"Fueling or Alleviating the Flame: Unraveling the Impact of Leadership Styles on Workplace Well-being in the Workplace"

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Abstract

The paper explored the impact of leadership style on the workplace wellbeing in the service sector of India. Sector was grouped into six categories; Banking, Education, Hospital, IT & ITES, Manufacturing units, and Hospitality. A questionnaire distribution method was used to conduct this research study. Total 450 questionnaire was sent out of which 400 respondents were included in study who was professional employees in different service sectors of India. The findings of this paper reveal that the autocratic leadership style distort the environment of the organization with the rigid rules and despotic behavior. Due to the presence of such behavior in organization, employees get demotivated and their performance was lower downs. Employees have feeling of contentment and persuaded towards their chores under the leader, who adopted democratic style. They feel affinity and sense of belongingness towards the workplace. The findings show that group adherents were more inclined to leave the group and divert their resources to other places when they were overseen by an autocratic leader as opposed to a democratic leader. Most of the group members were left an autocrat style leader than a democratic one, regardless of whether they acknowledged positive personal favors from the leader. This suggests that the procedural components of an autocratic style leader are more dangerous than the distributive ones. Therefore, autocratic leadership is not an appropriate long-term solution for the welfare of the workforce and its employees.

Keywords: - Leadership styles, Autocratic style, Democratic style, Workplace wellbeing, Service Sector. Organizational Politics

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and fast-paced work environments, organisations that want to sustain productivity and develop a healthy organizational culture must prioritize employee well-being. Emotional tiredness, defined as emotions of depletion, fatigue, and a diminished sense of accomplishment, has emerged as a common problem impacting employees in a variety of professions (Jolson, & Spangler, 1995). While a variety of factors contribute to emotional weariness, the current study has focused on the impact of leadership styles in increasing or reducing the condition (Kelloway and Day, 2005).

Leadership, as a cornerstone of organizational effectiveness, is critical in shaping the workplace and impacting employee experiences. Different leadership styles, ranging from authoritarian and transactional to transformational and servant leadership, have varying effects on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and general well-being (Wendt et al., 2009). However, the particular impacts of different leadership styles on emotional tiredness remain relatively unknown and warrant further exploration.

Inspiring employees to achieve organizational goals is an aspect of the leadership idea. Regardless of their organization's size or framework, most executives strive to optimize their assistants' productivity to accomplish organizational objectives (Yukl, 1998). As a result, it is not surprising that initiatives to motivate employees to accomplish this aim have drawn a lot of attention. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate the benefits of transformational leadership compared to traditional styles, like transactional leadership, for achieving organizational objectives. (see, for example, Conger, 1999; Dubinsky, Yammarino; Awamleh, 1999). According to Barling, Berson, Shamair,), and Zacharatos, the well-being of the workplace also depends on the style adopted by the leader.

Leadership is a social inspiration progression in which the leader seeks the amenable cooperation of followers to achieve organizational objectives (Wendt et al., 2009), a process by which one person exercises social influence over other group members for the betterment of group(Berson et al., 2001), a process by which an individual or group of individuals are influenced by a person to fulfill the goal in specific circumstances and an interpersonal concept including both the persuading agent and the person being influenced (Barling et al., 1996).

Leaders play a vital role in creating a healthy working environment that maximizes the performance of employees and creates a jovial workplace (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006), (Kuoppala et al., 2008). A healthy work environment is influenced by the leaders which helps to increase productivity and achieve positive outcomes. (Leiter and Maslach, 2004, Wong et al., 2010). However, if leaders don't create this kind of climate, employees may not meet their goals, their performance may suffer, and eventually their health and well-being may suffer. (Ingersoll et al., 2002, Stouten et al., 2010). According to research, democratic leadership philosophies outperform better than authoritarian philosophies in terms of effectiveness (Kuoppala et al., 2008).

The strategy used by the managers to lead, direct, and manage the employees who work for them determines how quickly their firm develops. To look at it another way, employees will be more devoted to their work if leaders or managers effectively control, direct, or advise the people working for them (Wendt et al., 2009). Unfortunately, some managers fail to perform their tasks effectively and as per commitment then staff members start taking their jobs for granted, which always hurts the performance of the employees. According to Adamaechi and Romaine (2002), the role of a leader is very important in every group or organization because it means the differences between the success or failure of any group or joint operation. Therefore, the success of an organization depends on its leaders. So, the organization must be filled with experienced leaders. (Spangler, & Bass, 1993).

The motivation for examining the impact of autocratic and democratic leadership styles on workplace welfare originates from an awareness of the tremendous effects both styles can have on employees' psychological, emotional, and physical health.

Literature review

Autocratic leadership style

They define an autocratic leader as one who is ruthless in his governance and keep the things in his hand. He serves as the focal point for all activities within the organization. All authority came from him and ended with him that makes him a primary factor in decision-making. He controls the process and make all the decisions by himself. (Cellar et al. 2001, Maloş 2012). His view on participating of his subordinates in decision-making

as an unused or waste of time whereas he thinks that his ideas or thoughts are better than his employees(Maloş 2012). The worker's interests and welfare are not taken into consideration because the leader sees him only as a production tool. He ensures complete obedience and dependence on him by using threats and intimidation. He does not tolerate criticism since he tends to see those who hold alternative opinions as adversaries of his government. He pushes everyone to follow his orders and ruthlessly suppresses any disagreement (Sauer 2011; Cunningham, Salomone, Wielgus 2015)

Workers under an autocratic leaders may be apparent as being under continual burden and fear, and they recurrently express their annoyance with this leadership style by arriving late for work, slow performance, sabotaging the work, requesting a transfer, or voluntarily leaving the company.

Since his followers see his leadership as a "one man show," the autocratic leader has a hard time winning their genuine affection, support, and collaboration. According to Yalokwu (2000), Umeakuka (2005) an autocratic leader has slight or no trust in his or her juniors, makes decisions on their own, issues orders and commands without regard for the juniors' involvement, creates group policy, provides step-by-step instructions, and dictates tasks (Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers (2004).

He or she believes that they are always correct and does not entertain questions from subordinates. He may neglect the rights of his or her subordinates and be subjective in how they are assessed by the organization((İnandi, Uzun, Yeşil 2016). They went on to add that an autocratic leader wants complete surrender from the group, irrespective of whether the membership understands the leader or the leader's ideals. An autocratic leader believes he is the most experienced and has the best solutions for organisational problems. He utilised threats and sanctions to keep his workers under control.

Democratic leader style

Democratic leaders encourage team members to work freely without any pressure, even though they invite team members to participate in the decision process. The growth of assistance is assisted by leaders in the action which boosts job gratification (Hersy et al, 2009). Democrat leaders encouraged team members to work hard just not only for monetary reward but also for the promotion they deserve so that they feel in charge of their destiny. This style may slow down the process of implementation of policies due to the involvement of employees in decision-making, but the results are frequently superior. Such techniques might be appropriate because quality is more important than speed to market productivity (Fiaz et al. 2017; Sayedi et al (2009). Because democratic managers value favourable interactions in the workplace, which have greater influence on employees, they can increase managerial and client communication through the use of work technology and employee-centric processes. Such practices make employees feel more inspired and motivated, which improves their job happiness and career (Ngai, 2005). Democratic leadership is ideal for managing political science and basic rights. It can be applied to two concepts:

First approach: Democratic leadership refers to a leader who was elected by the majority of society, as opposed to authoritarian leadership, when citizens have no involvement in attaining authority. (Rahimi, 2011).

A democratic leader is one who establishes authority without relying on others to achieve their position. Second approach: Autocratic leadership may not be based on public will, but their management style can be democratic. Alternatively, democratic selection can lead to autocratic and dictatorial management and leadership. This study examines both autocratic and democratic leaders. An autocratic leader is one who does not rely on popular votes or wants to influence their behaviour or leadership style (Mohammadi et al 2014).

Workplace wellbeing

Numerous studies have looked at the relationship between leadership style and workers' well-being (Nielsen and Munir, 2009; Nyberg et al. 2011; Tafvelin et al. 2011). For instance, Tafvelin et al. (2011) study in a 12-

month longitudinal research of 2700 social sector employees of a Swedish municipality, explored that transformative leadership was positively and significantly related to employee wellbeing. However, there hasn't been much literature to help us understand how, in the context of Australian higher education, leadership impacts employee welfare. Employee well-being has also been extensively examined and has given rise to numerous conceptualizations, definitions, and metrics, similar to the diverse conceptualization and definition of leadership (Burnetto et al. 2012). Although physical health is often connected with well-being in Australia, a larger definition of well-being also includes spiritual, social, emotional, and logical well-being (Brunetto et al. 2012). Indeed, Winefield et al. (2014) defined wellness in terms of psychological stress and job satisfaction. Leadership styles and employee wellbeing are tightly associated, regardless of how wellbeing is conceived, in the context of corporate training and employee performance.

According to research findings, a supportive manager is crucial to striking a healthy balance between one's personal and professional lives (Kinnunen and Mano, 1998; Greenhaus et al., 2012). We would anticipate that servant leadership behaviors help employees to balance their demands of work incentives and family livelihood. Leadership is seen as one of the "single biggest elements contributing to employee perceptions in the workplace and workforce engagement" (Wang and Walumbwa, 2007). Few studies investigate the effects of servant leaders on their followers' perceptions of work-life balance and the results showed that servant leaders, by putting others' interests before their own, enable their followers to thrive and experience positive results in terms of organizational behaviors, satisfaction, and commitment (Liden et al., 2008).

Hypothesis development

The impact of leadership styles on wellbeing has been studied. It's critical to understand that well-being as a concept has been proposed to have both mental and physical components (Liu et al., 2010). The subject matter will therefore be reviewed in this part in terms of its general implications on both mental and physical health. Studies on well-being have generally shown that relational, charismatic, and transformational leadership styles consistently reveal better employee consequences in terms of well-being, in line with earlier research looking at outcomes on absenteeism and stress/burnout (Cummings, 2004). In particular, transformational leadership has been allied to compact levels of depression across time, enhanced general health, decreased levels of nervousness, and reduced levels of stress (Cummings, 2004; Munir, Nielsen & Carneiro, 2010; Stordeur et al., 2001). Studies have also looked into the opposite, i.e., leadership traits that seem to be harmful to wellbeing. As a result.

Skogstad et al. (2007) discovered that democratic leadership was linked to more role conflict, ambiguity, conflict, and bullying. Additionally, abusive supervision has repeatedly been associated with elevated levels of anxiety and sadness (Tepper, 2000; Harris & Kacmar, 2005). Unsurprisingly, destructive leadership styles have repeatedly been shown to negatively impact workers, especially in terms of their well-being (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Examples of disastrous leadership styles include harassment, bullying, abusive practices, abusing power, and undermining.

H1: Autocratic leadership style has significant impact on workplace wellbeing.

H2: Democratic leadership style has significant impact on workplace wellbeing.

Hypothesized model of the impact of leadership style on workplace wellbeing.

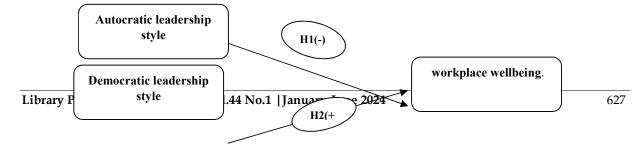


Figure 1: Proposed framework showing the relationship between Autocratic leadership style, Democratic leadership style and workplace wellbeing

Purpose of the Study

This study purposes to investigate and comprehend how democratic and autocratic leadership styles affect employee well-being at work. We hope to learn insightful lessons that can help improve employee happiness, productivity, and general well-being in organizations by analyzing the impact of these opposing leadership styles.

Methodology

Participants

The demographic features of this research were measured by gender, age, Industry type, salary and sector of the organization. In this study the majority of the respondents was male (n=354, 68.6 per cent). Age was grouped into 18-25, 26-35, 36-50 and 51 and above; the frequency of respondents is 157, 167, 86 and 106respectively. The percentages are 30.4 percent, 32.4 percent, 16.7 percent and 20.5 percent respectively. Industry type was grouped into six categories; Banking, Education, Hospital, IT & ITES, Manufacturing units, and Hospitality with the frequency of 78, 156, 70, 74, 76 and 62 respectively. Salary was grouped into four categories; up to 2lakhs, 2lakhs to 5 lakhs, 5 lakhs to 10 lakhs, and above 10 lakhs with the frequency of 160, 198, 94, and 64 respectively. Sector of the organization was grouped into two categories: Private (Indian) and Public (Government) with the frequencies of 338, and 178. The basic concept of research was explained to each participant, and we also aware them that they might leave the research process at any time without providing a reason. The participants have been assured about the confidentiality and anonymity. Once they were on board, they submitted the consent form, and data collecting got under way. Self-report questionnaires were used to gather the data. Harman's single factor test was used to examine common method bias, and the results showed that the data were free of bias because the single component could only account for 14.3% of the variation.

Table 1. Sampling profile of respondents

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Demographic Features	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender			
Male	354	68.60%	
Female	162	31.40%	
Age			
18-25	157	30.40%	
26-35	167	32.40%	
36-50	86	16.70%	
51 and above	106	20.50%	
Industry Type			
Banking	78	15.05%	
Education	156	30.11%	
Hospital	70	13.51%	
IT & ITES	74	14.28%	

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Manufacturing Units	76	14.67%	
Hospitality	62	12.38%	
Salary			
Up to 2 lakhs	160	31.01%	
2 lakhs to 5 lakhs	198	38.38%	
5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	94	18.22%	
Above 10 lakhs	64	12.39%	
Sector of Organization			
Private (Indian)	338	65.51	
Public (Government)	178		

Source: Authors own

Measurement of the study constructs

We employed previously validated scales to operationalize the path model's constructs, all of which are reflective measures.

Autocratic style of leadership was operationalized using Chelladurai (1980) scale consist of five items. Responses were captured using 5-point Likert scales varying from "I do not agree at all" (1) to "I agree completely" (5) The items were modified to suit the purpose of the present research. Some of items are "In my organization work is relatively independent of the employee," "Our supervisors don't explain their action.". Higher score represents higher autocrat behavior. The 5-item measure was subjected to a reliability analysis, and the results showed acceptable validity. (Cronbach's Alpha = .90). Democratic leadership was captured using a 6-item instrument which was also developed by Chelladurai (1980). Participant responses were captured on 5-point Likert scales anchored with "I do not agree at all" (1) and "I agree completely" (5). Some of the items are "My supervisor let the group set its own goals," "My supervisor used to ask for the opinion of the employees on strategies for specific competitions.". Higher score implies the higher democrat behavior. The data indicated good reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .95). Workplace wellbeing, the dependent variable was measured using a three-item construct developed by Zheng (2015). Responses were captured using 5-point Likert type scales: from "I do not agree at all" (1) to "I agree completely" (5). Example item: "I am satisfied with my work responsibilities, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job". The WWS has recently been used in several studies with satisfactory internal consistency (Eisele, 2020a;2020b). The trustworthiness of these 16 items was virtuous (Cronbach's Alpha = .91).

The structural equation modeling (SEM), a two-step process was used in the study (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). First, the measurement model was evaluated. The measurement model was used to test the model constructs' reliability and discriminant/convergent validity. The structural model was then evaluated. In other words, the proposed theoretical model was examined and its parameters were calculated. The structural analysis was carried out using AMOS 24, and maximum likelihood was utilized to estimate the parameters under the presumption that the data was multivariately normal (Bollen, 1989).

Common Method Bias

All measurements were self-reported; hence it is important to examine the effects of common method bias (CMB). To ensure that CMB was eradicated or minimized, established commendations were followed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We promised responders that the data would be kept private and their identities would remain anonymous in order to control for CMB. Furthermore, IBM SPSS was used to run Harman's single

factor test (Harman, 1976). The findings demonstrate that our model did not consider CMB since the first factor's variance is less than the stipulated limit of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2012), at just 14.3 percent.

Result and Interpretation

We conducted various hierarchical regression models to evaluate the association between leadership styles and workplace wellbeing and outcomes. Firstly, we conducted CFA to assess the validity of data.

Confirmatory factor analysis

confirmatory factor analysis was then operated to evaluate the measurement model (construct reliability and construct validity). The result of CFA is displayed in Table -. According to the table's findings, EFA produces three different variables, and CFA has verified these factors. The suggested measurement model, as shown in Table, has strong convergent validity (Aggarwal et al., 2018a, b). According to the findings of the confirmatory factor analysis, the standardized loading values were significant at the 0.05 level.

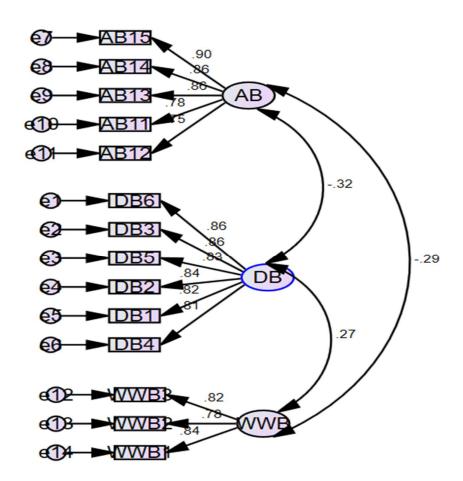


Figure 1-confirmatory factor analysis result

The results listed in Table 1 provide summarised results that the fit indices reached the threshold (Hu and Bentler, 1999). CMIN/DF, CFI, SRMR, RMSEA, and PClose, were assessed against the threshold values. The CMIN/DF value of 1.496 suggested a favorable value that shows that the model fits the data. Additionally, the CFI and TLI values of 0.993, and 0.991 that surpassed the suggested threshold of 0.9, indicating a good fit.

Furthermore, the SRMR and RMSEA values of 0.045 and 0.031 suggest a good fit as compared to the acceptable value of <0.08. Overall, these results support that all fit indices values are acceptable, so it can be said that the relationship of various constructs is feasible and suggests an acceptable model fit

Table 1-Goodness-of-fit indices for variables under study

Fit index	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMR
Acceptable value	<5	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	< 0.08	< 0.08
Model fit score	1.496	0.971	0.959	0.993	0.991	0.031	0.045

Notes: N=400, p<0.001

Correlation Analysis and construct validation.

This is an exploratory study, the gathered data are further analysed using the bivariate correlation test. The bivariate correlation test computes the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the correlation between two variables or rank orders. A measurement of linear relationship is the Pearson's correlation coefficient. Simple correlations, descriptive statistics, average variance extracted (>0.5) and composite reliability (>0.7) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table shows the correlation value of (r = -0.28**) reflects a negative association between autocratic style of leadership and workplace wellbeing. The workplace wellbeing was found positively correlated with democratic style of leadership with the value of (r = 0.27**). The maintained indicators showed loadings of 0.60 or higher, which allowed for an assessment and confirmation of the internal reliability of these components (Hair et al., 2016). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values both went beyond the necessary cutoff of 0.70. (CR). For all of the constructs, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was higher than the threshold of 0.50 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), demonstrating convergent validity (see Table -2) Table -2 shows correlation and construct validation

CR AVE **MSV** MaxR(H) DB AB **WWB** DB 0.933 0.699 0.105 0.934 0.836 -0.324*** AB 0.917 0.690 0.105 0.927 0.830 WWB 0.858 0.668 0.082 0.86 0.270*** -0.287*** 0.817

Notes: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); * *correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

(note; DB- Democratic leadership style, AB- Autocratic leadership style, WWB-Workplace wellbeing, CR- Composite reliabilities, AVE- Average variance extracted, MaxR(H)- Maximal Reliability).

HYPOTHESES TESTING OF STRUCTURAL MODELS

Figure 2 represents the SEM outcomes of the hypothesized paths. The results showed in Fig. 1 provide support for the acceptance of Hypotheses 1 and 2. The outcomes will now be conferred in more detail.

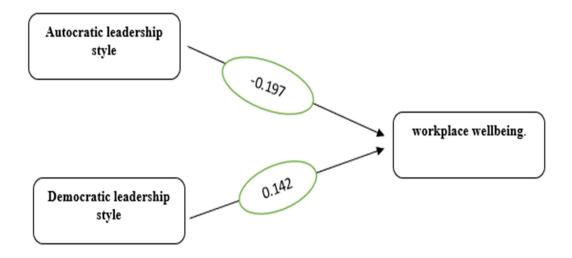


Fig. 2. Examining the path from autocratic leadership style and democratic leadership style to workplace wellbeing

Effect of Autocratic Leadership style on workplace wellbeing

This section shed some light on how authoritative leadership style affects the workplace wellbeing. Results from the Table shows that the autocratic leadership style has a significant negative influence on workplace wellbeing (β = -0.197, SE= 0.045). The results, again give enough grounds to accept the hypothesis which states that 'Autocratic leadership style significant negatively affects workplace wellbeing. This shows employees don't want to work under authoritative leadership style. the autocratic leadership style distorts the environment of the organization with the rigid rules and despotic behavior. Due to the presence of such behavior in organization, employees get demotivated and their performance was lower downs. They feel a pressure of manager under this style and the workplace become dreadful.

Table 3 -SEM - Structural Relationships - Conceptual Model

Hypothesis	Hypothesized Path	Regression Weights	S.E.	C.R	p-value	Standardized Regression Weights	RESULTS
H _{1a}	Autocratic style → Workplace wellbeing	-0.197	0.045	-4.400	***	-0.223	Hypothesis Supported
H_{1b}	Democratic style→Workpla ce wellbeing	0.142	0.036	3.909	***	0.197	Hypothesis Supported
÷	*** p<.001						

Note= n=400, p<0.00

Effect of Democratic Leadership on Workplace wellbeing

The result reveals that the democratic leadership style has a significant positive impact on wellbeing (β = 0.142, SE= 0.036, p<0.001). The positive effect of democratic leadership style was also established by the management who showed that this type of leadership style benefits in decision making and it enables their assistants to work without qualms. Employees have feeling of contentment and persuaded towards their chores under the leader, who adopted democratic style. They feel affinity and sense of belongingness towards the workplace.

Key Findings

The findings of this paper reveal that the autocratic leadership style distort the environment of the organization with the rigid rules and despotic behavior. Due to the presence of such behavior in organization, employees get demotivated and their performance was lower downs. Employees have feeling of contentment and persuaded towards their chores under the leader, who adopted democratic style. They feel affinity and sense of belongingness towards the workplace. The findings show that group members were more inclined to leave the group and divert their resources to other places when they were overseen by an autocratic leader as opposed to a democratic leader. Most of the group members were left an autocrat style leader than a democratic one, regardless of whether they received positive personal favors from the leader. This suggests that the procedural components of an autocratic style leader are more dangerous than the distributive ones. Therefore, autocratic leadership is not an appropriate long-term solution for the welfare of the workforce and its employees.

Recommendations

To improve workplace well-being, organisations should prioritise the development of supportive traits in supervisors and managers through thorough leadership development programmes. These programmes should prioritise developing abilities like emotional intelligence, compassion, interpersonal skills, and imaginative thinking. Leaders should also be encouraged to be real in their dealings with employees, which promotes trust and psychological security. Furthermore, supporting a harmonious work-life balance through flexible policies and wellness programmes can improve employee well-being. It is also critical to cultivate a supportive culture in which leaders actively listen to employee feedback, recognise achievements, and respond to concerns as soon as possible. Continuous monitoring and assessment of executive behaviours and their influence on well-being can help to inform continuing efforts to foster a healthy work environment for employees.

The employees are the important assets of the organization. Consequently, it's important to manage them appropriately. So, it is obligatory to keep them amused and satisfactory. This study corroborates the statement that the democratic leaders create the positive vibes on workplace due to which employee's feels a sense of affinity on the workplace. As the result of study reveals that democratic leadership style positively affect the wellbeing of workplace. Managers in the organizations should apply the democratic leadership styles as it has pragmatic effect on workplace. However, authorities at the organization must adopt democratic leadership style because employees feel collusion in decision making and freely focus on their work which helps to increase productivity and employee's wellbeing. Top level managers should keep in mind that the appropriate leadership style should be followed on the workplace so that employees work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They feel rapport on the workplace so that the productivity increases.

Conclusion

Finally, the complex relationship among style of leadership and workplace well-being is a key focus in organisational dynamics. Through the examination of various leadership techniques, it is clear that leaders play an important role in either feeding or extinguishing the spark of well-being in the workplace. Democratic leadership, with an emphasis on motivation, inspiration, and personalised attention, emerges as an effective catalyst for improving workplace well-being. Transformational leaders provide a supportive and empowered atmosphere in which people may thrive, resulting in greater job satisfaction, engagement, and general psychological

In contrast, authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles tend to raise workplace stress and reduce well-being. Autocratic CEOs can limit employee liberty and creativity, instilling sentiments of alienation and unhappiness. Laissez-faire leaders, on the other hand, may ignore their obligations, leaving staff feeling unsupported and disoriented. The role of leadership in developing workplace well-being emphasises the need to cultivate leadership practices that prioritise employees' holistic needs. Organisations must engage in leadership development programmes that promote transformational leadership skills such as compassion, interpersonal skills, and visionary thinking. Furthermore, cultivating a culture of confidence, transparency, and collaboration can enable leaders to successfully meet their teams' different needs, resulting in an enjoyable place to work conducive to well-being. To summarise, leadership styles have a deep and multifaceted impact on workplace well-being. Recognising the crucial role of leadership in establishing organisational culture and worker satisfaction allows organisations to actively build conditions that light up a feeling of well-being, ultimately boosting productivity, creativity, and overall success.

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