

Impact of Constructive Leadership Styles on Employee Well-being, with the Mediating Role of Autonomy Support

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research work is to investigate the link between the constructive leadership style like transformational and charismatic leadership style and the well-being of the employees with the mediating effect of autonomy support. Leaders have a crucial role in managing organizational interventions, which are efforts to promote employee health and well-being by changing the way work is organized, created, and managed. During this quantitative research, we analyzed the data that was collected from 436 workers who were employed in a different Free Zones in Pakistan. The data were gathered using questionnaires for surveys. According to our findings, transformational and charismatic leadership have a significant effect on the well-being of employees, whereas mediating effects of autonomy support is also present between constructive leaderships and employee well-being. Future researchers should include a diverse sample of enterprises in Free Zones to study these variables, also categorize the Free Zones based on size, ownership, and control.

Keywords:Autonomy Support, Charismatic Leadership, Employee Well-being, Free Zones,
Transformational Leadership

Introduction

Human well-being in organizational context is a crucial aspect of success, as all organizations depend on the work of human beings (Pfeffer, 2010). Organizations thrive only when each member of staff contributes to the organization's success, and any company that neglects the wellbeing of its employees ultimately fails. The success of an organization depends on both physical and material factors, as well as management and leadership styles within the organization (Diener & Seligman, 2004).

Leadership is a widely discussed phenomenon, and it involves leading people by going in advance and ensuring service quality (Day et al., 2014). Employees play an important role in ensuring service quality, and understanding their requirements and expectations can increase performance (Binyamin, 2020). Various leadership styles have been employed to distribute job responsibilities and manage resources, and research has demonstrated that leaders have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness via exerting influence on personnel. In recent years, research on leadership has presented a significant challenge to researchers and practitioners (Ryder et al., 2019). Leadership is a multifaceted phenomenon that includes influence, motivation, and working with individuals, like management from multiple perspectives (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Supervisors' support and leadership style significantly add to employee engagement, and understanding different leadership styles is essential for successful leadership (Strom et al., 2014). As a leader, having more tactics and methods available can help them lead successfully in a competitive environment.

The literature on the impact of leadership styles on employee well-being, particularly in Free Zones (FZs), is very limited. The current body of management literature lacks consistent outcomes (Yukl, 2002) and does not completely incorporate theories of leadership (Vilkinas & West, 2011). Leaders play an essential role in organizations, and their behavior significantly impacts performance, work behaviors, and employee well-being (Avolio et al., 2009). However, previous research on leadership has mostly neglected the research on employee well-being and employee health (Grant et al., 2007). The association between well-being, viewed as job satisfaction, and performance is at a moderate level. Employee well-being is often taken as a mediator or secondary outcome in configuration literature, making it difficult to measure as a significant outcome or consequence. This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by examining the impact of different types of constructive leadership on employees' well-being, specifically among individuals employed in free zones in Pakistan. Despite the differences and similarities among leadership literature, the researchers agree that leadership significantly affects individuals working in organizations (Tafvelin et al., 2011), along with organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit work (Ertureten et al., 2013). However, very limited studies have focused on how leadership style affects employee wellbeing separately in the context of free zones of Pakistan. Ultimately, this research enhances the current body of knowledge by addressing this deficiency and introducing a new viewpoint in the literature of leadership and organization.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership and Employee Well-being

Transformational leadership encourages and motivates managers and subordinates to honestly analyze current beliefs and think crosswise over new direction (Saleem, 2015) and to trust, obey, thank, and be loyal to their leaders and assigned tasks without question. These leaders care more about their subordinates and influence their behavior, which improves work satisfaction and organizational outcomes (Givens, 2008). They help their subordinates be productive, creative, and adaptable to the organization's environment (Baltaci et al., 2010) and solve business problems. Leadership and wellbeing are linked in management research to employee performance and organizational practice. Like diverse definitions and conceptualizations of wellbeing, employee well-being has been widely studied and measured (Brunetto et al., 2012). In enterprises, employee wellbeing is often associated with physical health, but past research demonstrates that it also involves social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional well-being. Studies have examined how leadership style or behavior affects employee wellbeing (Nielsen et al., 2009; Tafvelin et al., 2011).

Transformational leadership was positively and significantly connected with employee wellbeing (Tafvelin et al., 2011). Leadership and employee well-being have been studied extensively. Previous research showed that leaders' behavior greatly improves employees' well-being, as do lifestyle, age, life events, demanding job, and family and coworker support. Van Dierendonck et al. (2004) observed that good leadership conduct affected context-free affective well-being and job-related psychological well-being. Transformational leadership may reduce employee stress (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Overall, this research suggest:

H1: Transformational leadership has positive and significant effect on employees' wellbeing.

Charismatic Leadership and Employee Well-being

Research suggests charismatic leaders exhibit self-confidence, passion, and self-sacrifice, set high expectations, serve as role models, exhibit desirable behavior, and demonstrate self-reliance (House & Podsakoff, 2013). These actions reflect how charismatic

leaders inspire their followers. Supporters believe they have unmatched abilities and traits. Due to their attraction and visionary interests, followers differentiate themselves from their leaders and disguised their leaders' opinions, principles, goals, qualities, and convictions to achieve the results they want.

Employee well-being refers to their physical and mental health, but 'well-being' can encompass many concerns (Dodge et al., 2012). It includes perks an employee should receive to ensure his health. Benefits include access to medical care, a healthy and safe workplace, aid with family issues like deprivation, fatherly leave, and company policies like no smoking (Currie, 2001). Thus, the workplace affects the person's life and the network's well-being. The presence of a positive attitude in an expert should lead to happier and more lucrative workers (Harter et al., 2002). The company benefits most from employee wellbeing. Because work is important and affects a person's life.

An exploratory study conducted by Bono and Ilies (2006) found that "charismatic leaders empower their devotees to encounter positive feelings" (p. 331). Positive attitudes and feelings could be examples of positive emotional well-being, like our examination outcome. The infection theory suggests that charismatic leaders display more pleasant feelings and their followers "get" them. According to previous research, positive factors are more strongly associated with positive well-being, whereas negative factors are more associated with negative well-being. For instance, job resources and people increase engagement and well-being (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). A positive and productive style of leadership like charismatic leadership also more accurately predicts employee psychological, subjective, and workplace well-being (Sonnentag, 2015). So the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Charismatic leadership has positive and significant effect on employee well-being.

Autonomy Support act as a mediator between Transformational Leadership and Employee Well-being

Employee well-being has a positive association with autonomy support. In the past, researchers have focused their attention on the aspect of well-being. Researchers examined well-being-causing self-regulation and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Selfconcordant motivation promotes strength-based growth (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Supporting autonomy will help set career goals and fulfill them, resulting in great emotional well-being. Cross-cultural people share "psychological requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness." When we meet these demands, employees are satisfied and well-being increases (Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, when social to cultural, contextual forces grow, well-being decreases and vice versa. According to self-determination theory (SDT), displaying essential self-aspects and authentic composition improves well-being. Finally, Bono and Judge (2003) found that transformative or visionary leaders' followers received self-ruling than controlled workplace goals. These supporters became happier at work and more emotionally invested in the company. Since transformational leadership inspires by encouraging recognizable proof with the group, increasing devotee self-viability, and connecting work esteem to adherent qualities (Shamir et al., 1998), SDT can support devotee autonomy, satisfy basic psychological needs, and motivate them.

Deci et al. (2001) examined how autonomy-supportive work environments affect need satisfaction and well-being. According to Bulgarian and US survey results, autonomysupportive work environments increased need fulfillment, which in turn increased work engagement and well-being (Deci et al., 2001). These findings suggest that satisfying basic wants can be found throughout cultures. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Autonomy support mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' well-being.

Autonomy Support act as a mediator between Charismatic Leadership and Employee Well-being

Previous research suggest autonomy support could help leaders overcome many leadership issues. This study examines whether autonomy-supportive leadership might boost an organization's success. Managers now prioritize employee well-being to improve employee well-being. It's hardly unexpected that managers use such methods to improve well-being. Time is needed to manage this issue intelligently for better results. Researchers are familiar with "self-determination theory" (SDT) of human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). SDT suggests that humans have three wants; fulfilling them makes employees happy and well-being is achieved. Humans need relatedness, autonomy, and competence. We see positive results when we use these concepts at work. First, relatedness is an individual's awareness of their potential to build good professional relationships. Second, autonomy is the feeling of volition and choice, and third, competency is the ability to master labour.

SDT is a motivating instrument used to examine the relationship between leader autonomy and employee success. Many experts believe that the primary human need for autonomy—the ability to choose exercises—determines motivation. Additionally, autonomy is the fundamental characteristic that distinguishes distinct motivations. Inborn motivation occurs when people are sincerely interested in a movement. Extraneous (remotely guided) motivation requires extrinsic rewards or disciplines (Moran et al., 2012). Additionally, if leaders create independent workplaces that allow individuals to choose how to work, inventiveness will likely flourish.

Charismatic leadership using vision, expectation, confidence, and unselfish love motivates employees by objective proof and assigned contribution. The higher-request requirements of people—self-viability, autonomy, relatedness, and capability—make this strategy compelling (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Effective leaders should use their power to reduce activity costs and improve staff coordination and involvement (Zehnder et al., 2017). Based on the above literature, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Autonomy support mediates the relationship between charismatic leadership and employees' well-being.

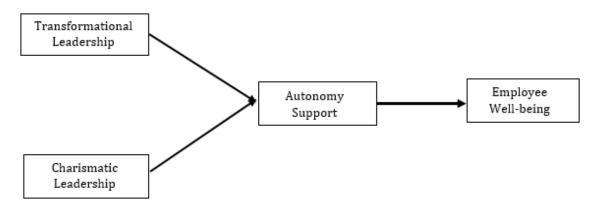


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Material and Methods

For the purpose of this study, a survey approach is utilized because it is the method of choice for gathering information from a big number of people. According to Saunders et al. (2012), the survey is connected to the analysis of the deductive method. The questionnaires are the primary method of data collection for the surveys since they provide the collection of reliable information from a broad population in a fair manner. The purpose of our study is to collect data only once, and we do this by doing cross-sectional research. A

collection of data is gathered from the people who are currently working in the various companies that are in free zones in Pakistan. To facilitate the selection procedure, the required responses were chosen from free zones. The acceptance of employees to participate in convenient sampling using the questionnaire allowed the study to accomplish its goal, which was to collect feedback from employees. A total of 550 questionnaires were sent out for the purpose of data collection, and a response rate of 88% was obtained from the 485 questionnaires that were ultimately returned. Following the completion of the data cleaning procedure, the outliers, responding individuals who were not engaged, and missing data were discovered and rectified. There was a total of 436 questionnaires that may be used after the data cleaning process.

Measures

In the questionnaire, we collected data on four demographic variables: Gender, Age, Experience, and Qualification of the respondents. Aside from demographics, the survey has incorporated additional constructs for evaluation. The constructs encompass of survey questions pertaining to transformational leadership and charismatic leadership, employees' well-being in the workplace, and autonomy support. All factors were measured using a 7-point Likert scale. This study utilized a 10-item scale developed by Carless et al. (2000) to assess transformational leadership. The charismatic leadership was measured using the 20-item scale developed by Conger et al. (1997). The autonomy support scale was consisting of 4 items developed by Brien et al. (2012). The well-being of employees was assessed using an 8-item scale developed by Bartels et al. (2019). This scale measures two components: interpersonal factors and intrapersonal factors.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability and Correlation Analysis

Table 1 **Descriptive, Correlation and Reliability Analysis** Mean SD 1 2 3 4 **Transformational** 5.56 0.70 (0.80)Leadership Charismatic 4.31 0.48 0.192* (0.81)Leadership 0.521** **Autonomy Support** 5.41 0.46 0.421** (0.75)**Employee Well-**0.471** 0.579** 5.66 0.61 0.330** (0.89)being

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, reliability, and correlations of all the variables.

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown in Table 1 represents that the well-being of employees in Pakistani Free zones is predicted to be greater, as indicated by a highest mean value of 5.66 along with a standard deviation of 0.61. Cronbach's alpha estimates the reliability of a measurement by calculating the correlation between variables, assuming that all variables have equal reliability. The Cronbach alpha scores at the end of the study varied from 0.75 to 0.89. This indicates that there is a high level of reliability, as the values above the acceptable threshold set by Fornell & Larcker (1981), which is greater than 0.70.

After completing the reliability assessment, a correlation study was conducted to examine the links between all the analyzed elements. The primary objective of this statistical

analysis was to determine the explicit link between constructive leadership styles and wellbeing of employees. Moreover, the variables are considered to be correlated if they have a tendency to vary in the same or opposite directions. Table 1 demonstrates a significant correlation among all variables. There is a significant correlation r = 0.471; p< 0.05) between transformational leadership and employees' well-being. The results show demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between charismatic leadership and well-being of employees (r = 0.330; p< 0.05). Correlation table's values indicate that it is acceptable to proceed with additional statistical studies, as they align with the expected associations.

Regression Analysis

The current study implemented multiple regression analysis technique to investigate the direct influence and mediating role of the variables being studied, including transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, autonomy support, and employees' wellbeing. The table given below presents the results obtained from the regression analyses.

Regression Analysis					
	Coefficient	Т	P-value	Result	
TLEWB	0.378	2.612	0.000	Supported	
CL →EWB	0.496	4.915	0.000	Supported	
TI - Transformational Los	dorchin CI - Chari	amatic Loadorch	in EWP-Employee	Woll boing	

Table 2

TL= Transformational Leadership, **CL=** Charismatic Leadership, **EWB**= Employee Well-being

The findings of the present study indicate that transformational leadership has a favourable and significant impact on employee wellbeing ($\beta = 0.378$, p = 0.000), supporting hypothesis 1. Moreover, findings shown in Table 2 demonstrate a strong and positive link between charismatic leadership and employees' well-being ($\beta = 0.496$, p < 0.000). Hence, the findings of this study provide support for hypothesis 2.

Mediation Analysis

We conducted a regression study to investigate how autonomy support mediates the link between constructive leadership styles and well-being of the employees. The findings of the mediation test are presented in Table 3. The current study utilized 5000 bootstrap resamples to calculate the confidence interval of 95% of the indirect effects, as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008) research work.

Table 3						
Mediating Effect of Autonomy Support						
Direct Effect	Total Effect	Indirect Effect	Findings			
0.179*	0.378***	0.307***	Supported			
0.490***	0.496***	0.018*	Supported			
	Direct Effect 0.179*	Mediating Effect of ADirectTotalEffectEffect0.179*0.378***	Mediating Effect of Autonomy SupportDirectTotalIndirect EffectEffectEffect0.378***0.179*0.378***0.307***			

TL= Transformational Leadership, **CL=** Charismatic Leadership, **AS=** Autonomy Support, **EWB**= Employee Well-being

addition, analysis investigated transformational In the how and charismatic leadership styles influence employees' wellbeing through autonomy support. Based on the analysis of the current research, it can be concluded that the effect of transformational leadership on the well-being of employees was influenced by autonomy support. This influence was found to be indirect effect of ($\beta = 0.307$; p < 0.000), hence supporting Hypothesis 3. In addition, the findings that are presented in Table 3 indicate that autonomy support has a substantial role in mediating the connection between charismatic leadership and the well-being of employees. This mediation effect is statistically significant $(\beta = 0.018; p = 0.05)$. Therefore, the results provided support for hypothesis 4.

Discussion

The objective of this research is to examine the link between constructive styles of leadership and employee wellbeing. Our research has explicitly examined leadership styles within constructive contexts, which come together to form a distinct managerial arrangement. This arrangement promotes collective accountability, favorable attitudes, and exemplary behavior among employees.

Previous literature has conducted little research on the impact of constructive leadership on wellbeing of employees in the workplace (Angermeier et al., 2009). No empirical investigation undertaken in free zones has been found. Consequently, to address this deficiency, ongoing study investigates the impact of different kinds of constructive leadership on the well-being of employees in Pakistani free zones. The Pakistani setting was chosen due to the absence of any existing study that specifically examines constructive forms of leadership in Pakistani free zones. Hence, this study examines the correlation between constructive leadership style (transformational and charismatic leadership styles) and employee wellbeing. Furthermore, this study also examines how autonomy support act as a mediator between constructive leadership styles and employee well-being. The findings of our study suggest that the transformational and charismatic leadership styles exhibited by constructive leaders in free zone enterprises have a positive impact on the employee well-being.

Conclusion

This study shown that the implementation of transformational and charismatic leadership styles in Free zones enterprises positively impacts the well-being of employees. Free zone companies should provide training to their managers to encourage the adoption of positive leadership styles. We discovered that a workplace characterized by interactional justice will result in a more significant impact of transformational and charismatic leadership styles on the wellbeing of employees. The current research work's findings make a valuable contribution to the existing literature.

Recommendations

There are numerous intriguing areas for future investigation that are eagerly awaiting intellectual contributions. First of all, the data and recommended approach are specifically intended for enterprises operating in Free zones. Excluded from the sample are companies located in non-free zones. In future research, it may be beneficial to incorporate enterprises that are not located in Free zones and perform a comparison in order to examine the variations in the nature of interactions between the two groups. By including a diverse sample, such as this, the study's ability to be applied to a wider population will be enhanced. Furthermore, in future endeavors, it is necessary to categorize Free zones enterprises according to their size, ownership, and control in order to assess the legitimacy of the beneficial relationship between leadership and well-being. Furthermore, we will enhance our research by employing a comprehensive multiple case study approach that incorporates qualitative data. Additionally, we strongly suggest conducting longitudinal evaluations to examine the impact of other leadership styles on employee wellbeing using a dynamic approach. Prior research regards leadership as factors that precede or influence well-being. Consistent with prior studies, our research demonstrates that constructive leadership styles have a direct impact on overall well-being.

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