

HOW MOTIVATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAN POSITIVELY AFFECT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES, LEADING TO BETTER PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract - *The mental health of employees is a crucial aspect of workforce welfare. An organization can stay productive and deliver quality performance when the work environment positively supports the mental well-being of employees. To ensure this productivity, leadership plays a significant role in an organization. There are different types of leadership that can promote the personal and professional development of employees. However, motivational leadership goes a step ahead and connects this scope of development with the innate enthusiasm and willingness of the individual. Motivational leadership induces and emphasizes the constructive side of the workforce, stimulating them to work toward a shared goal. Such leadership is dynamic and has the potential to enable employee motivation leading to better productivity. Therefore, our study's purpose is to analyze this potential and explore how different motivational leadership characteristics positively impact employees' mental health. The present study will utilize a phenomenological research design to perform qualitative research on 30 participants working in a particular organization. Each respondent will be given questionnaires they will fill out and submit to the research team. The responses will be coded and analyzed using thematic analysis. The expected finding is that motivational leadership positively affects employees' mental health.*

Keywords: *motivation, leadership, mental health significance, employee engagement, work productivity, and corporate experiences.*

INTRODUCTION

Employees' mental health and well-being are becoming increasingly significant in the complex work environment. Different factors can impact an individual's performance and thereby impact the organization's productivity. The crucial aspect for leadership is to address these factors and improve their quality to leverage employee engagement and motivation. The complexity originates from the fact that although mental motivation is the driving factor for employees to accelerate their performance, the factors can differ individually. (Hansen & Rojas, 2021).

The underlying idea is to understand the common factors that positively influence employees. These factors may include work-life balance, workplace culture, leadership support, communication channels, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Effective organizational leadership can build motivational strategies related to improving these factors to transform the work culture. (Ali et al., 2015). A culture that prioritizes employee mental health significantly improves work behavior due to the innate willingness of the workforce to contribute to the project's success.

With this understanding, the study will analyze how the motivational approach of leadership actually contributes to employees' mental well-being. Subsequently, the study will explore the different ways of incorporating motivational strategies and their correlation with the increment in workforce efficiency. This will include an analysis of the implications of organizational culture and workforce response. Finally, the study will establish the positive association between leadership motivation and employee mental well-being and the crucial impact on workforce productivity.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Khan et al. (2020) conducted an interesting research study to understand the impact of fundamental motivation as a mediator between transformational leadership and workers' outcomes. Burnout and social loafing were the primary variable outcomes considered for the research study. It involved a survey of 308 employees working in the telecommunication industry. The testing procedure involved Model 4 Process Hayes for evaluating the arbitrating effects between the transformation leadership and employees' workplace behavior.

The study's results indicated a substantial positive relationship between fundamental motivation and transformational leadership. It also established that employees' work performance shows crucial improvement due to the incorporation of transformational leadership. While working burnout and social loafing did not show a significant correlation, the study will be an essential source to explain the positive effect that leadership motivation brings to employee inspiration and mental well-being in the organization.

According to Montano et al. (2017), there is an interesting relationship between leadership, followers' mental well-being, and work performance. It involved mapping various leadership categories like transformational, task-oriented, and leader-member exchange to study the change in mental health-related outcomes of the employees. Some of the outcomes included stress, burnout, psychological well-being, and emotional symptoms. The study utilized a meta-analytic model to evaluate the association between leadership and outcomes.

The study's results showed a significant positive association between constructive leadership and the followers' mental health. It also revealed a negative correlation between destructive leadership and mental health. The result showcased the importance of mediation effects that enable motivational leadership to improve the job performance of individuals in the organization. The study will work as a useful source to emphasize the role of leadership's mediating effects in facilitating a mentally comforting work culture for the employees.

Moreover, Paais et al. (2020) conducted a useful empirical study to analyze the effect of enthusiasm, leadership, and organizational culture on job contentment and worker performance. The study aimed to critically assess various factors that may improve the quality of Human Resource Management (HRM). The sample pool involved 155 employees from Wahana Resource Ltd. company in Indonesia. The study utilized a questionnaire to collect data and incorporated Structural Equation Modelling for data analysis.

The study results revealed a positive correlation between the organizational culture promoting motivational factors and employees' work performance. The result outcomes showcased an improvement of 73.5% in workers' performance and a 57.4% rise in job satisfaction under the influence of motivational leadership. So, the study will become a crucial source to signify the importance of motivational leadership and positive organizational culture in the development of work satisfaction and performance of employees.

Furthermore, Noviyanti et al. (2019) also examined the association between the effect of leadership, work motivation, and job satisfaction on the performance of cultural department workers. The research study utilized a sampling method on 112 employees with the help of a questionnaire pertaining to motivation and performance aspects of the job. The data evaluation incorporated the Path Analysis method and a statistical tool called SPSS 16.0. The underlying aim of the study was to assess the accuracy of the conceptual framework that establishes leadership as an agent for work motivation.

The results of the study showed that leadership is positively associated with work motivation. This positive association is evident in various studies. (Naile & Selesho, 2014; Ali et al., 2015). The result also concluded that work motivation significantly impacts job satisfaction. Also, work motivation positively influences job performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction affirmatively drives employees' performance, thereby increasing work productivity. Thus, the study will be an essential source to establish the foundational role of leadership in bringing incidental positive changes to employees' motivation, satisfaction, performance, and work productivity.



Additionally, Al-Altheeb (2020) conducted investigative research to study the relationship between different leadership styles and employee motivation. The different styles included authoritarian, paternalistic, transformational, and Laissez-faire. The study conducted a comprehensive literature review to assess the impact of these leadership styles on employee motivation and mental willingness to contribute to common goals. The questionnaire was the data collection method incorporated and SPSS 22 tool was used to perform a statistical analysis of the data.

The study results indicated an overall 66.5 % positive correlation between different leadership styles and the motivation of employees. This positive association encompassed various traits from different leadership styles that motivate employees through mental support, work culture improvement, and ethical values. These factors bind the employees at an intrinsic level and enable the leadership to guide them collectively towards a common goal. So, the study is a significant source to establish how leadership fosters work culture and workforce unity to bring productivity.

Further, Berger et al. (2019) performed a comparative study to analyze the impact of two contrasting leadership styles on employee well-being. Transformational leadership and passive-avoidant leadership were used for the comparison. The Job Demand-Resource (JDR) Model was used for analyzing the relationship between leadership activities and employee mental well-being states such as anxiety and conflicts. The study aimed to understand the complex relationship between leadership and followers' well-being under job demands and resource factors.

The study results indicated that essential motivating traits from both leadership help bring resources and demands together in the organization. So, if the leadership is encouraging, there will be greater demand for resources in the organization thereby balancing work distribution. Negative leadership will discourage unity and put mental stress on the workforce. Thus, the study help establish the role of leadership in fostering unity under motivational, relational, and social-cognitive categories, thereby improving the organization's overall productivity.

Lastly, Naile & Selesho (2014) performed a statistical study to evaluate how leadership styles affect employee motivation, corporate behavior, and, eventually, employees' organizational-oriented ventures. The study involved 184 teaching staff who were asked to complete a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) related to their day-to-day work motivation and its relationship with leadership endeavors. The study used Descriptive Statistical analysis to evaluate the correlation between the impact on the workforce and the associated leadership style.

The study results revealed a strong relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee mental commitment to productive activities. This involves emotional, continuative, and normative obligations of employee that signifies the mental well-being of the workforce. The result concluded that such a relationship between leaders and the workforce also fosters trust, creativity, and motivation. Thus, the study is a useful source to establish the relationship between motivational leadership and employees' mental commitment to perform job operations that eventually boosts organizational productivity.

Research Question

How correctly implemented motivational strategies by motivational leadership can positively affect employees' mental health, leading to increased productivity?

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

The study utilizes a phenomenological research design under the qualitative research approach. This type of research design focuses on the 'lived experiences of people' instead of relying on preconceived notions about the phenomena. (Groenewald, 2004). Further, this research paradigm leverages the experiences to congregate more reflective insights and evaluate how people understand those notions. Researchers use this research design to understand the universal nature by exploring the opinions or views of those who have experienced it.

2. Participants

The study involved 30 participants/employees chosen anonymously from the Ras Al Khaimah Government organization. Based on the profile of employees, purposive sampling was used to create



the respondent group of 20 participants with 14 males and 6 females within the age range of 25-45 years. His sampling technique is used to gain a better matching percentage and reliable data based on respondents' subjective credibility. (Campbell et al., 2020). Thus, selecting appropriate candidates for questionnaire responses enhanced the reliability of the study results.

3. Data Collection Method

The questionnaire was the data collection method used as part of the Qualitative research approach. The questionnaire has been distributed anonymously to Ras Al Khaimah Government Employees. Studies have confirmed that simple and articulate questionnaires can provide relevant, consistent, and accurate information for research evaluation. (Einola & Alvesson, 2021). To ensure this coherence, a questionnaire containing 12 questions was provided to the 20 respondents. A binary response set including 'Yes' and 'No' was recorded corresponding to each question. The respondents filled out and submitted the questionnaire response to the research team.

4. Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to investigate data and classify shared themes in the form of subjects, concepts, or models. As per Kiger & Varpio (2020), thematic analysis help to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns from the data response set. This implies that the thematic analysis is a useful tool to analyze common themes of leadership traits, motivational strategies, and the impact on employees' mental well-being from the responses received on the questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted on the obtained responses. (Refer to **Appendix 1**). Thematic analysis has six steps, as described below. (Kiger & Varpio, 2020)

Step 1: Familiarizing with the data

Acquainting oneself with the total breadth of the data set will provide a constructive inclination to the initial data and is a roadmap for all the later stages.

Step 2: Generating Initial Code

Coding helps consolidate data at a unitary and explicit level. Significance, questions, the relevance between data objects, and other initial ideas help mark data extracts with applicable codes, ensuring coverage of potential linkages between elements that might apprise successive theme expansion.

Step 3: Searching for Themes

Using thematic maps and inferential analysis help derive themes explicitly from the coded data. The themes obtained will be narrowly mapped to the original data and contemplative of the whole data set.

Step 4: Reviewing Themes

In this step, the researcher evaluates whether the derived themes implicitly fit within the data set and whether the thematic map adequately exemplifies the construction of interest.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

The refinement of the thematic map further requires a description and a coherent narrative to support the understanding and interaction of themes.

Step 6: Producing Report/Manuscript

This is a continuation step in the analysis and note-taking of the narrative that describes the interpretation of the researcher concerning the implications of outcomes and enquires about the suppositions.

5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance from SACAP Ethics Committee was obtained to ensure that judicious use of employees' data and information is incorporated for analysis.

RESULT

Based on the questionnaire responses analysis, the themes below are derived as a result of the thematic analysis.

Theme 1: Motivational Approach

Of 20 respondents, 18 agreed they would prefer working under a motivational leader. The response indicates a crucial result that employees' motivation is often dependent on the influencing



characteristics of the leaders who guide them. A motivational approach of the leaders stimulates the preference of workers and thereby engages their commitment to the work. A motivational leader can also cultivate the quality of chain enthusiasm. So, at the individual level, employees can collaborate and support each other to foster a culture of collective inspiration. This helps boost productivity in the organization.

Theme 2: Significance of motivation tools

Of 20 respondents, 16 agreed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational tools help cultivate their impetus to work. These tools included recognition, praise, bonus for hitting targets, and an increase in salary after excellent performance appraisal results. This implies that leaders' efforts to implement such tools in the organization's operational policies positively impact the employees' motivation factor. The result showcased that the employees expect their leaders to ensure the quality of these instruments under employee welfare programs such that the workforce contentedly drives their efforts to fulfill the common goals.

Theme 3: Productivity

15 out of 20 respondents agreed that their productivity would increase when the leaders motivate them. 16 out of 20 respondents agreed that their productivity would increase with work motivation. This theme is one of the research study's direct correlation variables, and an affirmative result concludes the positive association between leadership motivation and productivity. Motivation from the leaders becomes an expressive reward for the workforce not just to put the physical efforts into the organizational goals but also to devote mental acuity to the job. As a result, leadership motivation encourages employees to enhance their willingness for the job, thereby increasing work productivity.

Theme 4: Negatives of motivational absence

17 out of 20 respondents disagreed with working for a leader that does not motivate them. This shows a strong negative acceptance in employees regarding the absence of motivation in leadership. This absence critically impacts employees' willingness to work for the organization, thereby also reducing the probability of work productivity. The result is critical for organizational leaders to prioritize motivational strategies. Such strategies are crucial for organizations because implementing them will enable employees to get inspired by their leaders and actually feel contented to embrace a work culture that promotes collective stimulation.

Theme 5: Feel Good, emotional disposition, and mental wellness.

18 out of 20 respondents agreed that motivation enables them to feel good about the work and positively affects their emotional disposition. 15 out of 20 respondents agreed that motivational leadership improves their mental wellness at work. The responses indicate that motivational support from the leadership drives critical notions of mental well-being, emotional comfort, and feeling of goodness. This enables employees to regard work with an all-embracing approach and not treat the tasks as mere formality. As a result, the employee feels contented with the self-performance and contributes willfully to achieving the organization's vision.

Theme 6: Team bonding and allegiance

13 out of 20 respondents agreed that motivational leader helps improve their relationships with peers. This strengthens team bonding and positively impacts the employees. 17 out of 20 respondents agreed that they will stay in the company with a motivational leader. This implies that motivational leaders also entice workers' allegiance to the job. Thus, motivational strategies are crucial in obtaining collaborative efforts and commitment. Both traits positively enhance employees' mental well-being.

Theme 7: External Impact

12 out of 20 respondents agreed that motivational leadership improves mental wellness outside work. The result indicates that motivational leadership greatly impacts employees' professional and personal development. Not only the employees are able to mentally cooperate with their peers in the organization, but they are also able to maintain the same degree of wellness in their non-professional environment. This elevates the quality of life and helps employees to leverage the strength of mental well-being in other productive works.



The study confirmed that the strategic implementation of motivational strategies by motivational leadership positively impacts employees' mental health. This leads to increased productivity.

Significance of the Study

Since mental health is one of the key indicators of employees' work motivation, the study aimed to explore what drives this motivation. The research project specifically involved insightful literature that signifies the role of motivational leadership in an organization. Understanding the research study will be crucial to developing leadership strategies that foster employee well-being. The study will also help different organizations to create employee-centric policies and reduce the nitpicks of inadequate work quality, productivity, and work-life balance.

Limitations of the Study

The narrow sample size used for the data analysis could be a potential study limitation. However, the comprehensive questionnaire ensured that the participants could provide input on all the necessary aspects of leadership and its role in employee motivation.

Future Recommendations

Some of the future recommendations are based on the Motivation-Hygiene Theory. (Hanseen & Rojas, 2021). Under this, employees' mental health gain support when the leadership recognizes certain motivators like achievement, advancement, recognition, responsibility, and work. Leaders can maintain the hygiene of these stimuli with the help of five motivational strategies. Firstly, the leadership must foster a supportive interpersonal relationship with the employees. This will help create an environment of recognition and constructive feedback, thereby improving the mental well-being of employees to work productively for the organization.

Secondly, the leadership strategies must create effective policies and administration that are employee-centric and address grievances agilely. Employees will be mentally prepared and willing to perform with honest efforts when their concerns are heard and resolved. Thirdly, the leadership strategies must incorporate an ideal mix of monetary and non-monetary benefits in employee welfare policies. This will create a sense of reliability, safety, and appreciation in employees' minds, thereby enticing allegiance towards work.

Fourthly, leadership strategies must create job security. Employees are mostly concerned about the terms of employment and financial security that come from the job. (Hanseen & Rojas, 2021). Jobs can be aligned with creative project opportunities and skill-based assignments, thereby motivating employees to achieve professional growth and security. Fifthly, enabling satisfactory work conditions through proper infrastructure, supportive workgroup, and service bench will help motivate employees to work productively towards common organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research study develops a strong case for the role of motivational leadership in influencing employees' mental well-being. Strategies such as recognition programs, periodic appraisal systems, job security frameworks, and employee-centric policies help leaders motivate employees to connect with the job more intrinsically. Employees' mental well-being from these influences becomes a strong factor in their commitment to the job. Higher commitment transforms into a more efficient and goal-oriented performance of employees leading to an overall increase in the throughput. Thus, the study presented an insightful account of the correlation between motivational strategies of leadership, employee well-being, and work productivity.

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