

A comprehensive review of leadership styles and their impact on employee performance

Julie Sunil^a ✉ | Amit Kansal^b | Karan Pandre^c | KN. Anantha Subramanya Lyer^d | Praveen Kumar Tomar^e | Amrita Singh^f

^aPresidency College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

^bQuantum University Research Center, Quantum University, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

^cCentre for Multidisciplinary Research, Anurag University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

^dDepartment of Management Studies, JAIN Deemed-to-be University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

^eSchool of Business Management, Noida International University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

^fParul University, Vadodra, Gujarat, India.

Abstract Leadership has the most crucial influence on employee performance and welfare in an organization. Therefore, different styles of leadership are important to understand, how a manager can motivate employees toward increased productivity. This review examines the different types of leadership styles, such as transformational, laissez-faire leadership styles, transactional, autocratic, democratic, and their influence on employee performance. The objective of this paper is to discuss, how every leadership style affects the employees' behavior, job satisfaction, and performance in general. The review assesses the styles of leadership to fostering a healthy work environment, promoting well-being among employees, and improving productivity and job satisfaction. The review discusses how leadership styles can promote a positive work environment, improve employee well-being, and lead to better outcomes in terms of productivity and job satisfaction. In addition, it emphasizes the requirement for adapting leadership styles to different situations and individual needs within a team. Findings reveal that a flexible approach to leadership, combining elements from a variety of styles, often results in the best employee performance. In conclusion, an understanding of the connection among ideas of leadership and employee performance can guide managers to take strategies that promote motivation, engagement, and organizational success.

Keywords: motivation, job satisfaction, environment, employee well-being, organizational success

1. Introduction

Leadership coordinates both the utilization of human and other resources in an organization (Faulks et al., 2021). The approach promotes transformative leadership and works best in environments that are steady and predictable. It is not appropriate, though, in times of instability and uncertainty (Alsharif et al., 2021). Good leaders motivate employees, whereas motivated employees don't just increase their job performance or commitment within an organization; they go further than the requirements of jobs, hence increasing general performance as well as profitability of such an organization (Kalogiannidis, 2021). Motivating people to perform to the best of their abilities is one of the main responsibilities of a manager. Employee performance is commonly defined as a combination function of ability and motivation (Ali, 2023). The employee commitment will prove to minimize this pressure and induce growth of the organization. The main factors governing the success and failure of any organization are employee commitment and leadership styles. Leadership is the ability of an individual to inspire, motivate, and guide others to achieve common goals (Al-maaitah et al., 2021). Individual performance influences organizational performance; in other words, the performance of individuals impacts the performance of the organization.

This means that the actions of members of an organization, both individually and collectively, strengthen organizational performance since motivation has an impact on it (Sirait et al., 2022). An organization's effectiveness is influenced by a number of factors, but its people are its most important component (Anwar et al., 2023). Leadership, thus helps to create the right atmosphere in the workplace; effective leadership involves making a good decision, giving clear guidance, and encouraging teamwork and cooperation. Employee performance indicates how well employees perform their tasks; it is the cornerstone of organizational success (Fekete, 2021). Factors for assessing employee performance may include productivity and job satisfaction, quality of the work organism done, and attainment of personal and team goals. Employee commitment leads to leadership efficacy and further ensures improved performance from the employees, decreased turnover, and lower levels of absenteeism. For organizational goals to be met, there should be a strong relationship between the leaders and the employees (Mahfouz et al., 2022). The productivity and overall success of the organization rely on high-performing employees, who feel committed to their work. In the past several years, a notable shift has occurred in conventional leadership methods. There is

more focus on the strategic integration of modern leadership approaches that are targeted to enhance employee performance (Fitriana et al., 2024).

Leadership styles, which are the behaviors and processes the leaders undertake to inspire great results within an organization, have a major impact on both the overall performance of a firm and the dedication of its personnel (Oyewobi, 2024). For businesses that require skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated employees to form effective teams, leadership practices have become essential. However, the interaction between leaders and their employees is key to fostering employee commitment. Employee commitment is complex and continuous, and it requires leaders to come up with innovative ways to improve the work life of employees (Al Daboub et al., 2024). The failure to meet this necessity results in the loss of valuable employees, which directly impacts the organization's growth and sustainability. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of various leadership approaches and their influence on employee performance is crucial in achieving long-term organizational success. The purpose of the research: To investigate different leadership styles and their effects on worker performance. It seeks to identify how various leadership approaches impact employee's behavior, motivation, and overall productivity in the organization.

2. Overview of Leadership Style

Leadership is the process by which both leaders and followers interact to improve spirits and inspire people. Leadership styles (Bwalya, 2023) refer to the way a leader guides, motivates, and influences their team. The concept of leadership is thought to be dynamic and multifaceted, and it has been influenced by a variety of global factors, including politics and international events (Victoria et al., 2022). Different leadership approaches can have a greatly influence on employee performance, motivation, and satisfaction (Khan et al., 2022).

The three stages of leadership techniques are dyadic collaboration, leader, and followers. Every level should be covered separately in leadership analysis. Leader-member interaction centers on connections, followers utilize empowerment, while leaders employ characteristic and behavioral techniques. By emphasizing the leader, followers, and connection, a situational approach combines the three areas of a leadership cycle.

2.1. Autocratic leadership: Centralized control, decision made by the leader

An autocratic style of management, in which one individual holds authority, makes decisions unilaterally, and directs others according to their way of action.

The effectiveness of an organization is correlated with leadership that relies on skill, experience, and competence. Without staff involvement, management makes decisions. In general, decision-making entails asking followers for information and comments in addition to taking their opinions into account (Karakitapoğlu-Aygün et al., 2021). Even if the idea is advantageous to the company, the organization disregards employee input in favor of managing business operations using its power and prestige (Pizzolitto et al., 2023). While the leader desires to make a choice fast and without warning, this style of leadership works well.

2.1.1. Rapid decision-making and the impact on the organization

Rapid decision-making is one issue with the goods in the market, for instance, because of the economic crisis. The boss makes the decision to quickly reduce employees and halt production at this moment (Krasniqi & Hajdari, 2024). An autocratic leader's decisions are made without considering how they will affect employees, which can damage the relationship between managers and employees. Work performance and satisfaction were positively correlated. The intermediate level of prospective management employs an authoritarian approach, in which they frequently highlight their leadership skills to senior executives. This suggests that they have communicated their leadership abilities to upper management, which is beneficial for their careers. Therefore, power will be employed to make sure that every work is completed by the schedules.

There is a notable connection between work performance and employee work effort, and a decrease in motivation may result in poor productivity. Employees are not permitted to make suggestions that might lead to inadequate performance. This is the outcome of senior management making choices without seeking input from employees. Additionally, employees may become discouraged if the boss places excessive pressure on them to reach the objective. They are therefore dissatisfied, which might result in increased absenteeism and turnover. When employees are unhappy with their boss's attitude, it's one of the main reasons people left their job.

2.2. Democratic leadership

A model of democratic leadership entails one person assuming the lead, while essentially receptive to group opinions, often allowing the group to decide and assign tasks cooperatively. This leader offers direction rather than commands.

The Democrats (Hilton et al., 2021) tend to start from scratch, when making judgments on how an organization should be run. Performance tends to improve when senior management and staff perspectives are combined. The leader promotes innovation by opening the perspective from below, which aids in improved planning and competitive tactics. Therefore, it is

the responsibility of the employee to engage in work with consideration to assure that the assignment is completed on schedule and is associated with better performance. The leader in this case looked to get down with the employee and communicate effectively. Additionally, the boss might influence the worker to adhere to their goal during the conversation.

2.2.1. Collaboration and employee effects

Collaboration between employers and employees is essential to accomplishing corporate goals. Workers typically put in more effort, particularly overtime, which improves team dynamics. Employers may increase profits, minimize expenses, and accomplish jobs on schedule (Alam et al., 2021). The highest levels of employee satisfaction occur, when managers engage in a relational and task-oriented manner. Workers believe they have a stake in the company and can influence its direction. As a result, the workplace is more effective and productive.

2.2.2. Employee satisfaction and workplace effectiveness

A democratic leadership style has the potential to make an employee feel valued inside the company. This is due to the possibility that an employee could feel like they belong to the organization if they are aware of its mission and goals. In this instance, employee motivation might rise (Easton & Steyn, 2022). They think that they are helping the business succeed. Moreover, leaders who tend to inspire their staff to take action can cultivate an atmosphere that instills a strong sense of drive to perform at their best. This is a clear correlation between followers' motivating requirements and leadership style and improved performance. It underscores that a deeper relationship between the leader and workers helps the achievement of company objective.

2.3. Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership supports all organizational conditions with new technology because it is an advancement from traditional to modern ways (Nguon, 2022). The goal of transformational leadership is to change both the economy and people (Gan & Voon, 2021). They help the company create an atmosphere, goals, targets, and visions that support individuals, organizations, and the company itself in "practicing its values and serving its purpose." These leaders are trustworthy and inspire followers' dedication, which fosters a feeling of unity of goal. To inspire, motivate, and foster commitment to a shared objective, a leader must possess these qualities.

There were four dimensions in Bass and his colleagues' first transformational leadership approach. Transformational leadership into four dimensions, also known as the four I's of transforming leadership, they are as follows:

- Idealized influence (behavior)
- Idealistic impact (Charisma)
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual Growth Facilitation

Because idealized influence both traits and behaviour is viewed as a single dimension, it has been reduced to four levels.

2.3.1. Individualized attention (behaviour)

Individualized attention entails recognizing followers' strengths and shortcomings for their development and evolution, as well as considering them as distinct persons with wants (Khan et al., 2022). According to Burns, this strategy helps leaders to foster followers' sense of significance and help them realize their greatest potential. Leaders, who employ this strategy guide followers, foster self-improvement, boost confidence, and have a clear goal that inspires people to go above and beyond. A more dedicated and productive team is created by this strategy, which optimizes the efficiency of both individuals and organization followers.

2.3.2. Idealistic impact (charisma)

Charisma, the most important component of transformative leadership, may exist at every organizational level. Idealized influence leaders inspire individuals to aim high by acting as role models (Nassif et al., 2021). Their ideals and character attributes inspire them to work harder and accomplish others. They put other people's needs and interests ahead of their own. Idealized leaders are prepared to take chances, share those risks with their followers, and have an organized plan and direction. They avoid abusing their position of authority for selfish ends and behave honorably and consistently. By empowering their followers, transformational leaders help them become more adaptive and capable of handling changing circumstances.

2.3.3. Inspiring motivation

A vital but sometimes disregarded component of leadership is inspirational motivation. It entails spreading knowledge of the group's goal and encouraging adherents to feel confident and valuable. Motivating leaders are explicit in their expectations, optimistic about the business's future, and dedicated to reaching common objectives. Long-term objectives are

their main emphasis, and they inspire and enable followers to reach those (Khan et al., 2022). Leaders encourage confidence and loyalty, especially under difficult circumstances, by showing by action and interacting with their followers. This gives them a feeling of direction and inspires them.

2.3.4. Intellectual growth facilitation

New ideas are more inclined to come from leaders who encourage creativity by challenging presumptions and finding novel solutions to issues. They foster a creative atmosphere by refraining from openly criticizing others. This strategy is especially helpful if the leader lacks the knowledge or expertise necessary to address issues by (Ystaas et al., 2023). It encourages originality, receptivity to many viewpoints and a strong focus on problem-solving as opposed to conformity. This strategy is especially helpful, when the leader is inexperienced or ignorant.

2.3.5. The influence of transformative leadership on worker satisfaction and turnover intention

The emotional state that workers experience when their work satisfies their values is known as job satisfaction (Chi et al., 2023). It is specific to each person and is made up of a variety of components, including opinions, mind-sets, and emotions. Although attitudes and feelings have a significant role, work values have the most impact on job fulfillment. Job qualities, the work environment, personal traits, and attitudes all have an impact on job satisfaction, which can vary from complete fulfillment to severe discontent. Nevertheless, every aspect of the environment is dynamic and subject to shifts, which might affect job fulfillment. Employee loyalty is increased and turnover intentions are decreased when transformational leaders establish a collaborative work environment.

By fostering an emotional attachment to a cause or goal through idealized impact and inspiring motivation, they lower the risk of employees quitting the company. Employees with less supervision, however, might not have an impact on this approach because they can be more open to change and taking risks. All things considered, leadership that transforms significantly improves worker efficiency and the level of fulfillment (Chi et al., 2023). Employee turnover intention is strongly impacted by job satisfaction; data indicates a moderate to negative connection. While unsatisfied workers might never quit or transfer to another company, pleased workers are less likely to depart. Reduced intentions to leave are a result of significant job satisfaction. Strong supervisor connections and high fulfillment at work are associated with lower turnover, according to recent research, which shows the significance of job satisfaction in lowering turnover intention.

2.4. Transactional leadership

The trading relationship between leaders and their followers is referred to as transactional leadership (Mahfouz et al., 2022). The self-interested connection between a leader and their followers is highlighted by transactional leadership, which uses the exchange of monetary or psychological benefits as an organizational tenet (Putra et al., 2024). The possibility of punishment might emphasize this idea. The self-interested connection between a leader and their followers is highlighted by transactional leadership, which uses the exchange of monetary or psychological benefits as an organizational tenet. The possibility of punishment might reinforce this idea. Transactional leadership may be divided into three categories: active management in exceptional situations, passive management in exceptional situations, and passive management in exceptional situations.

2.4.1. The organization's and its workers' performance

The term "organizational performance" describes how well a company uses and processes its resources to accomplish its objectives. It is impacted by a variety of tactics and operations and is determined by the overall efficacy of all organizational activities. The "fit" between a firm's resource base and its strategic goal determines superior performance. To attain managerial performance, a mentorship program is required. The capacity of a person to effectively accomplish their objectives is known as employee performance. The ability of employees to effectively accomplish their objectives is a personal gain. The performance of workers is crucial to a business, because it dictates the course of organizational achievement in the modern day.

2.5. Laissez-faire leadership

- Under the guidance of a laissez-faire boss, team members have the autonomy to design their own duties and adhere to deadlines. The leader does the assignment without getting in the way of the worker's workflow.

The most passive leadership approach, known as laissez-faire, has been thought to have a number of detrimental effects on workers (Zhang et al., 2023). Employees might be empowered by their leaders to make their own decisions on their job. The organization believes that employees are more inclined to consider their task seriously and complete it on time when they are given creative authority over it. As a result, they are highly motivated and confident. When an employee is happy with his boss,

he is inspired to put in more effort (Desgourdes et al., 2024). The boss turns into a consultant, guiding the staff in the proper path to guarantee that the task is finished on time.

2.5.1. *The role of guidance and support in laissez-faire leadership*

Advice is crucial for both ensuring that jobs are completed without issues and demonstrating to management that they support any work done by the employee. Besides, when supervisors interact less, employees have greater freedom to be creative and engaged in their duties. Employee job satisfaction has also increased. Review by Lundmark et al. (2022) exposed that employees' attempts to improve stress by in search of guidance and support can inconsistently increase their stress, at last increasing resource depletion and diminishing overall well-being over time. Therefore, an employee's independence should be limited, though, to make sure they don't lose it and that they're still working toward the organization's objective.

2.5.2. *Encouraging and creativity satisfaction*

Even if employees are content with their freedom, if team members have trouble managing their time, it might lead to their demise (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2021). The goal of the company cannot be achieved if teammates are not equipped with the abilities, expertise, or self-worth needed to work effectively. Consequently, the leader should be provided direction and leadership for the organization. It illustrates how a laissez-faire attitude may be better, when staff management can be guided. Also, if a person is engaged with the organization and truly understands their task, the corporation will spend less money in the event that the allocated task fails.

3. Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance

3.1. *The connection among organizational performance and leadership styles*

Leadership style: The way that leaders communicate with their subordinates is considered to be a blend of several features, behaviors, and attributes. The pattern of management action known as leadership is intended to combine organizational or individual interests and impacts to accomplish certain goals (Logan, 2024). The way a person interacts with others to inspire them to work together toward a common goal can be considered their leadership style.

Organizational performance: In business literature, organizational success is a multifaceted phenomenon that includes an organization's outcomes or outputs compared to its targets, goals, and expected outcomes. It encompasses three areas: market performance of goods and services, shareholder return (financial worth stated), and economic success (return on investments).

The leadership styles used by businesses have a big influence on their performance. The leadership approach shapes the company culture, which subsequently affects the organization's overall performance (Logan, 2024). Performance and company culture are correlated with the leadership style.

4. Positive and Negative Effect on Employee Performance for Leadership style

Leadership styles determine how employees perform within an organization. Different leadership styles have strengths and faintness that influence motivation, workplace fulfilment, and efficiency (Anggraeni & Sumartik, 2023). The understanding of each style's positive and negative effects helps organizations pick the most effective leadership styles to improve the performance of their employees.

i. Autocratic Leadership:

- Positive: Crises and emergencies are times when the application is very effective. They deliver quick results with high productivity at certain times.
- Negative: Reduces employee morale and job satisfaction because it discourages employees from participating in decision-making and stifles creativity.

ii. Democratic Leadership

- Positive: Involves the employees in decision-making processes to foster higher job satisfaction, motivation, and collaboration, hence boosting overall performance.
- Negative: It might lead to slower decision-making and, hence cause inefficiencies in fast environments or when rapid decisions are required.

iii. Transformational leadership

- Positive: Motivates employees, stimulates creativity, and increases job satisfaction and overall performance. It also inspires innovation and helps them to perform beyond the norm.
- Negative: This can lead to burnout, when expectations are too high or if employees are not provided with the necessary resources to meet said goals.

iv. Transactional Leadership

- Positive: Assures performance consistency with crystal-clear rewards and penalties; brings measurable productivity with the need for structure.
 - Negative: Not challenging creativity and long-term motivational factors, as it centers more on completing the jobs than on employee development and innovation.
- v. Laissez-Faire Leadership
- Positive: Enables skilled employees to work independently. For those who thrive in autonomy, this certainly fosters creativity and job satisfaction.
 - Negative: This results in uncertainty and misguidance in teams that require more guidelines or structure, and an underperformance.

5. Moderating Factors

The relationship between leadership style and employee performance is moderated by several factors, including the organizational culture, the working environment, the characteristics of employees by Calluso and Devetag (2025), and contextual factors, such as the industry and the size of the organization. These factors determine to what extent a given leadership style will be effective by activating employees and improving performance.

- Organizational Culture: The effectiveness of leadership differs with culture. Democratic or transformational leadership suits collaborative cultures, whereas autocratic or transactional styles suit hierarchical cultures.
- Working Environment: High-pressure environments require autocratic leadership for quick decisions, whereas creative environments require transformational leadership to promote innovation.
- Employee Characteristics: Employee traits, such as personality and job role, determine the type of leadership preferred. Calluso and Devetag (2025) found that personality traits mediate the relationship between leadership preferences and employee motivation, indicating that introverts may prefer transactional leadership, whereas extroverts may prefer transformational approaches.
- Employee Characteristics: The employee's characteristics, such as personality and job roles, influence leadership preferences. Introverts might respond better to transactional styles of leadership. Extroverts might prefer more transformational approaches.

The impact of leadership on the performance of employees is consequently not just dependent on the style of the leader but, how organizational culture, work environment, and other individual factors interact with the leadership style. Understanding these moderators helps to tailor leadership strategies to optimize performance within given contexts.

Existing research on leadership styles is varied with limitations. The majority of the studies focus on a single leadership style, restricting an extended understanding (Faulks et al., 2021). Well-being among staff is yet to be explored, as it affects productivity (Al-maaitah et al., 2021). Models of leadership tend not to be adaptive, not accounting for varied needs of the workplace (Mahfouz et al., 2022). Classical theory prevails, ignoring contemporary issues such as remote work and digital transformation (Fitriana et al., 2024).

Moreover, real-world applications for managers are usually lacking, and therefore, there is a theory-practice gap (Al Daboub et al., 2024). The present review bridges such gaps by establishing a comparison of styles of leadership. It focuses on the welfare of employees and the importance of the adaptability of leadership in changing workplaces. Through discussion of contemporary issues in workplaces, it extends leadership studies to non-traditional workspaces. Lastly, it closes the theory-practice gap by providing practical strategies for managers.

6. Limitation and Future Scope

This review is primarily theoretical in nature and does not consider the contextual or cultural differences that might affect the efficiency of these leadership approach in different administrative settings. Future research may be directed towards observed research on the practical application of different leadership approach across industries and cultural contexts, as well as the impact of changing leadership models in the digital age.

7. Conclusion

Different leadership styles have a substantial influence on employees' good and productivity, as the review highlights. Various approaches to leadership affect how employees behave, feel, and perform at work under, autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. A favorable and productive work environment, satisfaction by employees, and superior productivity are achieved through the appropriate use of leadership style selection adapted to individual and team needs. According to research results, no single leadership style seems to be universally best, but rather, only in blending pieces of several styles; so, this flexibility is more inclined towards achieving the goal of engaging and motivating employees for desired organizational performance. The result managers, who understand flexibility also build more effective team dynamics with high involvement by improving organizational outcomes. The bottom line is that effective

leadership requires not just a choice in style but an adaptation of the same to the particular wishes of the team and the situation for optimal success.

Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

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