part of the company. The codes of the Employee Loyalty theme are shown in (Figure 6).

5.11.1. Employees empowerment

Employee loyalty to the organization is supported by employee empowerment, which is a strong aspect. Interviews have confirmed this fact, thus it is crucial to create a code of conduct for employee empowerment. Evidence regarding this point is shown as follows:

I consider EZDK as one of the best organizations in the field of iron and steel industry. The positive points offered by the company are empowerment of employees, friendly atmosphere, and supportive management

I am so satisfied with my company, it offers to us employees empowerment and at the same time it succeeded in controlling everything. I think this balance is really hard to be done in any other company

5.11.2. Employees satisfaction

A code of employee satisfaction is produced based on the evidence from the interviews and is then integrated under the topic of employee loyalty. Employee satisfaction is another factor that motivates employees to stay loyal to the EZDK organization. The following evidence shows this point clearly.

Our organization always works on offering the best for us and does all the best to make us feel satisfied. So there is no doubt that my all loyalty goes to this organization

I am so satisfied and proud to be a part of this organization. Besides its friendly and supportive atmosphere, it works on offering us a work-life balance and satisfies all our needs

Figure 6. Theme of employee loyalty.



I am so loyal to my company. I think that the degree of satisfaction I found in the company is hard to be found in any other place

5.11.3. Employees planning

The data shows that all of the employees are devoted to the business and have no plans to quit. Numerous quotations make this point clear, so a code of employee planning is created in response.

I am not planning to leave my work. Being an employee at this organization is in my best interest as well as I consider the success of the organization as my success

I have a strong attachment to my company and I am not planning to leave it

From the interviews, it is also assured that employee planning is related to loyalty; “As we have a wonderful friendly atmosphere, I am not planning to leave my work. I am completely loyal to my company”. Therefore, employee planning is developed as a code under the theme of employee loyalty.

5.11.4. Being a part of the company

Employees feel proud to be a part of this company, which reflects their satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. This point is shown clearly through the interviews. Accordingly, being a part of the company is developed as a code under the employee loyalty theme.

I consider myself a core part of the company. Accordingly, I cannot imagine myself working at another place

Being a part of this company is considered an honor for me. Accordingly, it is impossible for me to look for another job

EZDK is not just a working place for me. I consider it as my second home and I am proud to be a part of it

6. Conclusion

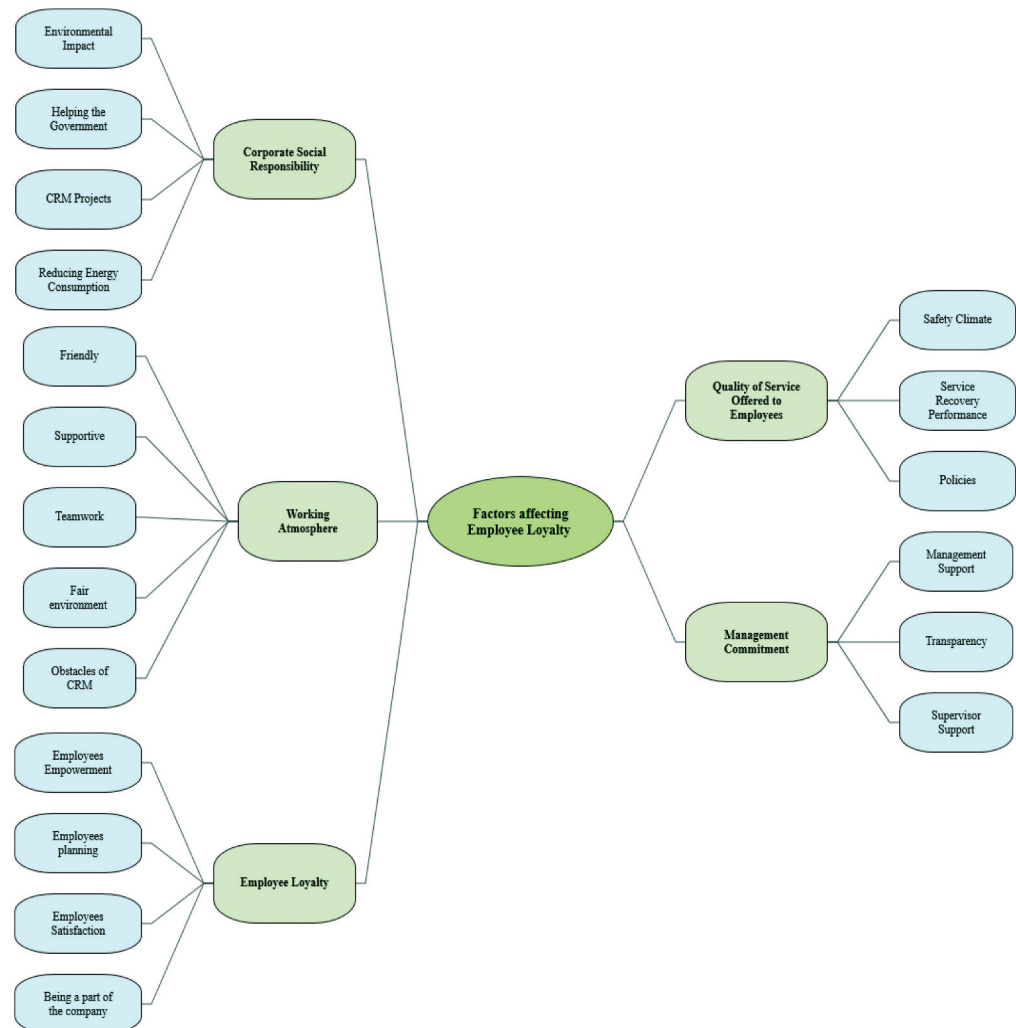
In this section, thematic analysis was conducted for 15 interviews with individuals from middle and top management levels working in the iron and steel industry, specifically in EZDK in Egypt. From the analysis five themes were developed as follows:

The theme of Corporate Social Responsibility

The theme of Quality of Service Offered to Employees

The theme of Working Atmosphere

Figure 7. Project mind map.



The theme of Management Commitment

The theme of Employee Loyalty

Theme of Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the understanding and application of CSR inside the company, which consists of four codes (Environmental Impact, Helping the Government, CSR Projects, and Reducing Energy Consumption). The second theme is the Quality of Service Offered to Employees, which consists of three codes (Safety Climate, Service Recovery Performance, and Policies). The third theme is Working Atmosphere, which consists of five codes (Friendly, Supportive, Teamwork, Fair environment, and obstacles of CRM). The fourth theme is Management Commitment, where the codes are (Management support, Supervisor Support, and Transparency). The fifth theme is Employee Loyalty, which consists of four codes (Employees Empowerment, Employees Satisfaction, Employees planning, and Being a part of the company).

Finally, a mind map is done that summarizes the themes and codes of the interviews. The mind map is shown in the Figure 7:

7. Discussion

The amount of research on all the aspects affecting employees' loyalty is significant, according to the existing literature. However, the majority of the study's data came from a single source, such as employee evaluations of their satisfaction and loyalty, which did not shed light on the true reasons from their source for answering the "why" question. Another difference between the current study and previous studies is that the current study depends on collecting qualitative data through interviews, while most previous studies depended on quantitative data. Finally, the current study has contributed to choosing Egypt as a case study to identify factors that affect employee loyalty inside the industrial sector. According to the social exchange hypothesis, there are interactions between the individual and the organization. If a benefit is offered, the recipient is required to give the same in return. Over time, these interdependent interactions increase faithfulness and mutual duties (Blau, 1964), which retains employees. On the other side, attrition has a negative impact not only, on the organization's profit, but also, on the intellectual capital (Dutta & Dhir, 2021). Therefore, every organization aspires to develop and keep a loyal workforce. In the iron and steel industry, specifically in EZDK in Egypt, the current study aims to create a conceptual framework that examines factors influencing employee loyalty through the relationship between service quality and management commitment from the employees' perspective. To reach this aim, qualitative data was collected through conducting interviews. semi-structured interviews with 15 employees from different managerial levels (top, middle, and divisional) working at EZDK. Thematic analysis is conducted by utilizing NVivo. From the analysis five main themes are developed, where each theme consists of several codes.

The first theme is corporate social responsibility; EZDK understands well its social responsibility. This appears clearly from the company's activities related to social responsibility. Accordingly, four codes are developed from this theme, which are; environmental impact, helping the government, CSR Projects, and reducing energy consumption.

The second theme is the quality of service offered to employees; EZDK puts great intention into providing a high quality of service to its employees. This point is shown clearly in the interviews. Accordingly, three codes are developed from this theme, which is; safety climate, service recovery performance, and policies.

The third theme is the working atmosphere; EZDK has a quite good atmosphere that is friendly and supportive. Five codes are developed from the theme of the working atmosphere; friendly, supportive, teamwork, fair environment, and obstacles of CRM.

The fourth theme is Management Commitment, where management has a great role in supporting employees. Three codes are developed from this theme; management support, supervisor support, and transparency.

The fifth theme is Employee Loyalty, where many factors affect loyalty. Accordingly, four codes are developed which are; Employees Empowerment, Employees Satisfaction, Employee planning, and Being a part of the company.

From the analysis of the collected data, it was concluded that corporate social responsibility (environmental impact, helping the government, CSR Projects, and reducing energy consumption), quality of service offered to employees (safety climate, service recovery performance, and policies), working atmosphere (friendly, supportive, teamwork, fair environment) and management commitment (management support, supervisor support, and transparency) are the main factors that affect employee loyalty.

The findings revealed that some factors were similar to previous studies (Fadhila & Sulistiyani, 2022; Farrukh et al., 2019; Ismail & Puteh, 2021; Jin et al., 2022; Lai, 2021; M. N. Khuong & Tien, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2020; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017; Phuong & Vinh, 2021; Pulungan & Andika,

2022; Sharma, 2019; Supit, 2022), and others were new that had not been mentioned in previous studies such as; corporate social responsibility, and quality of service offered to employees. This implies that these findings help conclude that the explored factors are study ones with acceptable psychometric characteristics. Both academics and practitioners must consider the effects of these factors. We have also been able to learn more about the idea and close the gap between theory and business executives' actual comprehension of the problem thanks to the grounded theory approach. Employee loyalty and its traits are not well understood in the existing literature. Enlightening conversations with top, middle, and divisional managers throughout the scale development process have made it possible to assess employee loyalty more accurately. Customers are the driving force of any firm. They are responsible for an organization's survival in a competitive market. Naturally, the firm continues to prioritize client retention. To foster client loyalty, we require loyal personnel. As a result, client loyalty comes before staff loyalty. Loyal workers make a substantial contribution to an organization's long-term growth and prosperity. They are prepared to exert additional effort without considering their own interests. They continue the organization's life and expansion. The results of this study will serve as a valuable tool for human resource managers.

From the above discussion, it is noticed that the two objectives of the research had been achieved, which are; investigating factors that affect employee loyalty and testing the relationship between service quality and management commitment.

8. Research implications

8.1. Managerial implications

Today measuring employee loyalty is not enough. Employee loyalty contributes significantly to an organization's growth. Loyalty motivates individuals to perform to the highest of their abilities, thereby assisting the firm in achieving its objectives and reaching new heights. From the revealed findings, some implications are noticed that would help policymakers. It will assist them in developing improved HR policies and fostering a culture of mutual growth and development inside the firm. Firstly, the improvement of service recovery performance and safety climate will make the employees feel safer and satisfying, which will reflect positively on their loyalty. Secondly, the development of policies that enhance employees' satisfaction, safety, and even those related to their work-life balance will make the employees very loyal to the company. In addition, this will enhance their working performance. Third, the working atmosphere is a significant factor that enhances the loyalty of the employees. Therefore, providing a friendly, supportive and fair environment is a really good way to ensure employee satisfaction and loyalty.

The fourth point is regarding corporate social responsibility. The more attention the company put on corporate social responsibility and its project implementation, the more the employees trust their company and become loyal to it. The fifth point is related to support, as providing enough support to the employees from the management and leadership will enhance employee performance and by that increase their trust and loyalty.

8.2. Theoretical implications

This research provides great implications for the research field, as it investigated factors that affect employees' loyalty in the iron and steel industry in Egypt. Another implication is discussing new variables that are not mentioned before in previous studies, such as; corporate social responsibility, and quality of service offered to employees. These implications open the door to future research to make new studies that examined the main variables and make more investigations on the new variables (corporate social responsibility, and quality of service offered to employees).

9. Recommendations and limitations

The purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework that explores factors affecting employee loyalty in the iron and steel industry, specifically in EZDK in Egypt. After the analysis was

done some recommendations are provided to decision makers (owners and top management of the iron and steel industry, specifically in EZDK) as well as other recommendations are introduced to current and future research.

The first recommendation provided to decision-makers in EZDK is providing more training to employees regarding using the CRM system. The second recommendation is to make the sales and marketing teams more involved in CRM activities. Those two recommendations are identified according to the interviews' quotations.

According to interviews, the third recommendation is also provided to decision-makers in EZDK; it is to make the employees more aware of the policies related to safety procedures by identifying those policies for new employees and making regular training for other employees. Generally, it is recommended to decision makers of the iron and steel industry put more intention into providing good service quality to its employees, especially in procedures related to safety.

Another recommendation is related to the environment. The working environment must be friendly, supportive, and satisfying. These factors make employees loyal to their company. For current and future research, the researcher suggests making more studies that focus on linking management commitment and service quality. Moreover, try to investigate more factors that could affect this relationship. In addition to that try to test this relation through quantitative study as the current study uses qualitative one. In addition, make other studies that support both qualitative and quantitative.

Finally, the researcher makes this study in the iron and steel industry in Egypt, so the researcher suggests making more studies in this field as well as the researcher suggests examining the same topic in other sectors to see if the same results could be concluded.

Regarding limitations, it has been noted that scientific research has some that can prevent the results from being generalized. There are some restrictions on the population, sample size, and timing for this study.

The first limitation is regarding the population and the sample of the study, as this study targeted 15 employees in EZDK in Egypt. Thus, the researcher suggests making this research on a larger sample to reach generalization.

In addition, another limitation is considered in this study, which is focusing on examining the employees' perspectives. Accordingly, the researcher suggests examining the same relationships from customers' perspectives to see if there are any changes will happen in the results.

The study also had a timing limitation because the data it used for the study only covered a short period. As a result, the study suggests that future studies include data from a longer time frame. The researcher also recommends using qualitative and mixed designs.

10. Ethical consideration

Each stage of the study process has taken ethical concerns into account. The participants attest to ethical approval. By describing how each participant will be issued a number as a measure of identification, the researcher reassured the participants of their privacy throughout the investigation. One of the primary issues throughout the data collection phase was how to gather information in a way that gives respondents the right level of assurance and ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. Each participant received a distinctive identification number, so they could be identified in the future by their number (e.g., Respondent 1, 2, 3, etc.). This was done in case they needed to leave the focus group at any time. They were told that the researcher would be the only one to utilize these identification numbers and that the written study would entirely conceal their identities. Participants were asked to consent to the use of a voice recorder before

a transcript and anonymized identities were made. No data identifying the participants were kept. The voice data files were safely kept and properly destroyed when it came time to get rid of them. Although there are no overt dangers, the interviewer was aware that the questions might be distressing. If any of the respondents appeared to become angry, it was taken into account to show appropriate empathy and to remind them that they had the option to leave the focus group physically if they so desired. Regarding the data that has been submitted, it was discussed in a focus group that it might not be able to erase the data that the participant who withdrew from the study has provided because it is impossible to identify the individuals in the recordings. In contrast, interviewees were given 24 hours to decide whether or not they wanted to disclose the information they had provided. Moreover, the participants were assured that this focus group is done for this paper and that the information extracted from it will not be used in any other research. Before taping, all of the aforementioned details were reiterated to allow participants to leave if they so desired.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Exploring factors affecting Employee Loyalty through the relationship between Service Quality and Management Commitment a case study analysis in the iron and steel industry Al Ezz Dekheila Steel Company in Egypt, Eman Mohamed Abd-El-Salam, *Cogent Business & Management* (2023), 10: 2212492.

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