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Minor Project Report
On
Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is the backbone of organizational productivity and growth. It encompasses not only the ability of employees to fulfil their designated roles and responsibilities but also their willingness to go beyond minimum expectations, contribute creatively, collaborate with peers, and remain committed to the organization's long-term vision. A wide body of research in organizational behaviour consistently highlights that employee performance is not solely a function of individual capability or skill — it is deeply influenced by the environment created by leadership. When employees feel valued, supported, and inspired by their leaders, they are far more likely to invest their full potential into their work. Conversely, poor leadership can lead to disengagement, low morale, high attrition, and a significant decline in organizational output

Leadership is a crucial element in the success and growth of any organization. It plays an important role in influencing employees, guiding their behavior, and motivating them to achieve organizational goals. Leadership style refers to the approach and method used by leaders to direct, manage, and motivate employees. The effectiveness of a leader often depends on the leadership style they adopt and how well it aligns with the needs of employees and the organization..

In modern organizations, employee performance is considered one of the key factors that determine overall organizational success. Leaders not only assign tasks and responsibilities but also inspire employees to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. A positive leadership approach can enhance employee motivation, increase job satisfaction, and improve productivity. On the other hand, poor leadership practices may lead to low morale, decreased performance, and high employee turnover.

Leadership style refers to the consistent pattern of behavior that a leader exhibits when directing, motivating, and managing people. Over decades of research in organizational psychology and management theory, several distinct leadership styles have been identified and studied extensively. The autocratic leadership style is characterized by centralized decision-making, where the leader retains full authority and expects compliance from employees with little room for participation or feedback. While this style may be effective in crisis situations or highly structured environments, it often stifles creativity and reduces employee

satisfaction in knowledge-intensive or The relationship between leadership style and employee performance has been the subject of extensive academic inquiry across industries and geographies. Studies have consistently demonstrated that the leadership approach adopted by managers directly shapes the motivational climate of the workplace, influencing how employees perceive their roles, relate to their colleagues, and engage with organizational objectives. In the Indian organizational context, this relationship carries additional significance. Indian workplaces are characterized by a unique blend of traditional hierarchical values and modern aspirational expectations, particularly among the growing millennial and Gen Z workforce. Employees today seek not just financial rewards but also meaningful work, recognition, autonomy, and leaders who genuinely invest in their growth. This evolving expectation makes it imperative for organizations to critically evaluate and continuously refine their leadership practices.

This study aims to address these dimensions by examining the impact of different leadership styles — autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire — on employee performance within organizational settings. By collecting primary data through structured questionnaires from employees across organizations and supplementing it with insights from existing literature, the study seeks to identify which leadership approaches are most effective in enhancing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. The findings of this research are intended to provide actionable insights for HR professionals, organizational leaders, and management practitioners who are committed to building high-performance cultures through thoughtful and effective leadership. Ultimately, this study underscores the belief that leadership is not merely a position of authority — it is a profound responsibility that, when exercised with empathy, vision, and purpose, has the power to transform individuals, teams, and entire organizations

Despite the vast body of research on leadership, gaps remain in understanding how different leadership styles impact employee performance across specific industries, organizational structures, and cultural contexts. Many existing studies focus predominantly on Western organizational settings, leaving room for more contextually grounded research within developing economies like India. Furthermore, the post-pandemic era has introduced new complexities into the leadership landscape — remote and hybrid work models have redefined the nature of leader-employee interactions, making it increasingly important to understand which leadership behaviors drive performance in these transformed work environments. Leaders today must be adaptable, emotionally intelligent, and digitally fluent — capable of building trust and sustaining team cohesion even across physical distances



Employee performance is closely related to factors such as motivation, communication, job satisfaction, and the work environment. Leaders who effectively communicate organizational goals, recognize employee achievements, and provide guidance and support are more likely to enhance employee performance. Therefore, understanding the relationship between leadership style and employee performance is essential for organizations seeking to improve productivity and maintain a competitive advantage.

Leadership

"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people". ***Mohandas Gandhi***

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, guide, and motivate a group of people to achieve common goals and objectives. In an organizational context, leadership plays a crucial role in directing employees, coordinating their efforts, and ensuring that the organization moves toward success. A good leader not only manages tasks but also inspires employees, builds trust, and encourages teamwork within the organization

Leadership is different from management. While management focuses on planning, organizing, and controlling organizational activities, leadership focuses on influencing people and motivating them to work willingly toward organizational goals. A leader uses various leadership styles and approaches depending on the situation, the nature of the task, and the characteristics of employees.

It's a myth that Good leaders are born and not made. Believe for truth, if we have the desire and willpower, we can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Leadership is the art of getting people to move together toward a goal they don't yet see. The quality of leadership, more than any other single factor, determines the success or failure of an organization.

History:

The search for the characteristics or traits of leaders has been ongoing for centuries. History's greatest philosophical writings from Plato's Republic to Plutarch's Lives have explored the question "What qualities distinguish an individual as a leader?" Underlying this search was the early recognition of the importance of leadership and the assumption that leadership is rooted in the characteristics that certain individuals possess. This idea that leadership is based on individual attributes is known as the "trait theory of leadership".

"A Leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way"

Definition of Leadership

"Ability to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute to success of their organization".

"Leadership is lifting a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond his normal limitations".

A Leader Is Someone Who... influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Key aspects of leadership include...

Creating and communicating a vision

Influencing others through use of power

Motivating task behaviour in pursuit of shared objectives

Establishing and maintaining group culture

Empowering others





Leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and discipline... Reliance on intelligence alone results in rebelliousness. Exercise of humaneness alone results in weakness. Fixation on trust results in folly. Dependence on the strength of courage results in violence. Excessive discipline and sternness in command result in cruelty. When one has all five virtues together, each appropriate to its function, and then one can be a leader

Effective leaders can increase.

- Subordinates' motivation
- Satisfaction
- Morale
- Task performance
- Group identification

Styles of Leadership

Leadership style refers to a leader's behaviour. It is the result of the philosophy, personality, and experience of the leader.

Autocratic or authoritarian style:

Under the autocratic leadership style, all decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with dictators. Leaders do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It permits quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to him/herself until he/she feels it needs to be shared with the rest of the group.

Such a Leader makes decisions without reference to anyone else:

High degree of dependency on the leader

Can create de-motivation and alienation of staff

May be valuable in some types of business where decisions need to be made quickly and decisively.



This style is most effective in specific scenarios:

- **Crisis and Emergency Management:** In life-or-death situations, such as a **fire chief** directing a crew or **emergency medical teams** responding to a disaster, there is no time for consensus-building.
- **Military Operations:** Strict hierarchies and immediate obedience to commands are critical for battlefield success and safety.
- **High-Risk Industries:** In **manufacturing**, **aviation**, or **construction**, authoritarian leadership ensures that safety regulations and quality control standards are followed exactly to prevent accidents.
- **Unskilled or New Teams:** When employees lack the expertise to make informed decisions, a directive leader can provide the necessary structure to minimize costly mistakes. AIHR +4

Real-World Examples



Steve Jobs (Apple): Known for his uncompromising standards and unilateral decision-making, Jobs used an authoritarian approach to push groundbreaking innovations through a singular, focused vision.



Elon Musk (Tesla & SpaceX): Frequently described as an autocratic leader, Musk makes fast, sometimes impulsive decisions to maintain the rapid growth and high-performance standards of his companies.



Winston Churchill: During **World War II**, Churchill's decisive and authoritarian leadership was credited with guiding Britain through a period of extreme existential threat.

Participative or democratic style:

The democratic leadership style favors decision-making by the group. Such a leader gives instructions after consulting the group. They can win the cooperation of their group and can motivate them effectively and positively.

The decisions of the democratic leader are not unilateral as with the autocrat because they arise from consultation with the group members and participation by them.

This style is most effective in specific scenarios:

This style thrives in environments where quality and "buy-in" are more critical than immediate speed:

- **Creative and Tech Industries**: Best for fields like software development or advertising, where diverse ideas lead to better products.
- **Highly Skilled Teams**: Effective with mature, experienced professionals (like engineers, doctors, or professors) who have the expertise to contribute meaningful insights.
- **Organizational Change**: Ideally suited for complex transitions where employee "buy-in" is essential to prevent resistance and ensure long-term success.
- **Strategic Planning**: Used when setting long-term goals that require the commitment of the entire organization to achieve. St. Thomas University +5

Other Notable Examples



Indra Nooyi (PepsiCo): She was known for involving employees in major strategic shifts, such as moving the brand toward healthier "Performance with Purpose" products, which required widespread organizational buy-in to succeed.



Sundar Pichai (Google/Alphabet): He is frequently cited for a calm, collaborative approach that focuses on listening and drawing out ideas from across the company's vast technical teams.



Bill Gates (Microsoft): Especially during the early development of Windows, Gates was known for facilitating deep technical debates and incorporating the opinions of his engineers to refine the final product.

Laissez-Faire or Free rein Leadership style:

This style is often called delegative leadership, is a "hands-off" approach where leaders provide minimal direction and grant maximum autonomy to their team members. The term itself is French for "let them do" or "let it be"

It as a non-interference management philosophy where the leader acts more as a resource provider than a director.

Under this style, the leader intentionally steps back from the day-to-day decision-making process, transferring the power of "how," "when," and "what" entirely to the subordinates.

This style is most effective in specific scenarios:

- **Creative Industries**: Fields like advertising, design, and marketing thrive when employees have the freedom to brainstorm and innovate without top-down restrictions.
- **Highly Skilled Professionals**: Best for mature, self-motivated teams such as experienced software engineers, scientists, or doctors who possess more specialized knowledge than the leader.
- **Startups**: Effective during early-stage brainstorming where rapid experimentation is needed to define a product or vision.
- **Research and Academia**: University settings often use this style, allowing researchers to independently pursue long-term projects with minimal day-to-day intervention. Indeed +3

Notables examplesss



Warren Buffett: Grants complete operational independence to the CEOs of Berkshire Hathaway's many subsidiaries.



Steve Jobs: Employed delegative leadership for Apple's specialized R&D teams to foster "future-inventing" innovation.



Azim Premji: Successfully scaled Wipro by decentralizing power and trusting regional managers to lead their markets.

Transformational leader:

A leadership style is more than just managing tasks; it is a process where leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.

Instead of just telling people what to do, these leaders change the very identity of their team members by aligning their personal values with the organization's mission.

The Four Pillars (The "4 Is")

- **Idealized Influence (Walking the Talk):** The leader acts as a high-integrity role model. They don't just give orders; they exhibit the behaviors they expect to see. This builds a deep sense of trust and respect, making followers want to emulate them.

- **Inspirational Motivation (Selling the "Why"):** They articulate a vision that feels both exciting and achievable. By giving the work a deeper meaning (e.g., "We aren't just making software; we are changing how the world connects"), they foster a strong sense of purpose.

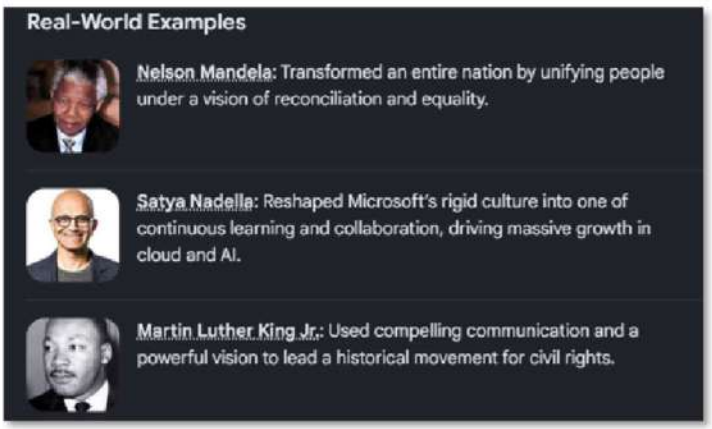
- **Intellectual Stimulation (Challenging the Status Quo):** Transformational leaders hate the phrase "that's how we've always done it." They encourage people to be creative, take risks, and look at old problems in new ways—even if those ideas challenge the leader's own views.

- **Individualized Consideration (Coaching, Not Managing):** They treat each team member as a unique person, not just a cog in the machine. They act as mentors, identifying an individual's specific needs for growth and providing the support to help them reach their full potential.

Why it Differs from Other Styles

vs. Transactional: While a transactional leader says, "Do this and I will pay you," a transformational leader says, "Let's build this together because it matters."

vs. Authoritarian: Instead of using power to force compliance, they use charisma and vision to gain voluntary commitment.



Leaders VS Managers

Basis	Leaders	Managers
Meaning	Leaders inspire and guide people toward a vision.	Managers plan, organize, and control work activities.
Focus	Focus on people and innovation.	Focus on tasks and processes.
Objective	Creating change and growth.	Maintaining stability and efficiency.
Decision Making	Encourages participation and creativity.	Usually follows rules and policies.
Approach	Vision-oriented and motivational.	Goal-oriented and administrative.
Risk Taking	Takes risks and encourages innovation.	Avoids unnecessary risks.
Relationship with Employees	Builds trust and inspiration.	Maintains authority and supervision.
Communication Style	Motivational and influential.	Formal and directive.
Power Source	Personal influence and charisma.	Official position and authority.
Employee Motivation	Inspires employees to perform better.	Controls and monitors employee performance.
Change Management	Welcomes and drives change.	Manages and adapts to change.



Manager who are leaders



Ways to develop Leadership Qualities

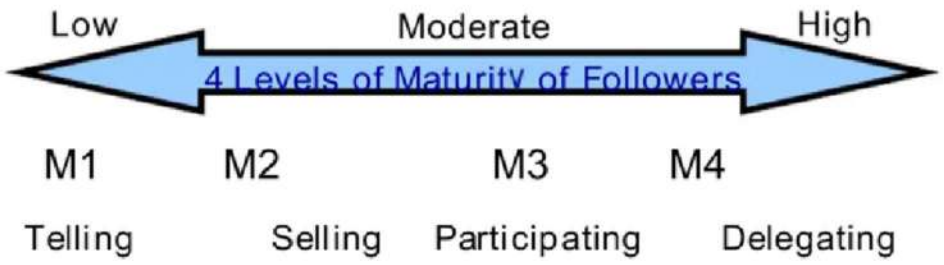
- Do more to enthuse your team
- Make your goals and future vision attractive and attainable
- Learn to communicate clearly
- Improve your speaking skills
- Organize and allocate workflow
- Make sure work is done correctly and on time
- Find better ways to do things
- Encourage progress and recognize efforts
- Try to match individual skills and work
- Build team spirit
- Encourage people to work cooperatively
- Recognize success and learn from failure
- Trust your subordinates
- Learn to think more critically

Situational leadership Model

It is developed by Hersey and Blanchard and is considered as a model, and not a theory. Different situations and followers require different leadership styles. No one leadership style is appropriate for all situations and effective leaders adjust their style to match the situation.

Situational Leadership Model focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers, as well as potential leaders and potential followers and there is no perfect leadership style for all situations; style must be adjusted to meet the development level of followers

4 Leadership styles	4 Levels of Maturity
S1: Telling	M1: Low, Immature
S2: Selling	M2: Low to Moderate
S3: Participating	M3: Moderate to High
S4: Delegating	M4: High, Mature



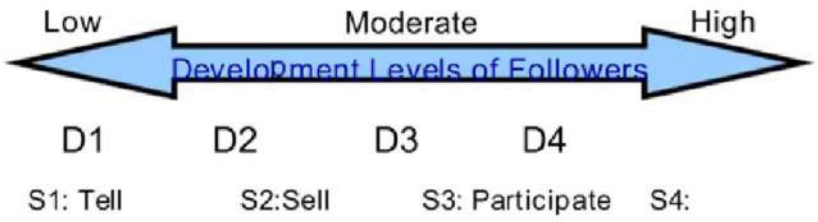
Telling (S1) Leader gives specific instructions about what, how, when, and where to complete tasks, and closely supervises performance; one-way communication.

Selling (S2) Leader explains decisions and provides clarifications; attempts two-way communication and support to get buy-in from followers.

Participating (S3) - Leader shares ideas and facilitates in making decisions; two-way communication.

Delegating (S4) - Leader give responsibilities for decisions and implementation to followers; followers take responsibility for their own behavior.

"*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader*".



4 Development Levels

D1: Low competence, High commitment

D2: Some competence, Low commitment

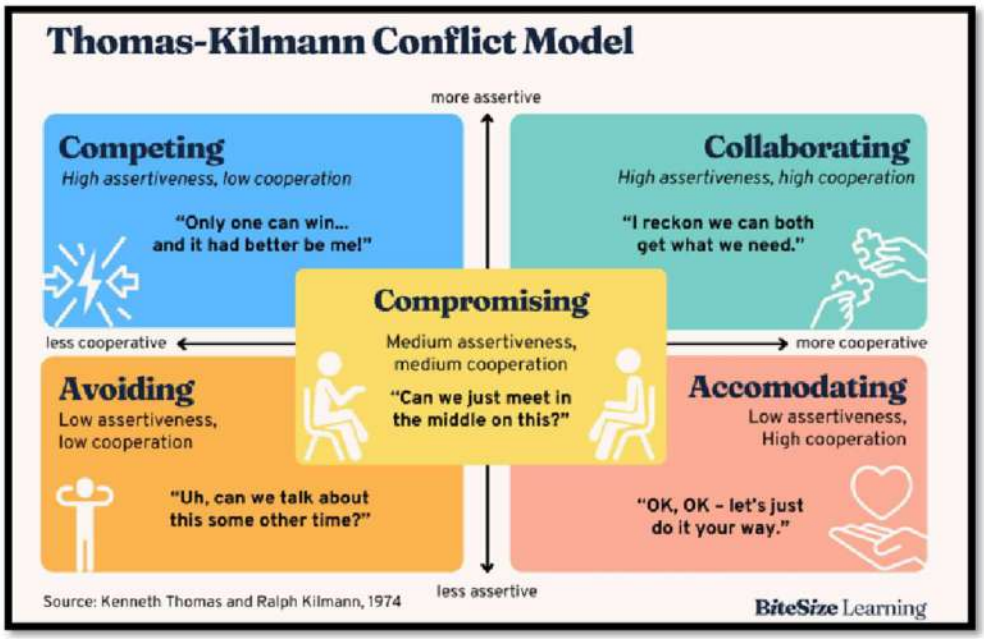
D3: High competence, Variable commitment

D4: High competence, High commitment

Directive behaviour

Participating Q3 S3: High Relationship Low Task D3: Able but unwilling or insecure	Selling Q2 S2: High Relationship High Task D2: Unable but willing or confident
Delegating Q4 S4: Low Relationship Low Task D4: Able/competent & willing/confident	Telling Q1 S1: Low Relationship High Task D1: Unable & unwilling or insecure

How leadership style impacts conflict resolution.



The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

- **Competing (High Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness)**: A power-oriented mode where you pursue your own concerns at the other person's expense. It is useful for quick, decisive action during crises.

- **Collaborating (High Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness)**: The opposite of avoiding. It involves working with the other party to find a "win-win" solution that fully satisfies both parties' underlying needs.

- **Compromising (Moderate Assertiveness and Cooperativeness)**: The objective is to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties essentially "splitting the difference".

- **Avoiding (Low Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness)**: When an individual sidesteps, postpones, or withdraws from a conflict without addressing it. This can be strategic when emotions run high and space is needed.

- **Accommodating (Low Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness)**: The opposite of competing. An individual neglects their own concerns to satisfy the other person's, often to preserve harmony or trust

Impact on the Thomas-Kilmann Model

- **The "Compete" Default:** Authoritarian leaders often default to **Competing**. This signals to the team that conflict is about "winning," which can discourage others from speaking up (forcing them into **Avoiding** or **Accommodating**).
- **The "Collaborate" Goal:** Transformational and Participative leaders actively push the team toward **Collaborating**. They view conflict as a source of "Intellectual Stimulation" and provide the psychological safety needed to find win-win solutions.
- **The "Accommodate" Risk:** A leader who is too Laissez-Faire might **Avoid** conflict entirely to keep the peace. This can lead to a culture of "artificial harmony" where problems are ignored until they become crises.

How Different Leaders Use the TKI Modes

Leadership Style	Primary TKI Mode	Why they use it
Authoritarian	Competing	They use their power to settle arguments quickly. Decisions are top-down, leaving no room for negotiation.
Participative	Collaborating	They view conflict as a tool for innovation. They invest time to find "win-win" solutions that satisfy everyone.
Transactional	Compromising	They focus on "deals." They prefer quick "middle-ground" solutions (e.g., "I'll give you X if you do Y") to keep projects moving.
Laissez-Faire	Avoiding	They stay out of staff disagreements, hoping the team will self-resolve. This can lead to unresolved tension.
Servant/Supportive	Accommodating	They may prioritize team harmony over their own goals, yielding to others' needs to build long-term trust.

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Style

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) refers to the ability of a person to understand, manage, and control their own emotions while also understanding and influencing the emotions of others. In leadership, emotional intelligence helps leaders build strong relationships, motivate employees, and create a positive work environment

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the "engine room" of leadership style,

Determining how a leader communicates, makes decisions, and manages team dynamics. While technical skills might get you a promotion, EQ is the primary driver of long-term leadership effectiveness



Under the four domains mentioned above, there are 12 competencies:

- Emotional Self-Awareness
- Emotional Self-Control
- Adaptability
- Achievement Orientation
- Positive Outlook
- Empathy
- Organizational Awareness
- Influence
- Coach and Mentor
- Conflict Management
- Teamwork
- Inspirational Leadership

> "Emotional Intelligence, a different way of being smart, is a key to high performance at all levels, particularly for outstanding leadership. It's not your IQ; it's how you manage yourself and your relationships."
>
> — Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*

How Do The Goleman Leadership Styles Impact Company Culture?

Looking at Goleman's leadership styles, it's clear to see which approaches build a positive company culture, and which weaken it:

- Leaders who have a coaching, authoritative, affiliative or democratic style build positive cultures.
- These leadership styles are much more open to collaboration. They put the employees first and value their opinions.
- Leaders who only take a pacesetter or coercive approach often add to negative company culture.

- Good Leadership Boosts Employee Satisfaction
- Good Leadership Improves Productivity
- Good Leadership Drives Revenue

Leadership Style	Role of Emotional Intelligence
Transformational	High EQ allows leaders to use **Inspirational Motivation** to sell a vision and **Individualized Consideration** to mentor followers.
Participative	Relies on high **Social Awareness** to ensure every voice is heard and **Relationship Management** to build consensus.
Coaching	Uses **Empathy** to identify an employee's unique strengths and weaknesses to foster long-term professional growth.
Authoritative (Visionary)	Requires **Self-Awareness** to project a confident, clear direction while allowing the team the autonomy to innovate.

Problem Statement

Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

In today's highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment, organizations continuously strive to improve employee performance, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. Employees are considered one of the most valuable assets of an organization, and their performance directly influences organizational growth and success. However, employee performance is affected by several factors, among which leadership style plays a significant role
Many organizations face challenges related to low employee morale, lack of motivation, reduced productivity, poor communication, workplace conflicts, and high employee turnover. In several cases, these issues arise due to ineffective leadership practices. Leaders who fail to communicate properly, involve employees in decision-making, recognize employee efforts, or provide guidance may negatively impact employee performance and organizational efficiency
On the other hand, effective leadership can create a positive work environment where employees feel motivated, valued, and committed toward organizational objectives. Leadership styles that encourage participation, communication, recognition, and teamwork often lead to higher employee satisfaction and improved performance. Therefore, understanding how different leadership styles influence employee behavior and performance has become an important concern for organizations and researchers

Despite the growing importance of leadership in organizations, many managers still struggle to identify which leadership style is most effective in improving employee performance. Organizations often fail to adopt leadership practices that align with employee expectations and organizational goals. This creates a gap between leadership behavior and employee performance outcomes

This research will help organizations understand the importance of effective leadership and provide insights into adopting leadership styles that improve employee performance, strengthen teamwork, increase job satisfaction, and enhance overall organizational productivity

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership style and employee performance in organizations.

- To Study the Concept of Leadership and Leadership Styles

  The first objective of the study is to understand the meaning, importance, and role of leadership in an organization. The study focuses on analyzing different leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. It aims to identify the characteristics and features of each leadership style and understand how leaders use these approaches to manage employees and achieve organizational goals

- To Examine the Relationship Between Leadership Style and Employee Performance

  This objective aims to analyze whether leadership style has a direct impact on employee performance. Employee performance includes productivity, efficiency, quality of work, and achievement of organizational objectives. The study seeks to understand how leadership behavior influences employee attitudes, commitment, and overall work performance.

- To Identify the Most Effective Leadership Style for Improving Employee Performance.

  Different leadership styles produce different outcomes in organizations. This objective seeks to identify which leadership style is most effective in improving employee productivity, teamwork, commitment, and organizational performance. The study compares various leadership approaches to determine the most suitable leadership style for organizational success.

- To Evaluate the Effect of Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction

  Job satisfaction refers to the level of happiness and fulfillment employees experience in their jobs. This objective aims to determine whether leadership style affects employee satisfaction with their work environment, supervisors, and organizational culture. The study also examines how supportive leadership contributes to employee morale and workplace satisfaction.

- To Analyze the Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Motivation

  Employee motivation is one of the most important factors affecting workplace performance. This objective focuses on identifying how different leadership styles influence employee motivation levels. The study examines whether leaders who encourage communication, recognition, support, and participation can improve employee enthusiasm and willingness to perform better.

- To Provide Suggestions for Improving Leadership Practices in Organizations

  Based on the findings of the study, this objective aims to provide practical suggestions and recommendations for organizations to improve leadership effectiveness.

Literature Review

Kurt Lewin (1939) – Leadership Styles Theory

According to Lewin, democratic leadership is more effective because it encourages employee participation and teamwork. His study concluded that employees perform better when they are involved in decision-making processes.

The study also found that autocratic leadership may increase work pressure and reduce employee satisfaction, while laissez-faire leadership may lead to lack of direction and poor coordination if employees are not properly guided.

Rensis Likert (1967) – Participative Leadership Theory

Rensis Likert suggested that participative leadership improves employee morale, communication, and productivity.

Likert identified four management systems:

1. Exploitative Authoritative
2. Benevolent Authoritative
3. Consultative
4. Participative

According to Likert, participative leadership is the most effective because it encourages employee involvement and builds trust between management and employees.

Burns (1978) – Transformational Leadership Theory

James MacGregor Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership.

Transformational leaders:

- Inspire employees
- Encourage innovation
- Create a shared vision
- Motivate employees to exceed expectations

Burns concluded that transformational leadership positively affects employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance because employees feel emotionally connected with organizational goals.

Daniel Goleman (1995) – Emotional Intelligence Theory

Daniel Goleman introduced the concept of **Emotional Intelligence (EQ)** and explained its importance in leadership effectiveness and employee performance. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand, manage, and control emotions while also understanding the emotions of others.

Goleman argued that successful leaders are not only intelligent in terms of technical knowledge or IQ but are also emotionally intelligent. Leaders with high emotional intelligence can build strong relationships, motivate employees, manage conflicts effectively, and create a positive work environment.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Theory (1974)

Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed the **Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)** to explain how individuals and leaders handle workplace conflict situations. The theory is widely used in organizational behavior and leadership studies to understand conflict management styles and their impact on employee relationships and performance.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Theory is highly relevant to leadership and employee performance because workplace conflicts directly affect employee motivation, communication, teamwork, and productivity

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) – Situational Leadership Theory

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard developed the **Situational Leadership Theory** in 1969. The theory explains that there is no single leadership style that is suitable for every situation. According to the model, effective leaders must adapt their leadership style depending on the situation, employee capability, experience, and level of motivation.

The theory emphasizes that employees have different levels of competence and commitment, and therefore leaders should change their behavior according to employee needs and workplace conditions. A leadership style that works effectively in one situation may not be effective in another situation.

Research Methodology

Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret data for conducting research. It provides a structured framework for identifying the problem, gathering relevant information, and drawing meaningful conclusions. In this study, the research methodology helps in understanding the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance within organizations.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design, sources of data collection, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection instruments, and methods used for analyzing the collected data.

5.1 Research Design

Research design is the overall plan used to conduct the study. It helps the researcher in organizing and carrying out the research systematically.

For this study, a **descriptive research design** has been used. Descriptive research focuses on describing the characteristics, behavior, and opinions of respondents regarding a particular subject. The study aims to describe how different leadership styles affect employee performance in organizations

The descriptive research design is suitable because:

- It helps in understanding employee perceptions regarding leadership styles.
- It explains the relationship between leadership behavior and employee productivity.
- It allows the collection of detailed information through surveys and questionnaires.

5.2 Nature of the Study

The study is both:

- **Qualitative in nature** – because it examines employee opinions, experiences, and perceptions about leadership.
- **Quantitative in nature** – because numerical data collected through questionnaires is analyzed using statistical methods.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Sources of Data Collection

Data collection is an important part of research because the accuracy of findings depends on reliable data. In this study, both **primary data** and **secondary data** are used

Primary Data

Primary data refers to first-hand information collected directly from respondents for the specific purpose of the study.

Methods of Collecting Primary Data:

1. Structured Questionnaire
2. Employee Surveys
3. Personal Interaction with Employees

The questionnaire contains questions related to:

- Leadership style of managers
- Employee motivation
- Job satisfaction
- Productivity and performance
- Communication and teamwork

The questionnaire is distributed among employees working in different organizations.

Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to information already collected and published by other sources.

Sources of Secondary Data:

- Books related to leadership and organizational behavior
- Research journals and articles
- Company reports
- Websites and online publications
- Previous research studies

Secondary data helps in understanding theoretical concepts and supporting the findings of the research.

Sampling Technique

In this research, the **Random Sampling Technique** is used. Under this method, employees are selected randomly from different departments and organizations.

Reasons for Choosing Random Sampling:

- It reduces bias in the selection process.
- Every employee gets an equal chance of being selected.
- It increases the reliability of the research findings.

Sample Size

For this study:

- Total Sample Size = **100 Employees**

The respondents include employees from different organizations, departments, and managerial levels to obtain diverse opinions regarding leadership styles and employee performance.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted among employees working in various organizations located in different sectors such as:

- Service sector
- Corporate organizations
- Retail businesses
- IT companies

The research focuses on understanding employee perceptions regarding leadership practices in their workplace.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used for data collection is a **structured questionnaire**.

The questionnaire consists of:

- Multiple-choice questions
- Likert scale questions
- Opinion-based questions

Areas Covered in Questionnaire:

- Leadership behavior
- Employee motivation
- Job satisfaction
- Communication effectiveness
- Employee productivity
- Teamwork and organizational support

Tools and Techniques for Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed using:

- Descriptive statistics (percentages, averages, frequency distribution)
- Graphical analysis (bar charts, pie charts, line graphs)
- Comparative analysis to evaluate differences in adoption across sectors
- Content analysis for qualitative open-ended responses

Software tools such as Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets were used for calculation and chart creation.

Selection Criteria

Respondents were selected based on the following criteria:

- Service sector
- Corporate organizations
- Retail businesses
- IT companies

Willingness to participate voluntarily in the survey

Convenience Sampling

Used Employees who were easily accessible through:

- Google Forms
- Social media platforms
- Professional networks (LinkedIn groups, WhatsApp groups)

Operationalisation of Interview Questions

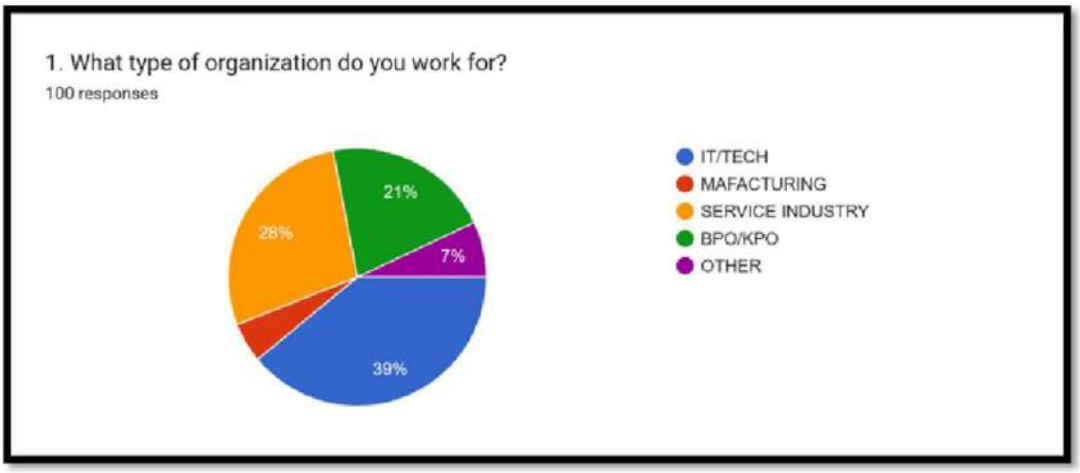
The questionnaire was designed with two primary purposes:

1. To obtain background information from respondents to validate their expertise, and

2. To gather data necessary to analyse the research questions in alignment with the literature

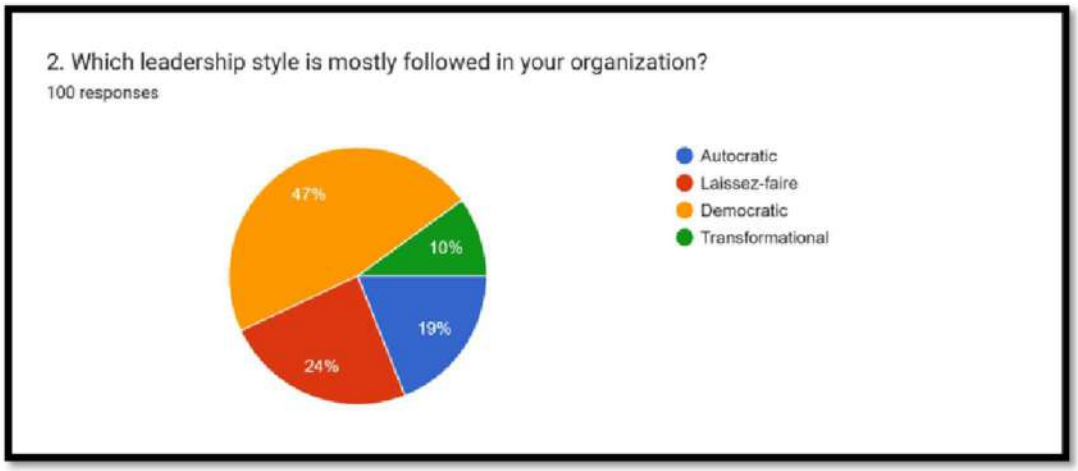
Survey

The following questionnaire is designed to collect data on the impact of leadership style on employee performance.



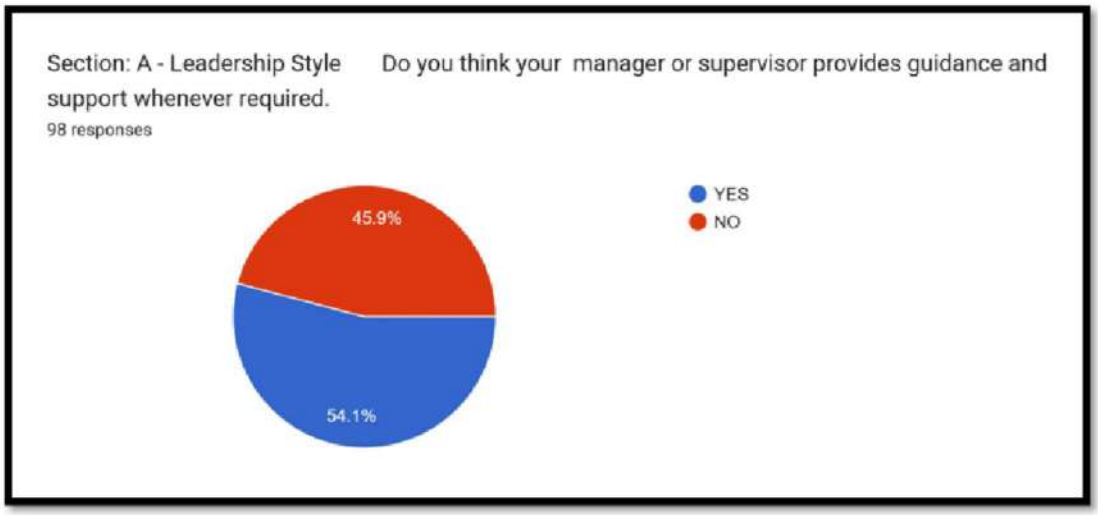
Key Findings

- The survey is largely dominated by respondents from the **IT/Tech sector (39%)**.
- Combined participation from **service-related sectors** (Service Industry + BPO/KPO) accounts for **49%**, indicating a strong service economy representation.
- The **manufacturing sector is underrepresented**, contributing only 5% of total responses.
- The data suggests that the study primarily reflects perspectives from technology and service-oriented professionals.



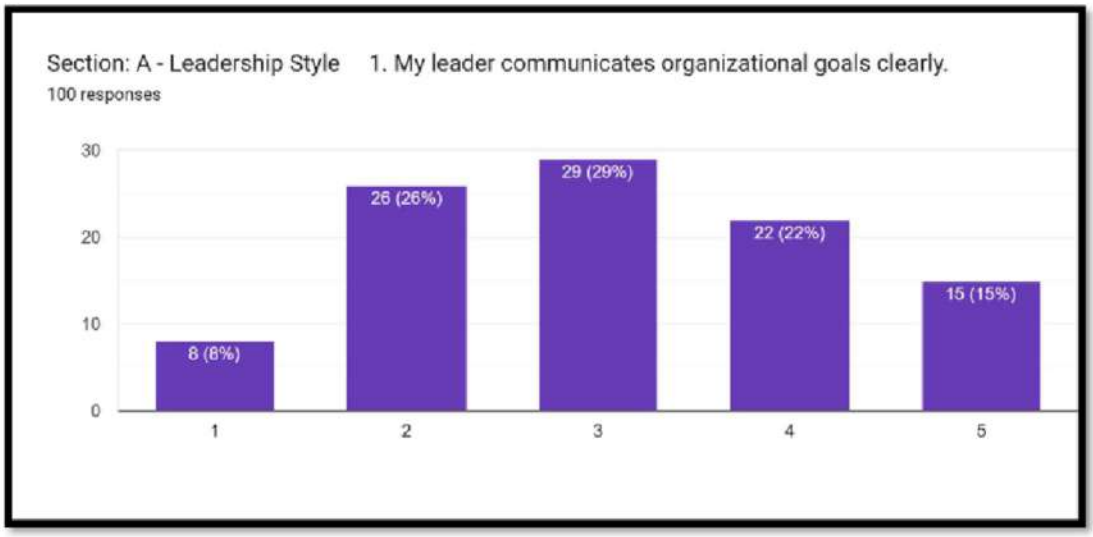
Key Findings

- **Democratic leadership (47%)** is the most commonly practiced leadership style among organizations surveyed.
- The preference for democratic leadership suggests that organizations value **team participation, communication, and collaborative decision-making**.
- **Laissez-faire leadership (24%)** reflects flexibility and employee independence in certain organizations.
- **Autocratic leadership (19%)** still exists but is less preferred compared to democratic leadership.
- Only **10%** reported transformational leadership, showing that visionary and motivational leadership practices are comparatively limited.



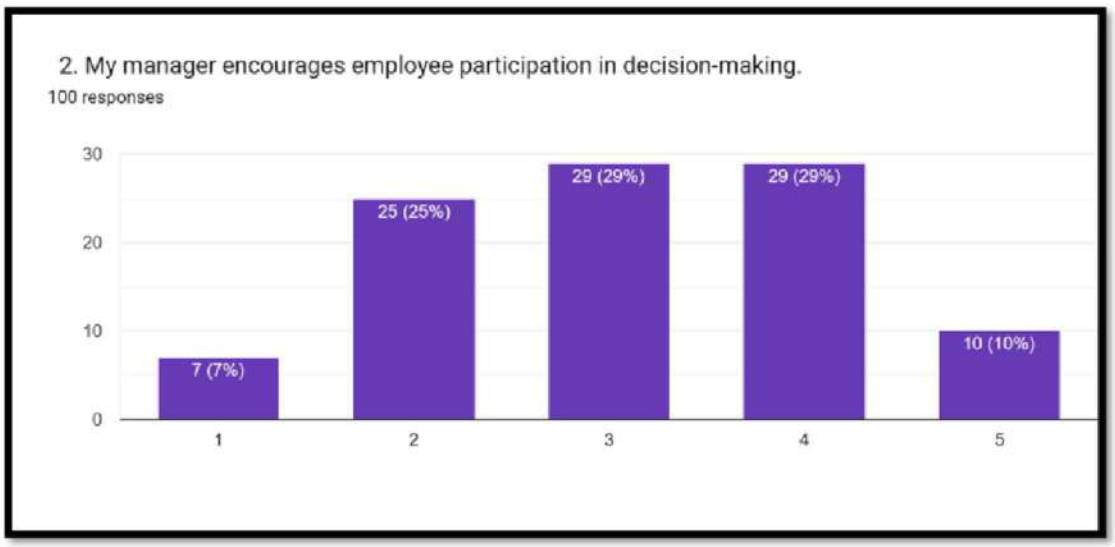
Key Findings

- The majority of employees (**54.1%**) have a positive perception of managerial support.
- However, the difference between "Yes" and "No" responses is relatively small, indicating mixed opinions among employees.
- Nearly half of the respondents (**45.9%**) are dissatisfied with the level of support and guidance provided by their managers.
- The findings suggest that while many organizations maintain supportive leadership practices, there is still considerable scope for improvement in employee supervision and mentoring.



Key Findings

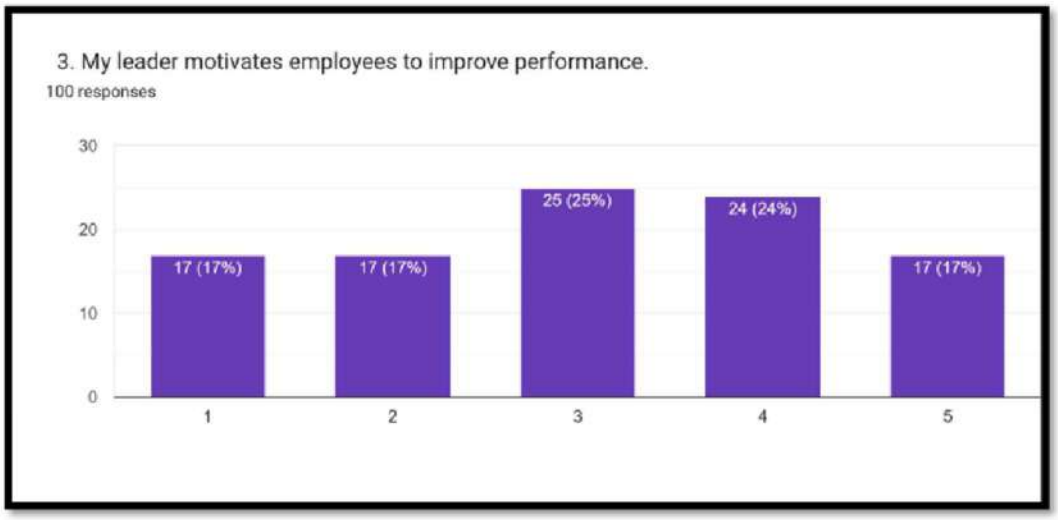
- The highest percentage of respondents (**29%**) selected **rating 3**, indicating a neutral perception regarding the clarity of organizational goal communication.
- A combined **37%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, showing that a significant portion of employees believe leaders communicate goals effectively.
- However, **34%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, suggesting dissatisfaction or lack of clarity in communication from leadership.
- The responses are relatively balanced, indicating mixed opinions among employees about leadership communication effectiveness.



Key Findings

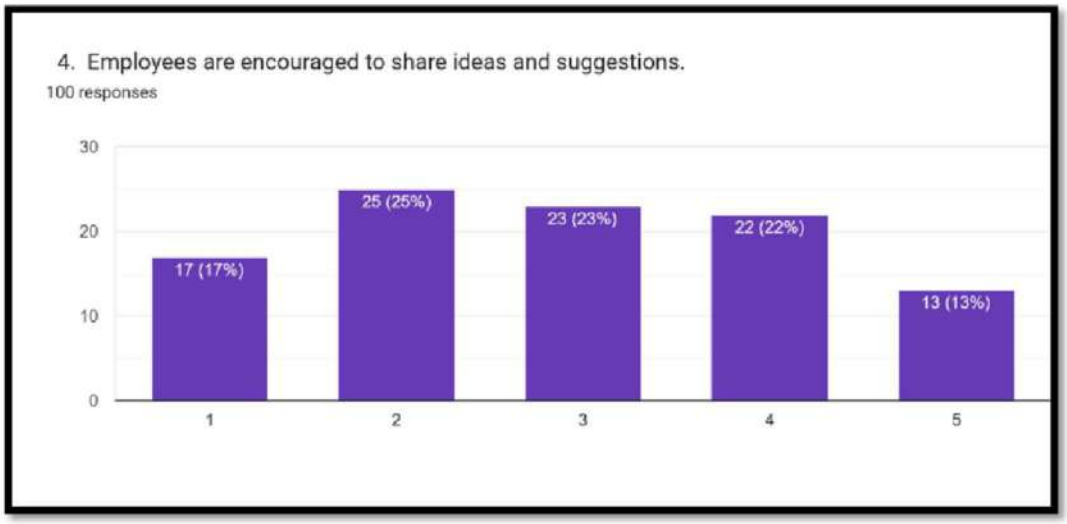
• The highest responses were recorded for **ratings 3 and 4**, each with **29%**, indicating that many employees either feel neutral or somewhat positive about participation in decision-making.
• A combined **39%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, showing that a notable portion of employees believe managers encourage participation and involvement.
• However, **32%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, indicating dissatisfaction and suggesting that some employees feel excluded from organizational decisions.
• **The results reflect a moderate level of participative leadership within organizations.**

The findings suggest that managers are making efforts to involve employees in decision-making, but these efforts may not be consistent across all departments or organizations.



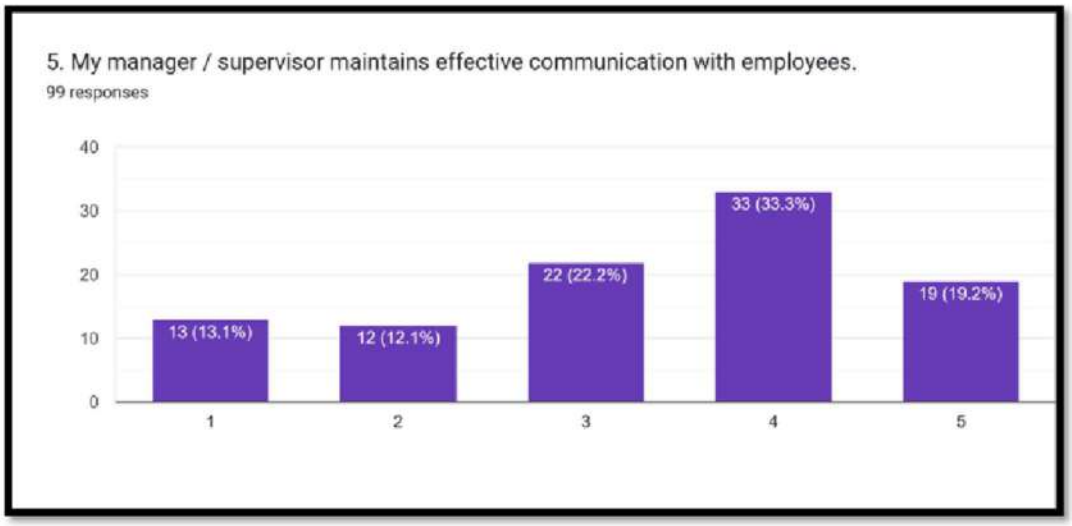
Key Findings

• The highest percentage of respondents (**25%**) selected **rating 3**, indicating a neutral perception regarding leadership motivation practices.
• A combined **41%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, suggesting that many employees believe their leaders positively motivate them to enhance performance.
• At the same time, **34%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, reflecting dissatisfaction and indicating that a significant number of employees do not feel sufficiently motivated by their leaders.
• **The distribution of responses is relatively balanced across all categories, showing varied employee experiences regarding motivational leadership.**
Negative responses highlight the possibility that certain employees feel undervalued, unsupported, or insufficiently recognized for their efforts.



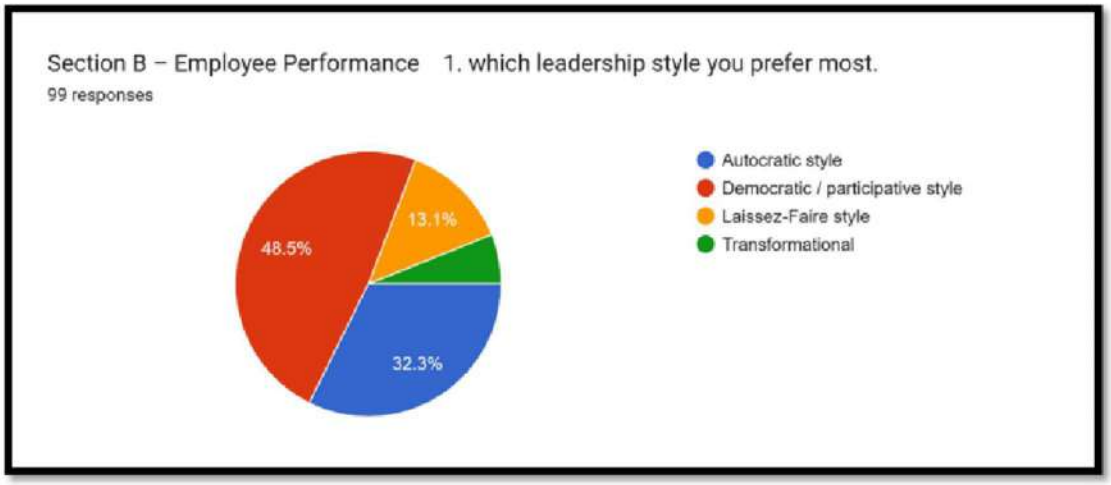
Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**25%**) selected **rating 2**, indicating that many employees feel they are not sufficiently encouraged to share ideas and suggestions.
- A combined **35%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, showing that some organizations promote open communication and employee involvement.
- However, **42%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, reflecting dissatisfaction and suggesting limited encouragement for employee participation.
- **The remaining** 23% **of respondents remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or inconsistency in organizational practices.** The findings suggest that employee participation and idea-sharing opportunities are present to some extent, but not strongly encouraged in many organizations.



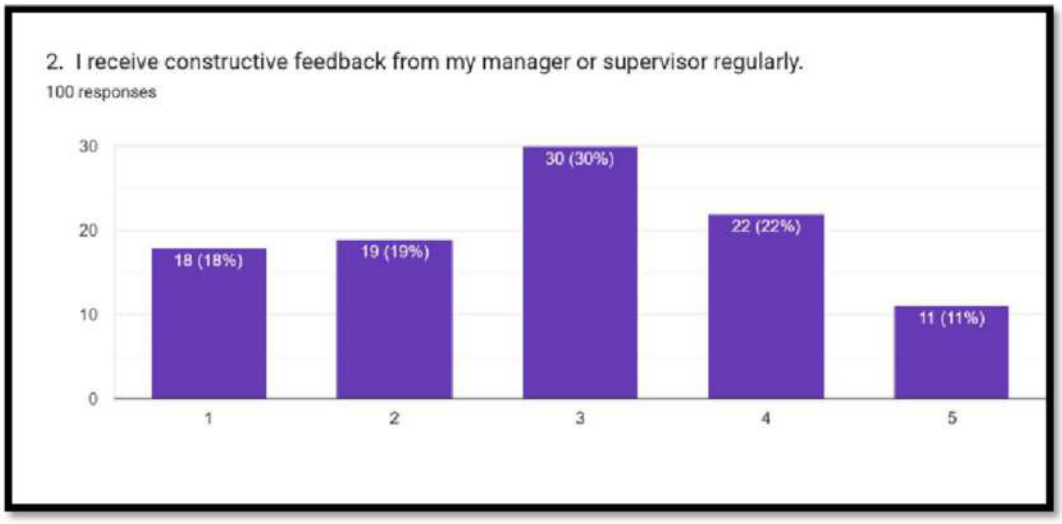
Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**33.3%**) selected **rating 4**, indicating that many employees believe their managers maintain effective communication.
- A combined **52.5%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, reflecting an overall positive perception of managerial communication.
- Only **25.2%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, suggesting that fewer employees are dissatisfied with communication practices.
- **Around** 22.2% **of respondents remained neutral, indicating mixed or inconsistent experiences.** The findings suggest that communication between managers and employees is generally effective within the organizations surveyed.



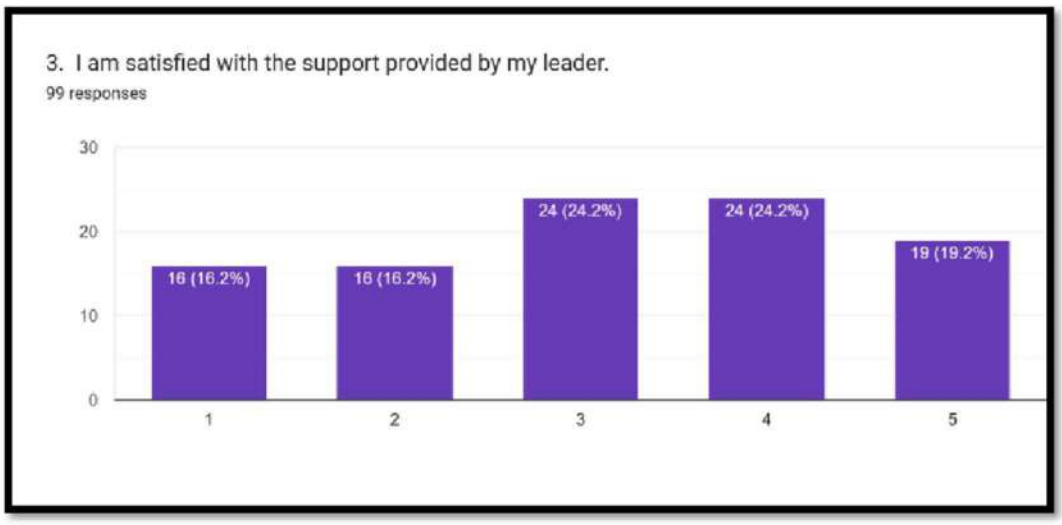
Key Findings

- Nearly half of the respondents (**48.5%**) prefer a **democratic/participative leadership style**, making it the most favored approach.
- The high preference for democratic leadership indicates that employees value involvement in decision-making, communication, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- **Autocratic leadership (32.3%)** also received a notable preference, suggesting that some employees appreciate structured authority, discipline, and faster decisions.
- **Laissez-faire leadership (13.1%)** was less preferred, indicating that employees may not favor complete independence without managerial involvement.
- Transformational leadership (6.1%) **received the lowest preference, possibly because employees may have limited exposure to visionary or innovation-driven leadership practices. The findings suggest that employees generally prefer leadership styles that balance authority with employee participation.**



Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**30%**) selected **rating 3**, indicating a neutral perception regarding the regularity of constructive feedback.
- A combined **33%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, suggesting that some employees regularly receive useful and constructive feedback from managers.
- However, **37%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, indicating dissatisfaction and suggesting that many employees feel they do not receive adequate feedback.
- **The response pattern reflects mixed experiences regarding managerial feedback practices.** The findings suggest that constructive feedback is provided inconsistently across organizations or departments.



Key Findings

- The highest responses were recorded for **ratings 3 and 4**, each with **24.2%**, indicating that many employees either feel neutral or moderately satisfied with the support provided by their leaders.
- A combined **43.4%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, showing that a significant proportion of employees are satisfied with leadership support.
- Meanwhile, **32.4%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, reflecting dissatisfaction among a considerable number of employees.
- **The results demonstrate a moderately positive perception of leadership support within organizations.** The findings suggest that leaders generally provide support to employees, but the level of satisfaction varies across individuals and organizations.



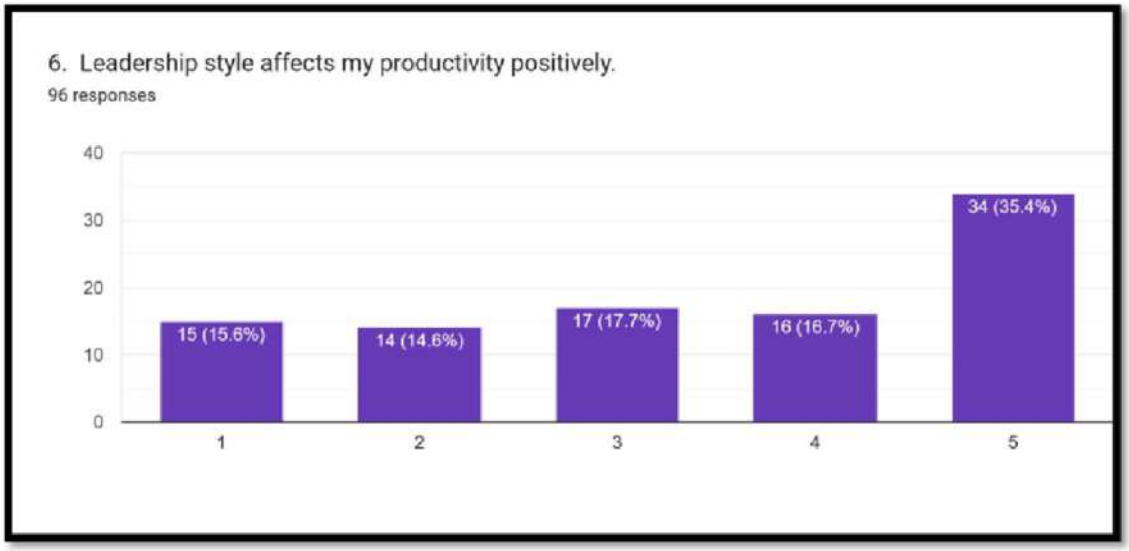
Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**33.7%**) selected **rating 4**, indicating that many employees feel inspired by their leaders to achieve organizational goals.
- A combined **50%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, reflecting a generally positive perception of inspirational leadership.
- Around **27.6%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, showing that some employees do not feel sufficiently inspired or motivated by their leaders.
- **Additionally,** 22.4% **of respondents remained neutral, indicating mixed opinions regarding leadership inspiration.**



Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**28.6%**) selected **rating 4**, indicating that many employees feel comfortable discussing work-related issues with their leaders.
- A combined **53.1%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, reflecting a generally positive perception regarding openness and communication with leaders.
- Around **31.6%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, suggesting that a considerable number of employees still feel uncomfortable discussing workplace problems with leadership.
- **Additionally,** 15.3% **of respondents remained neutral, indicating mixed experiences among employees.** The findings suggest that many leaders maintain an approachable and supportive relationship with employees.



Key Findings

- The highest percentage of respondents (**35.4%**) selected **rating 5**, indicating strong agreement that leadership style positively affects employee productivity.
- A combined **52.1%** of respondents selected ratings **4 and 5**, reflecting an overall positive perception regarding the impact of leadership on productivity.
- Around **30.2%** of respondents selected ratings **1 and 2**, suggesting that some employees do not believe leadership style significantly improves their productivity.
- **Additionally**, 17.7% **of respondents remained neutral, indicating mixed or situational experiences.** The findings suggest that leadership style plays a significant role in influencing employee productivity and performance.

Hypothesis Testing

Topic: Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

1. Statement of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is **no significant relationship** between leadership style and employee performance.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

There is a **significant relationship** between leadership style and employee performance.

2. Statistical Test Used

To test the hypothesis, **Pearson Correlation Analysis** was used between:

- **Leadership Style Variables**
  (communication, participation, motivation, idea sharing, effective communication)

and

- **Employee Performance Variables**
  (feedback, support satisfaction, inspiration, comfort in discussion, productivity)

3. Results of Hypothesis Test

Test	Correlation Value (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Pearson Correlation	-0.176	0.081	Weak negative relationship and statistically insignificant

4. Interpretation of Results

The correlation coefficient obtained is **r = -0.176**, which indicates a **very weak negative relationship** between leadership style and employee performance. The obtained **p-value = 0.081**, which is greater than the standard significance level of **0.05**.

Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the relationship between leadership style and employee performance is **not statistically significant** based on the collected sample data.

Therefore, the **Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted** and the **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected**.

5. Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing

The statistical analysis suggests that there is **no significant relationship between leadership style and employee performance** in the present study. Although descriptive findings showed that many employees believe leadership positively affects productivity, motivation, communication, and support, the correlation test indicates that the relationship is not strong enough to be statistically significant.

This result may be influenced by factors such as:

- Individual employee perceptions,
- Organizational culture,
- Different leadership practices across organizations,
- Limited sample diversity,
- External factors affecting performance beyond leadership style.

However, the descriptive analysis still indicates that leadership remains an important managerial factor influencing employee experiences and workplace behavior.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result
H_0: No significant relationship exists between leadership style and employee performance	Accepted
H_1: Significant relationship exists between leadership style and employee performance	Rejected

Findings

The study on the **Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance** revealed several important findings regarding leadership practices and their influence on employees within organizations. The data collected from respondents indicates that leadership style plays a significant role in shaping employee motivation, communication, satisfaction, participation, and productivity.

The demographic findings showed that the majority of respondents belonged to the **IT/Tech sector (39%)**, followed by the **Service Industry (28%)** and **BPO/KPO sector (21%)**, indicating that the study mainly reflects perspectives from service-oriented and technology-driven organizations. The survey also revealed that the most commonly followed leadership style within organizations is the **Democratic Leadership Style (47%)**, while **Laissez-faire (24%)**, **Autocratic (19%)**, and **Transformational Leadership (10%)** were followed to a lesser extent. Similarly, the majority of respondents preferred the **Democratic/Participative Leadership Style (48.5%)**, suggesting that employees value involvement, communication, and collaboration in the workplace.

The findings further indicated that leadership support and communication significantly affect employee experiences. More than half of the respondents agreed that their managers provide guidance and support whenever required. Employees also expressed moderately positive opinions regarding leaders' communication effectiveness, clarity of organizational goals.

The study also found that employee motivation and satisfaction are strongly connected to leadership behavior. Many respondents agreed that their leaders motivate them to improve performance, inspire them to achieve organizational goals, and provide adequate support in handling work-related challenges. Employees who experienced supportive and approachable leadership were more likely to feel comfortable discussing workplace problems with their leaders.

Another important finding of the study is that leadership style directly influences employee productivity. More than half of the respondents agreed that effective leadership positively impacts their productivity and performance. Leadership qualities such as communication, motivation, emotional support, recognition, and employee involvement were identified as major contributors to improved employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

At the same time, the study highlighted certain challenges within organizations. A notable proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction regarding feedback systems, encouragement for sharing ideas, and leadership support. This indicates that some organizations still follow rigid or less employee-centered leadership approaches, which may negatively affect employee morale and productivity.

Overall, the findings of the study conclude that effective leadership styles, particularly democratic and participative leadership, have a positive influence on employee performance. Leaders who maintain open communication, motivate employees, encourage participation, and provide support contribute significantly toward employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational success. Therefore, organizations should focus on developing strong leadership practices and employee-centered management approaches to improve overall workplace.

Discussion

The survey findings regarding the statement **"Leadership style affects my productivity positively"** indicate that leadership plays an important role in influencing employee performance and workplace efficiency. The responses collected from 96 participants show that a majority of employees believe that effective leadership contributes positively to their productivity. According to the data, **35.4% of respondents strongly agreed** and **16.7% agreed** with the statement, resulting in a combined positive response of **52.1%**. This clearly reflects that more than half of the employees consider leadership style to be a major factor affecting their work performance.

Effective leadership helps employees remain motivated, focused, and committed toward achieving organizational goals. Leaders who communicate clearly, provide guidance, appreciate employee efforts, and involve employees in decision-making create a positive work environment. Such practices improve employee morale and encourage individuals to perform better. Democratic and participative leadership styles, which were highly preferred by respondents in previous findings, are often associated with higher employee engagement and productivity because employees feel valued and respected within the organization.

The survey also reveals that **17.7% of respondents remained neutral**, which may indicate that some employees experience inconsistent leadership practices or believe that factors other than leadership, such as salary, workload, or organizational culture, influence their productivity. In contrast, **30.2% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the statement. This suggests that ineffective leadership practices still exist in some organizations. Poor communication, lack of support, limited recognition, and authoritarian behavior may reduce employee motivation and negatively impact performance.

The findings support leadership theories discussed in the literature review. **Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory** emphasizes that emotionally intelligent leaders can motivate employees, maintain healthy workplace relationships, and improve performance. Similarly, **Transformational Leadership Theory** highlights that inspiring and visionary leaders encourage employees to exceed expectations and contribute more effectively toward organizational success.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that leadership style significantly influences employee productivity. Positive leadership behaviors such as communication, support, motivation, and employee involvement contribute to better performance and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, organizations should focus on developing effective leadership practices to create a productive, motivated, and employee-friendly work environment.

Conclusion

The present study on the **Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance** concludes that leadership style plays a crucial role in influencing employee behavior, motivation, satisfaction, communication, and overall productivity within organizations. The findings of the study clearly indicate that effective leadership practices contribute positively toward improving employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

The research revealed that the **Democratic or Participative Leadership Style** is the most preferred and widely followed leadership approach among respondents. Employees tend to perform better when leaders encourage participation, involve team members in decision-making, maintain open communication, and provide regular guidance and support. Such leadership practices create a positive work environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and committed toward organizational goals.

The study further concludes that leadership significantly affects employee productivity and morale. Employees who receive constructive feedback, motivational support, and effective communication from their leaders are more likely to show higher levels of job satisfaction and performance. Leaders who inspire employees, listen to their concerns, and encourage idea-sharing help in building trust and stronger workplace relationships. These factors ultimately contribute to better teamwork, improved efficiency, and higher organizational performance.

The findings also highlight that leadership effectiveness is not consistent across all organizations. A considerable number of respondents expressed neutral or negative opinions regarding managerial support, communication, and employee involvement. This indicates that some organizations still follow rigid or less supportive leadership practices that may reduce employee motivation and productivity. Poor communication, lack of recognition, and limited employee participation can create dissatisfaction and negatively impact overall performance.

The study supports various leadership theories such as **Democratic Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory**, and **Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory**, which emphasize the importance of communication, emotional understanding, motivation, and employee engagement in achieving organizational success. Leaders with strong interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills are more capable of creating productive and employee-friendly work environments.

Overall, the study concludes that effective leadership is one of the key determinants of employee performance. Organizations that adopt supportive, participative, and motivational leadership styles are more likely to achieve higher employee satisfaction, improved productivity, and long-term organizational growth. Therefore, organizations should focus on leadership development programs, communication improvement, employee engagement initiatives, and motivational strategies to enhance leadership effectiveness and create a more productive workplace environment.

Questionaire

Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance

Instructions
Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for academic research purposes.

Instructions
Please tick (✓) the option that best represents your opinion.

Rating Scale

Scale	Meaning
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

1. 1. What type of organization do you work for?

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ IT/TECH
   - ◯ MAFACTURING
   - ◯ SERVICE INDUSTRY
   - ◯ BPO/KPO
   - ◯ OTHER

2. 2. Which leadership style is mostly followed in your organization?

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Autocratic
   - ◯ Laissez-faire
   - ◯ Democratic
   - ◯ Transformational

3. Section: A - Leadership Style

   Do you think your manager or supervisor provides guidance and support whenever required.

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ YES
   - ◯ NO

4. Section: A - Leadership Style

1. My leader communicates organizational goals clearly.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

5.

2. My manager encourages employee participation in decision-making.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6.

3. My leader motivates employees to improve performance.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7.

4. Employees are encouraged to share ideas and suggestions.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

8. 5. My manager / supervisor maintains effective communication with employees.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

9. Section B – Employee Performance

1. which leadership style you prefer most.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Autocratic style
- ◯ Democratic / participative style
- ◯ Laissez-Faire style
- ◯ Transformational

10. 2. I receive constructive feedback from my manager or supervisor regularly.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

11. 3. I am satisfied with the support provided by my leader.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

12. 4. My leader inspires me to achieve organizational goals.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

13. 5. I feel comfortable discussing work-related problems with my leader

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

14. 6. Leadership style affects my productivity positively.

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Declaration

I hereby confirm that the information provided by me is true to the best of my knowledge and is solely for academic research purposes.

Name (Optional): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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