

Midocean University

Faculty of Management

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Project title

**Exploring the Impact of Leadership Styles on Workplace
Wellbeing: A Qualitative Study in the Saudi Arabian
Workforce**

Student name

Afnan Mohammed Badawi

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Faculty of Management - Midocean University

Supervisor

Dr. Abdulrahim Nader

Faculty member- Faculty of management- Midocean University

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Introduction

Although there are many definitions of leadership, at its most basic level, it refers to the capacity to persuade people to accomplish objectives. Understanding leadership and its value in the context of advancing public health nutrition as a field and its role in our day-to-day work requires an awareness of the steps and qualities needed to influence others successfully (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). A well-established body of literature outlines the personal qualities of leaders, such as having a broad vision that is successfully communicated and making decisions that are

clear and resolute after weighing the information at hand. Leaders are courteous and consultative, but they are also prepared to make difficult choices when necessary. They are dedicated to empowering people and developing their ability. Credibility is a fundamental quality of leadership that is typically attained by exhibiting moral behavior and openness in one's practice. When necessary, leaders speak out against the status quo, take measured risks as well as move forward to assume accountability and demonstrate initiative (Silva, 2016). In real life, this kind of behavior calls for emotional intelligence, effective interpersonal communication and sound strategic thinking. Whether in academic institutes, communities or organizations, we all demonstrate and require leadership abilities to function

well in our day-to-day activities. Regardless of the level at which we function in society, we all strive to persuade others to support our goals.

Leaders assist others and themselves in acting morally. They establish goals, develop a compelling vision and produce something original. Leadership is dynamic, exciting and motivating; it involves laying out the path to "win" as a group or an organization. Although they determine the course, leaders must also employ management techniques to smoothly and effectively bring their followers to the correct destination (Igbaekemen, 2014).

There are many responsibilities when it comes to leaders. however, in the organization their role can be determined

by the value they bring in their employees and general work environment. The first and foremost role of leaders is to inspire and create a vision. A vision in business is a realistic, compelling, and appealing representation of your desired future state. A vision gives you focus, establishes priorities, and acts as a benchmark to let you know when you've accomplished your goals. Using methods like Porter's Five Forces, PEST Analysis, USP Analysis, Core Competence Analysis and SWOT Analysis to assess their current state, leaders concentrate on an organization's strengths in order to develop a vision (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). They consider the probable developments in their industry as well as the likely actions of their rivals. In order to thrive in upcoming markets, they consider how they may

successfully innovate and mold their companies and tactics.

Along with creating vision, another compelling role played by the leader in an organization is to motivate the people to give their best and reach maximum potential. A strong vision serves as the cornerstone of effective leadership. However, the ability of leaders to inspire and encourage others is what enables them to realize that goal. For instance, when you begin a new project, you are likely to be quite enthusiastic about it, thus gaining support at the outset is frequently simple. Finding strategies to maintain your vision's inspiration after the initial fervor wanes, however, can be challenging, particularly if the group or organization wants to make big adjustments to their

operational procedures. Leaders understand this and put a lot of effort into aligning their vision with each person's requirements, objectives, and aspirations throughout the project (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005).

Last but not the least, the leader must also know how to translate the vision into reality. This is the leadership domain that has to do with management. The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model states that there are appropriate times to participate, sell, tell and delegate. The secret to good leadership is knowing which strategy to employ and when. In addition to making sure that their vision is successfully realized, leaders must make sure that the work required to realize it is appropriately managed,

either by themselves or by a committed manager or group of managers to whom the leader assigns this duty.

As they encourage and uplift their followers, they typically display a certain style of leadership. Accordingly, a leader's style is the way they choose to guide and engage with their followers (Northouse, 2018). It displays how the leader influences and guides others by their actions, attitudes, and behaviors. How a leader takes choices, conveys expectations, inspires followers, and establishes a work atmosphere is greatly influenced by their leadership style. A leader's attitude to leadership is reflected in their style. It displays the leader's inclinations, principles, and convictions regarding the best ways to guide and sway others. There are various leadership philosophies and these

philosophies can have a variety of effects on the dynamics, output, and culture of an organization or group.

In any organization, leadership styles can vary greatly depending on the individuals in charge, the culture of the workplace and the goals the organization is trying to achieve (Gonos & Gallo, 2013). Different leaders have different ways of managing their teams, making decisions and communicating with their employees. These leadership styles are not fixed as they often depend on the situation, the people involved, and the leader's personal traits. For example, some leaders are more hands-on and controlling, while others believe in giving their team members more freedom and autonomy.

One commonly seen leadership style is authoritative or autocratic leadership, where the leader makes decisions independently and expects employees to follow instructions strictly. This style may work well in situations where quick decisions are needed or in highly structured environments, but it can sometimes lead to low employee morale if overused. On the other hand, democratic leaders involve their team in decision-making and encourage collaboration. This often results in higher job satisfaction and motivation among employees, although it might slow down the process when fast action is required.

Another leadership style that is becoming increasingly popular is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders aim to inspire and motivate their teams by creating

a shared vision and encouraging innovation. They focus not just on tasks but also on developing their employees' potential (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). In contrast, transactional leaders emphasize performance, rules and rewards. They focus on achieving specific goals and often use incentives or penalties to manage performance. While this can be effective in task-oriented environments, it might not always encourage creativity or long-term development.

There are also laissez-faire leaders, who take a more hands-off approach and allow their team members to take the lead. This can be beneficial in teams that are already highly skilled and motivated, but it can also cause confusion or lack of direction if the team lacks experience. Similarly,

servant leadership is a style where the leader prioritizes the needs of the team, focusing on supporting and empowering others rather than seeking control or authority.

Workplace wellbeing is an essential part of any successful organization. It goes beyond just physical health and includes emotional, mental and social aspects of an employee's experience at work. When employees feel valued, respected and supported in their roles they are more likely to perform better, stay committed to their tasks and contribute positively to the overall work environment (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). A workplace that prioritizes wellbeing often experiences lower turnover rates, higher productivity and stronger team morale. On the other hand, when wellbeing is ignored it can lead to burnout, low

motivation and decreased job satisfaction, all of which can harm the organization's overall performance.

In today's fast-paced work environments the importance of employee wellbeing is greater than ever. Organizations that recognize the link between a healthy workforce and business outcomes are more likely to invest in practices that promote balance, fairness and support. This can include flexible working hours, mental health resources, recognition systems or just maintaining a respectful and safe environment. Employees who feel cared for are not only more engaged but are also more creative, loyal and willing to go the extra mile for the success of their teams and organizations (Aryanti et al., 2020).

Leadership plays a major role in shaping workplace wellbeing. The way leaders communicate, support their teams and manage day-to-day operations has a direct impact on how employees feel about their work. Leaders set the tone for workplace culture and their behavior often influences whether employees feel stressed or secure. For instance, a leader who is open to feedback and genuinely listens to concerns is more likely to build trust within the team. In contrast, a leader who is overly critical or distant may unintentionally create an atmosphere of fear or discomfort.

Leadership styles affect how policies are implemented, how conflicts are resolved and how recognition is given. A leader who encourages open dialogue and collaboration

can help reduce stress and increase a sense of belonging, while a rigid and controlling approach might lead to pressure and dissatisfaction. When leaders prioritize wellbeing, it reflects in their actions and decisions, which in turn encourages employees to adopt healthier attitudes toward their work. In this way leadership styles become a key influence on workplace wellbeing and can ultimately determine the success or failure of organizational goals.

Research problem

In recent years workplace wellbeing has become a growing concern for organizations across the globe including those in Saudi Arabia. As businesses evolve and work cultures shift there is increasing awareness that employee wellbeing plays a crucial role in productivity,

retention and overall organizational success. However, many organizations still struggle to create environments that fully support the psychological and emotional needs of their employees. One key factor that influences wellbeing in the workplace is leadership. The way leaders interact with their teams, make decisions and manage daily operations can either contribute to a positive work atmosphere or lead to stress and dissatisfaction. Despite the importance of this connection limited research in the Saudi Arabian context has explored how different leadership styles impact employee wellbeing. Most existing studies tend to focus on organizational performance or employee motivation separately without deeply analyzing the relationship between leadership

approaches and employee wellbeing from the perspective of those experiencing it. This gap highlights the need for a qualitative investigation that captures real employee experiences and provides deeper insights into how leadership styles affect workplace wellbeing in the Saudi Arabian workforce.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it addresses a critical but underexplored area in the Saudi Arabian organizational context. By examining the impact of leadership styles on workplace wellbeing the study aims to provide valuable insights for employers, HR professionals and leaders themselves. Understanding how different leadership approaches influence employee wellbeing can

help organizations make informed decisions about leadership development, employee support strategies and workplace culture improvements. The findings may also contribute to shaping policies that prioritize not just productivity but also the mental and emotional health of employees. In a country where the workforce is rapidly diversifying and modernizing this research can help bridge the gap between traditional leadership practices and the growing need for employee-centered management. Ultimately this study seeks to promote a healthier and more sustainable work environment by highlighting the role of leadership in shaping employee wellbeing.

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