

2024

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Recommended Citation

Ellis, Mark (2024) "Evaluating Leadership Behaviors and Their Impact on Employee Morale: A Comparative Methodological Analysis," *Journal of Fundamental & Applied Business Research*: Vol. 2, Article 3.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/jbr/vol2/iss1/3>

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Evaluating Leadership Behaviors and Their Impact on Employee Morale:

A Comparative Methodological Analysis

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March 12, 2024

Abstract

This article encompassed the effect of diverse leadership behaviors on employee morale across variable organizational contexts but with a core interest in transformational and participative styles. The analysis brings together findings from a range of methodological approaches that include cross-sectional surveys, longitudinal studies, multi-level analyses, and cross-national research to provide a comprehensive understanding of how leadership impacts employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational success. These results indicate that supportive, positive leadership behaviors - empowering and engaging leadership - affect employee morale and innovative behavior - autocratic leadership results in destructive outcomes, such as employee dissatisfaction and high turnover rates. Perhaps what comes across most strongly in this review is the need for more adaptive, more engaged, and culturally sensitive practices within leadership in creating a supportive and productive work environment that will further lead to organizational performance and well-being for the employee. The study contributes to existing knowledge by integrating various research methodologies and practical views applicable to organizational leaders interested in maximizing employee engagement and productivity.

Keywords: Leadership behaviors, employee morale, job satisfaction, organizational dynamics

Introduction

The link between leadership behavior and employee morale is a core concern in organizational dynamics. Meanwhile, it has been reported that effective leadership is highly related to positive results like high involvement, productivity, and job satisfaction among employees (Grimm et al., 2021; Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Rahmadani et al., 2020). On the other hand, its negative side has been associated with adverse effects on employee dissatisfaction, withdrawal, and turnover (Khan & Uzair-ul-Hassan, 2021). As such, this review sought to analyze the impact of diverse leadership behaviors on employee job satisfaction across different organizational settings, with a focus on the engaging and authentic styles of leadership. Leadership behavior has a substantial impact on organizational outcomes based on its influencing role in employee morale about the formation of work situations that allow both high levels of productivity and job satisfaction (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Rahmadani et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2021).

There are numerous leadership styles, such as transformational, autocratic, and democratic, each of which impacts the psychological and emotional states of employees distinctly (Amin et al., 2021; Rehmani et al., 2023). These behaviors directly influence employees' morale and subsequently affect their emotional states, levels of job satisfaction, and general psychological health, which are always tied to the success of an organization (Laguna et al., 2019; Wu & Lee, 2020). The study then discusses in detail the specific effects the two management styles, transformational and participative, have on the morale of the employee. Some of the research studies, for example, done by Amin et al. (2021) and Rahmadani et al. (2020), discussed how empowering and engaging leadership behaviors uplift the spirits and evoke innovative behaviors in followers, resulting in better job satisfaction among them.

Continuing with the same theme, Rehmani et al. (2023) established how supportive leadership behaviors boost creativity and morale both in an educational setup and at the workplace (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2021; Lisbona et al., 2021). However, autocratic behaviors in poor leadership are also examined through studies by Khan and Uzair-ul-Hassan (2021), showing how this type of leadership can lessen morale and lead to poor workplace outcomes.

All findings point to a more significant requirement for democratic and engaging kinds of leadership to encourage good working conditions and higher levels of morale in employees from both sets of studies (Grimm et al., 2021; Schaufeli, 2021). Such leadership behaviors can be explained using theoretical frameworks such as transformational leadership theory and path-goal theory. Such theories explain the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation employees get that drives them to engagement and satisfaction. Besides this, mediating roles such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment allow for the indirect effects of leadership on morale to be more elaborate (Amin et al., 2021; Rehmani et al., 2023).

Methodologies

Research on leadership and employee morale is thus varied in its methodological approaches but fits perfectly in discovering different facets of how leadership styles affect organizational outcomes, be it engagement, productivity, or innovation. Below is a comparative analysis of methodologies in some of the critical studies, pinpointing the differences and contributions that each approach adds to enlighten the dynamics of leadership further.

Cross-Sectional Versus Longitudinal Studies

Amin et al. (2021) performed a cross-sectional survey to measure how empowering leadership influences innovative behavior in higher education. Using regression analysis, the study in question has measured the direct relationship between leadership behaviors and creative

results for one point in time, thus giving sufficient information regarding the impact of empowering leadership behaviors (Amin et al., 2021). Although it does not consider time and causality, it limits its scope.

However, Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) and Rahmadani et al. (2020) adopted a longitudinal, multi-level methodology that can make it possible to examine changes in employee engagement given the effectiveness of leadership styles over a long period. The study by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) explored, through the use of hierarchical linear modeling, how engaging leadership affects the dynamics of the employees and teams at different levels in an organization. It offers a much more dynamic understanding of the impact of leadership. Likewise, Rahmadani et al. (2020) used a longitudinal design of three waves of data collected with the structural equation model to examine the causal relationships between engaging leadership and job outcomes. This made their findings more robust regarding temporal dynamics.

Multi-Level Analysis and Mediation Models

Further developing the field of research, Grimm et al. (2021) implemented a multi-level mediation model to examine how leaders' health awareness is related to the well-being of the leader's team. Then, this approach would lay down the direct impacts of leadership and unveil how the effects would be transmitted by working conditions and team engagement providing complete insight into the cascading effect of leadership in an organization (Grimm et al., 2021).

Cross-National Surveys and Cultural Contexts

The studies of Laguna et al. (2019) and others were searching for the influence of authentic leadership on employees' innovative behavior across three countries. At the same time, Lisbona et al. (2021) analyzed the role of authentic leadership in fostering team initiative. Both

studies pay attention to the diversity of one's culture in determining the effectiveness of a leadership style within that culture (Laguna et al., 2019; Lisbona et al., 2021).

The variety of such methodological approaches presented above, from cross-sectional designs captures immediate correlations to longitudinal studies that trace leadership effects over time, from single-level analyses focusing on individual outcomes to multi-level analyses considering organizational hierarchies. At the base of the present review is a robust investigation of how leadership behaviors impact employees' morale and, eventually, their organization. Each methodology contributes uniquely to our understanding, and longitudinal and multi-level studies provide profound insights into the complex and evolving nature of leadership effects. Research that is currently exploring these dynamics through diverse methodological lenses will go towards enriching academic discourse while also informing practical leadership strategies geared toward optimizing workforce engagement and productivity. The impact of leadership on employee morale is a multidimensional domain in organizational dynamics that depends quite much on the variant methodologies employed to study the same. This review integrates results from several pivotal studies to better understand how leaders' behaviors shape employees' engagement, productivity, job satisfaction, and, ultimately, organizational success.

Integrating Diverse Methodological Approaches

Research that employs a cross-sectional design, such as that conducted by Amin et al. (2021), offers invaluable information about the association between empowering leadership and innovation within education. With the use of regression, this study grasps the short-term effect produced by leadership behavior on innovative outputs within a single time point, with features demonstrating the powerful influence of empowering strategies on faculty creativity and initiative (Amin et al., 2021). Again, this is the limitation of the study; that is, it is cross-sectional

and does not allow the tracking of the evolution of such dynamics across time or let us firmly establish causal relationships. The latter can only be brought about by longitudinal studies providing further detail about the temporal dynamics of leadership effects. As such, using longitudinal, multilevel designs, sustained effects of engaging leadership on team effectiveness and employee engagement in these ways have also been supported in extended periods in this model by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) and Rahmadani et al. (2020).

Hierarchical linear modeling, as used by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022), shows how engaging leadership permeates different organizational levels, offering a dynamic perspective of how such leadership styles enhance team dynamics and employee satisfaction over time. Similarly, the use of structural equation modeling across three waves of measurement makes the application robust in evidence regarding the causal links of engaging leadership with various job outcomes, pointing out the importance of sustained leadership engagement in enhancing well-being and productivity in organizational employees.

Investigation of Mediation Models and Cultural Variability

The multilevel mediation model by Grimm et al. (2021) is another more advanced example in this line of models testing the impacts of leadership, where the health consciousness of the leader could serve as an intervening impact on team states through the work context and employee exhaustion. This perspective discloses general relevance to behavior in organizational specifics: leadership, with a suggestion that the heads should be conscious awareness of health practices as part of the management team. What cross-national surveys by Laguna et al. (2019) and Lisbona et al. (2021) extended is a generalization as to how exactly the leadership styles work. These studies will seek to examine how authentic leadership fosters innovation and initiative and, therefore, bring new insight into the variability of effective leadership across

various cultural contexts and enhance the understanding of global leadership dynamics (Laguna et al., 2019; Lisbona et al., 2021).

Synthesizing Findings Across Methodologies

The synthesis of findings from these diverse methodologies—from the immediate, correlational insights of cross-sectional studies to the depth and causality explored in longitudinal research—paints a comprehensive picture of how leadership styles distinctly influence employee morale and organizational outcomes. Each methodological approach contributes uniquely to our understanding, with longitudinal and multi-level studies providing particularly profound insights into the evolving nature of leadership effects.

It is in this light that ongoing research into leadership dynamics from varying methodological perspectives not only enhances scholarly debate but also provides actionable solutions for organizational leaders interested in optimizing workforce engagement and productivity. Therefore, these studies show that importance lies in adaptive, engaging, and culturally aware leadership practices for an environment that boosts employee morale toward organizational success.

Cross-comparison of methodologies used in the aforementioned leadership studies brings out clear insights that can be actionable and positively influence organizational performance, employee morale, and organizational efficiency at large. It illustrates how organizations can use the results of empirical research to develop their leadership skills to create a better working experience in the organization.

Enhancing Innovation and Immediate Impact through Empowering Leadership

Cross-sectional studies, as by Amin et al. (2021), have also shown how empowering leadership can enhance organizational innovation. With the introduction of leadership styles that

empower, organizations can create an environment that is nurturing, supportive, and permits action for innovative outputs. Although these studies are not longitudinal and do not track changes over time, they offer insight into the direct impacts of leadership behaviors that may be important for short-term strategic planning and intervention (Amin et al., 2021).

Long-Term Benefits of Engaging Leadership on Organizational Dynamics

There have been two longitudinal studies examining the impact of engaging leadership on organizational dynamics: one by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) and another by Rahmadani et al. (2020). These studies have employed methodologies to track changes over time, explaining how consistent leadership involvement can enhance team effectiveness and employee engagement. Such insights are leveraged by organizations for the design of long-term leadership programs for the enhancement of more than just immediate morale among employees, but to also maintain the same benefits over time for an improvement in organizational performance and a reduction in turnover (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Rahmadani et al., 2020).

Strategic Application of Multi-Level Analysis to Enhance Team Management

The use of multi-level mediation models is illustrated by the study of Grimm et al. (2021). This approach enables the leader to adopt more comprehensive management practices that consider the direct and indirect effects of their behavior on team dynamics. Such strategic insights enable the development of holistic wellness programs, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity, a discussion supported by Grimm et al. (2021).

Incorporating Cultural Variability into Leadership Development

The results from the cross-national surveys, most especially those of Laguna et al. (2019) and Lisbona et al. (2021), suggest that cultural variability impacts the effectiveness of leadership. In this regard, these studies provide a roadmap through which organizations may align and adjust

their leadership development intervention strategies to various cultural angles, thereby ensuring that corresponding leadership styles and practices should be infused with cultural or regional sensitivities for the workforce. That is to say, by incorporating these cultural considerations, organizations can strengthen the global effectiveness of its leadership strategy, thereby creating an all-encompassing and supportive work environment for innovation and initiative in teams dispersed across various locations geographically (Laguna et al., 2019; Lisbona et al., 2021).

Synthesis of Methodological Approaches for Organizational Strategy

The integration between cross-sectional and longitudinal findings (Amin et al., 2021), coupled with multi-level research and cross-cultural studies (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022), will provide the framework for organizations to develop more effective strategies for developing leadership. An excellent wide range of methodologies has equally differing insights, which could be strategic in application for optimizing leadership practices (Rahmadani et al., 2020), thereby enhancing employee morale, organizational efficiency, and sustained success of an organization. All through exploring and then applying such research findings (Grimm et al., 2021), organizations have become able to adapt themselves dynamically against the happenings of any kind of change, either developing from within or occurring outside (Laguna et al., 2019), and finally found a competitive edge in creating a resilient and productive workforce (Lisbona et al., 2021).

Christian Perspective on the Problem and Findings

As discussed above, the link between leadership behavior and employee morale is a core concern in organizational dynamics. As we look into this issue from a Christian perspective, it is essential to recognize the biblical principles that align with effective leadership. Scripture often addresses the importance of servant leadership, empathy, and moral integrity. For instance,

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) states, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." This principle is fundamental to creating a positive and productive work environment where leaders prioritize the well-being and morale of their employees.

Effective leadership, as reported by various studies, is highly related to positive results like high involvement, productivity, and job satisfaction among employees (Grimm et al., 2021; Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022; Rahmadani et al., 2020). The Bible supports this by encouraging leaders to be shepherds to their flock, as seen in 1 Peter 5:2-3 (NIV), which advises,

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Leaders who embody these qualities foster an environment where employees feel valued, leading to higher morale and better organizational outcomes.

Conversely, negative leadership behaviors have been associated with adverse effects on employee dissatisfaction, withdrawal, and turnover (Khan & Uzair-ul-Hassan, 2021). From a Christian standpoint, such behaviors are antithetical to the teachings of Christ, who emphasized love, respect, and service to others. Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV) instructs, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Leaders who fail to exhibit these virtues can create a toxic work environment that erodes employee morale and productivity.

Integrating Christian principles with contemporary leadership research offers a holistic approach to addressing the business problem of leadership and employee morale. By embodying biblical virtues such as humility, empathy, and servant leadership, leaders can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency. This alignment not only fulfills the moral and ethical responsibilities outlined in scripture but also resonates with the empirical findings that show the importance of positive leadership behaviors in fostering a thriving workplace.

Conclusion

To conclude this examination of leadership's influence on organizational dynamics, the comprehensive insights drawn from varied methodological approaches significantly enrich our understanding of how effective leadership fosters enhanced employee morale and organizational efficiency. This review has systematically examined the positive impacts of different types of leadership behaviors in the critical role they play in shaping productive, engaged, and satisfied workforces. A comparison of cross-sectional and longitudinal methodologies in the studies reviewed reveals both immediate and long-term influences of leadership practices. Where cross-sectional studies can provide a snapshot insight valuable for immediate application in dynamic environments, longitudinal research, such as that by Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) and Rahmadani et al. (2020), offers further meaning for how these effects evolve and sustain over time. Such longitudinal insights are necessary for the drafting of strategies that not only address the problems at present but are also resilient to future organizational shifts.

What is more, the use of multi-level analyses and mediation models in such studies, as pointed out by Grimm et al. (2021), have opened up complex pathways whereby leadership behaviors percolate within an organization, later on affecting other levels of employee

interaction and well-being. These studies reveal the essential need to consider leadership holistically, in which there is a mixture of both direct and indirect impacts on employees' sense of morale. Additionally, the role of a cross-national perspective, mainly through studies by Laguna et al. (2019) and Lisbona et al. (2021), heightens sensitivity to culture in leadership. These inputs are very beneficial for any global organization so that the leadership strategies could be accordingly reframed and harness their maximum effectiveness across international boundaries.

A valuable synthesis of such findings is realized, thus indicating that a deep insight into the multi-dimensional impacts of leadership is needed to design applicable strategies that can enhance employee morale and consequently organizational success. This has been followed by widespread advice given to organizations to seek out these pluralistic views in leadership development programs because they support not only scientifically validated practices but also the amount of generalizability to the subtle differences of various organizational situations and cultural milieus. Strategic use of these research findings, at the end of the day, therefore, empowers organizational leaders to be able to create environments that cherish and nourish the morale of employees, consequently enhancing productivity and ensuring organizational growth. As leaders seek excellence in an increasingly complex and globalized business environment, this body of research provides not just academic discourse, but also a practical guide.

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