

# Leadership Styles: Employee Stress, Well-being, Productivity, Turnover and Absenteeism

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## Abstract

The present review examines some of the most widely accepted leadership styles (Transactional leadership, Laissez-faire leadership, Autocratic / Dissonant / Authoritarian and Transformational leadership) and how and whether these impact on employee outcomes such as employee stress, well-being, productivity, turnover and absenteeism.

The review shows consistent advantages in terms of reduced stress, turnover, absenteeism and better well-being and productivity for leadership styles that are more relational such as transformational leadership. Poorer outcomes are demonstrated for laissez-faire, autocratic and transactional leadership. This review suggests that employees will benefit from leadership environments where relational styles are present where employees feel their leaders have strong values and act in accordance with these, where the leaders communicate clearly and inspirationally attracting employees to follow their vision, where employees are encouraged to use their full capacity, are intellectually challenged and where they feel the leader individually supports them and considers them, or at a minimum knows them. In short, valued employees are healthier, perform better and take less time off.

## 1- Introduction

The concept of stress needs no real introduction. Scientific definitions suggest that stress occurs when the individual appraises a situation as a threat to something of value to them, which exceeds their ability to cope given their current resources and typically reduces their psychological and physical well-being (Harms et al., 2017; French et al., 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In simple terms, stress is felt when the situation demands more from us than we feel able to give.

In terms of well-being, its definition is perhaps more difficult and often is conceptualised as the absence of "dis-ease" or mental disturbance. However, according to the World Health Organisation this definition by absence is

incomplete, and they suggest well-being to be the most significant aspect of mental health, thus "Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO, 2014). Psychological conceptualisations of well-being have suggested it is primarily comprised of two components, 1. Hedonic well-being defined as maximising pleasure and minimising pain and 2. Eudaimonic well-being defined as moving towards one's full potential and experiencing life as personally meaningful. However, it is worth noting that large scale studies of well-being have reported these two factors to be highly inter-correlated (Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, & Jarden, 2016). Stress is a factor that will consistently reduce reported well-being.

One obvious potential source of stress in the modern world concerns work. Several characteristics of work make it a major potential cause of stress, chiefly: 1. The sheer amount of time spent at work relative to other life activities (e.g. sleeping, home, travel); 2. Consistent demands to perform and produce results; 3. Managing relationships with other individuals in the workplace; 4. Reduced autonomy; 5. Financial imperative to work irrespective of desire; 6. Usually a hierarchical power structure; 7. Career aspirations and wage discrepancy awareness; 8. Potential for bullying, victimisation, harassment and inequality; 9. Managing work life balance; 10. Job security; 11. Unmanageable workloads, deadlines and expectations; 12. Lack of training or support.

Given the potential for work to be such a compelling source of stress, one aspect that has increasingly received attention in the literature concerns whether the particular type of manager, leader or supervisor in the organisation and their style of leadership can affect the level of stress and well-being experienced by individual employees / followers.

Before the effects of leadership style can be examined, it is necessary to delineate differences between management and leadership. Understanding the similarities and differences between management and leadership has long been explored within management theories and research paradigms. Debate over the precise differences continues to the present day, with many suggesting

that arriving at a precise definition of either management or leadership remains an elusive goal (Morrill, 2007). Despite this, several key differences have been systematically distilled from a range of authors.

The attributes and activities of managers versus leaders have been documented by various authors (see Bennis, 1989; Diffen LLC, 2017; Kotter, 1990) and show clearly that there are marked differences between their roles. Typically, managers are seen as high-level administrators, chiefly concerned with the day to day running of an organisation, and therefore with structures, processes and ensuring optimal functioning. In contrast, leaders are more visionary and long term focused, attempting to define and generate organisational commitment to a shared vision and associated values (Bush, 2000). A famous quote, that echoes similar ideas, suggests that “management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things” (attributed to both Peter Drucker and Warren Bennis).

The focus of this chapter will be on leadership styles and how these influence employee outcomes including stress and well-being. Having said this it is important to realise that in practice managers and leaders are frequently the same individual. Despite this, organisational structure frequently allocates positions in a hierarchical manner to allow people employed at the very pinnacle, for example the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a leadership role, with several ancillary managers sitting just below them, for example CTO (Chief Technical Officer), CFO (Chief Financial Officer), COO (Chief Operating Officer), CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) to deal with the more practical aspects of running the organisation and reporting directly to the overall CEO.

Even though there is considerable overlap between leadership and management, this chapter will concentrate on leadership rather than management. Leadership has been defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northous, 2004).

## 2- Method

This article represents a review of the available evidence linking leadership styles in an organisational context with outcomes of relevance to employee health – chiefly: Employee Stress, Well-being, Productivity, Turnover and Absenteeism.

The method employed initially was to use a literature search on PsychInfo and Google Scholar for papers directly linking leadership styles to employee / health outcomes. The search terms used included “leadership styles” and derivatives such as “management styles”, and “employee stress, well-being, productivity, turnover and absenteeism” some relevant derived terms such as “burnout” were

also used. The abstracts of all papers arising out of these searches were examined for inclusion. Included papers represented ones where they provided actual data regarding the links between leadership styles and the particular health outcomes of interest. Previous review articles were also included as these led to the identification of further experimental literature that was not present in the online searches.

## 3- Leadership styles

The historical literature has identified a myriad of distinct leadership styles of unknown number and has frequently evidenced disagreement regarding taxonomy, overlap, hierarchy and critical distinctions. However, there is some broad agreement regarding the existence of four styles which although not exhaustive (Anderson & Sun, 2015) have the widest evidence base with regards to impact on employee outcomes. These are:

### 3-1-Transactional leadership

Focuses on transaction and exchange of resources in order to accomplish necessary work, rewards are contingent on measureable performance, in addition to taking corrective action when tasks are being undertaken poorly e.g. punishments (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Transactional leadership is seen as encompassing three dimensions:

- I. Contingent reward – the leader makes transactions in a constructive way, rewarding good performance and making explicit expectations.
- II. Management by exception active – the leader takes corrective action regarding leader / follower exchanges e.g. punishing poor performance – active leaders monitor behaviour and take corrective actions quickly.
- III. Management by exception passive – these leaders wait until problems manifest before taking action.

### 3-2-Laissez-faire leadership

These leaders are characterised by the absence of transactions and provide employees with a great deal of freedom regarding how they manage and run their day to day work. The leaders can be supportive but are often uninvolved. They passively avoid issues and decision making. This can backfire if the employees do not effectively manage themselves (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999; Lewin & Lippitt, 1938). Often described as the avoidance of leadership. These leaders are avoidant, often hesitant and difficult to contact.

### 3-3-Autocratic / Dissonant / Authoritarian

These leaders are autocratic and order others to do certain tasks, which depends on their position in the

hierarchy, authority and punitive measures. They make decisions without consulting others. The advantages are that decisions are made very quickly and can be implemented swiftly. However, employees feel uninvolved and can become complacent (Coleman et al., 2002; Lewin & Lippitt, 1938).

### 3-4-Transformational leadership

Involves establishing oneself as a role model by inspiring employees to follow them, gaining trust and employee confidence. These leaders are charismatic and attract respect and trust from colleagues, they are inspiring, motivating and seen as collaborative and fair. They model useful organisational behaviours they wish employees to adopt. They respect staff and challenge employees to follow them (Bass, 1990; 1998; Eagly et al., 2003).

As Judge and Piccolo (2004) state "Transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs" (p. 755).

Transformational leadership is said to encompass four sub domains (Arnold & Connelly, 2013; Bass & Riggio, 2006), which are:

- I. Idealised influence – these leaders have strong consistent values and act in accordance with those values.
- II. Inspirational motivation – communicate clearly, often inspirational and convey a vision of the path to take, convincing others to follow and share in this vision.
- III. Intellectual stimulation – they encourage followers to think in alternative and different ways, solving problems by using their full capacity.
- IV. Individual consideration – supporting employees individually and helping them to develop their potential.

The leadership styles noted above are not exhaustive and other styles debated in the literature include: charismatic; servant; authentic; ethical; as well as destructive forms of leadership e.g. abusive, tyrannical, derailed etc., and models such as Full-range Leadership Theory (FRLT) and Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX), among others. The focus of this chapter will examine how the style of leadership impacts on a range of employee outcomes, chiefly: well-being; stress and burnout; performance and absenteeism / sickness.

It is worth noting at this juncture that leadership styles are not mutually exclusive, and some have suggested that optimal leadership might be best conceptualised as a combination of the transformational and transactional styles, e.g. Bass (1999) states "the best leaders are both transformational and transactional" (p. 21).

However, others suggest sensitivity to context is key and that all styles are necessary to flexibly apply as the situation or the type of organisation demands (Goleman, 2000).

### 4-The impact of leadership styles on employee wellbeing and productivity

The following sections will examine research regarding employee outcomes under distinct headings representing possible effects of leadership style.

#### 4-1-Sickness, absence and staff turnover

Sickness and absence are clearly undesirable outcomes for any organisation. They will affect productivity, morale and stress levels of other employees. Furthermore, they are poor outcomes for employees.

Research has shown that higher level support provided by leaders and supervisors are associated with reductions in turnover (Thomas & Ganster, 1995) and absenteeism (Kuoppala et al., 2008; Stansfeld et al., 1997). However not all studies support this (Clumeck et al., 2009). Furthermore, long term absence due to sickness has been found to be related to lower levels of work based support from leaders and supervisors (Labriola et al., 2006; Nielsen et al., 2006).

There is also evidence that it is not only the provision of support per se that results in greater presenteeism but also the quality of the support. Thus, leadership quality assessed as providing good developmental opportunities, work satisfaction, and good conflict solving relationships is associated with lower levels of sickness absence (Munir et al., 2011). In a rare longitudinal study, Dellve and colleagues demonstrated in 3275 employees that high quality leadership that carefully used rewards and recognition cultivated greater respect and was associated with presenteeism (Dellve et al., 2007).

Studies that have examined discrete leadership styles have consistently found that relational leadership styles (e.g. transformative and charismatic / inspirational) where employees feel valued and have a say in decision making are invariably associated with less absenteeism including sickness and lower staff turnover (Boyle et al., 1999; Nyberg et al., 2008; Schreuder et al., 2011; Volk & Lucas, 1991). Importantly Schreuder et al. (2011) report task-oriented leadership behaviours are related to more absenteeism in the short term. Nyberg et al. (2008) found autocratic leadership to be associated with more sick leave for men.

Some research has examined the leadership behaviour and its relationship with intent to stay in the role by employees. With consistent findings being reported regarding the fact that employees report more intent to stay in roles where leadership

styles are more relational, employees are satisfied and feel their behaviour is rewarded (Manion, 2004; Boyle et al., 1999; Kramer & Schmalenberg, 2003; Upenieks, 2003). Transformational leadership has been specifically examined in the field of nursing and has been shown to relate to greater job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation, self-efficacy and empowerment, while simultaneously relating to lower staff turnover, (Failla & Stichler, 2008; Neilson et al., 2009).

#### 4-2-Stress and Burnout

The effect of leadership on stress and burnout has been examined in multiple studies. For the purpose of this chapter burnout is defined as a cluster of psychological factors best represented by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation (seeing others as more like objects than people) and reduced personal accomplishment (Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, & Sixma, 1994).

In line with the evidence reviewed above regarding absence and turnover, studies have consistently demonstrated that more relational forms of leadership such as transformational and charismatic, where leaders are perceived to be individually considerate and effective communicators are associated with less stress and burnout in employees (Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006; Leithwood et al., 1996; Seltzer, Numerof & Bass, 1989; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Sparks et al., 2001). Furthermore, higher levels of employee support have been associated with reduced stress and burnout (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Importantly in some studies the beneficial effects of leadership style are stronger than the effects of demographic and personality factors, however they are not as strong as job demands and social / organisational support (Leithwood et al., 1996). Lyons and Schneider (2009) report that transformational leadership was associated with higher perceived social support, increased self-efficacy, less threat appraisal when simultaneously under stress, and less negative affect again in stressful conditions.

Corrigan and colleagues examined the subcomponents of transformational leadership (idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation) the first three components were negatively related to burnout. However intellectual stimulation was not related to emotional exhaustion and was positively related to personal accomplishment (Corrigan et al., 2002). This is similar to Seltzer et al. (1989) who found that intellectual stimulation was positively related to stress and burnout.

Research has started to investigate processes that may moderate the relationships between relational leadership styles, stress and burnout. One suggested

factor is personality. Thus, Hetland et al. (2007) found transformational leadership was not associated with emotional exhaustion but positively associated with efficacy. Yet the personality dimension of neuroticism was more strongly associated with burnout and its sub-dimensions. Liu et al. (2010) found that another potential mediator was the degree of trust in the leader. Thus, leader trust and self-efficacy mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and stress.

In terms of negative leadership styles, abusive supervision and bullying have both been linked to increased stress and burnout (Sparks et al., 2001; Tepper, 2000). In line with this, research has examined a range of factors that are associated with increased stress the main contenders have been shown to be: role ambiguity, lack of autonomy, difficult interpersonal relationships and workload (Dolan & Renaud, 1992; O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994; Schaubroeck, Cotton & Jennings, 1989; Sullivan, 1993). Importantly given the literature these are all likely to be reduced where leaders are transformational. Thus, studies have shown that having increased control over one's work results in significant mental health benefits and reduces absenteeism (Stansfeld et al., 2000). Furthermore, there is evidence that these same factors not only affect stress and well-being but may have detrimental effects on physical health. Thus, high workload, low autonomy and lack of sensitivity to reward balance have been found to be related to increased coronary heart disease (Head et al., 2002).

These issues appear to be exacerbated where work stress becomes chronic. Therefore, chronic stress at work has been demonstrated both cross-sectionally and longitudinally to be linked to many negative outcomes including depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease and emotional exhaustion (Michie & Williams, 2003; Sapolsky, 2003). Furthermore, work stress itself relates to negative organisational outcomes such as increased staff turnover and absenteeism while simultaneously lowering performance (Dollard et al., 2000).

One feature of transformational leadership that lends itself to enhanced positive outcomes particularly regarding work stress is social support and individual consideration of employees. To investigate the effects of social support, Viswesvaran and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis which demonstrated that social support had beneficial effects on stress via three pathways. These were: reducing experienced strain, altering employee's perception of stressful situations whereby previously stressful situations come to be seen as easier to deal with, and moderating the relationship between stressors and strain (Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999).

In a review of the literature on stress and burnout in correctional officers, Schaufeli and Peters (2000) conclude that while stress levels and burnout are high in this occupation the situation could be helped by improving human resources management and the social work environment. Importantly both of these strategies are more likely with relational and transformational leadership styles.

#### **4-3-Well-being / health**

Studies have investigated the effects of leadership behaviours and styles on well-being. It is important to realise that as a concept well-being is seen as having both psychological and physical qualities (Liu et al., 2010). Therefore, the present section will review the literature in terms of effects on both mental and physical health broadly.

In line with the previous research examining outcomes on absenteeism and stress / burnout, studies on well-being have broadly shown that once again leadership styles that are relational, charismatic and transformational consistently demonstrate better employee outcomes in terms of well-being (Cummings, 2004). Specifically, transformational leadership has been associated with less depression at multiple time points, better general health, lower anxiety and less stress (Cummings, 2004; Munir, Nielsen & Carneiro, 2010; Stordeur et al., 2001). One rare longitudinal study is particularly instructive (Nielsen et al., 2008) which demonstrated, over 18-months, that there was no direct relationship between transformational leadership at time 1 and affective well-being at time 2. However, transformational leadership did show positive effects on affective well-being that were shown to be mediated by increasing experience of meaning in work, greater role clarity, improved developmental opportunities and more self-efficacy. Of relevance to well-being, transformational leadership was associated with less depression both at time 1 and over the 18-month period.

In terms of the mechanisms through which transformational and relational leadership may exert effects, research has shown that charismatic leadership (a sub component of transformational leadership) seems to evoke more positive emotions in employees with benefits to well-being (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Cherulnik et al., 2001). Thus, it seems charismatic and transformational leaders are viewed as more positive and these emotions can be transmitted to employees. This is important as positive emotions are one consistent hallmark of mental health and well-being (Arnold & Connelly, 2013). Furthermore, there is also some evidence that transformational leadership can simultaneously reduce negative emotions in followers (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). In addition to evoking more positive emotions the increased support likely to be in evidence with transformative and relational leadership styles may also lead to independent

benefits. Thus, higher levels of employee support have been associated with increased well-being and satisfaction (Amick & Celantano, 1991; Donaldson-Feilder, Munir, & Lewis, 2013; Moyle & Parks, 1999). Another factor that appears related to employee well-being and leadership is job satisfaction. Meta-analysis indicates that job satisfaction is related to improved employee health – both mental and physical (Faragher & Cooper, 2005). As transformational leadership styles have been consistently related to increased job satisfaction this suggests one route to improving well-being.

In view of the findings demonstrating consistent benefits of transformational styles on well-being, a range of studies have investigated whether these styles can be developed in leaders and the benefits that may result. The main findings indicate that training programs designed to develop effective leader behaviours show good outcomes particularly with respect to employee well-being. Thus, Theorell et al. (2001) examined the effectiveness of a program designed to improve managers psychosocial competence with the training covering the social psychology of groups, individual functioning (psychologically & medically), and the design of workloads. Leaders participating had bi-weekly sessions for a year. Results indicated that employees with managers that had undergone the training showed evidence of increased autonomy, and critically demonstrated lower serum cortisol levels compared to employees whose managers did not participate. This is an important finding as serum cortisol is seen as a robust marker of general stress.

In a similar study, Barling et al. (1996) examined a program designed to develop transformational leadership styles. Results indicated that employees of managers who underwent the training had enhanced perceptions of their managers transformational style. Most importantly the employees of managers that completed the training also showed evidence of increased organisational commitment and financial performance. In terms of the general effectiveness of stress management interventions, Richardson and Rothstein (2008) report consistent positive overall effects in a meta-analysis, especially beneficial were cognitive behavioural interventions.

In a well-designed study avoiding some of the pitfalls of an overreliance on self-report measures, Bono et al. (2007) used experience sampling procedures where employees were randomly stopped throughout the day and had to report their current emotions. Results indicated that employees with transformational leaders reported more positive emotions at work but not less negative emotions.

Studies have also investigated the converse i.e. leadership factors that appear detrimental to well-being. Thus, Skogstad et al. (2007) found that laissez-faire leadership was associated with increased role conflict, ambiguity and greater conflict and bullying. In turn, abusive supervision has consistently been linked to increased anxiety (Harris & Kacmar, 2005) and depression (Tepper, 2000). Unsurprisingly, forms of destructive leadership (e.g. harassment, bullying abusive practices, power abuse, and undermining among many other destructive practices) have consistently been demonstrated to harm employees, particularly with respect to well-being (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of destructive leadership by Schyns and Schilling (2013) suggests that employee outcomes are negative including worse perceptions of management and counterproductive work practices.

#### **4-4-Employee engagement**

Studies have also investigated the effect of leadership styles on employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to “individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002, p. 269). While this concept shares overlap with organisational commitment it is not viewed as identical (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004). Thus, organisational commitment is seen as referring to a person’s attitude towards their organisation but engagement is not seen as an attitude but the extent to which an individual is focused and attentive to their employment role (Saks, 2006). What is clear is the literature on employee engagement agrees that the concept has developed mainly from organisational departments and human resource based organisations not from academic researchers who have been slow to start researching employee engagement, which has led to terminological confusion (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Although a modern definition has emerged suggesting that employee engagement is a state of mind relating to feelings of fulfilment, enthusiasm and dedication to work (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017).

Once again relational forms of leadership where leaders are effective communicators are seen to be positively related to greater employee engagement, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Keegan & den Hartog, 2004; Myers & Kassing, 1998). In line with this, Schaufeli & Peeters (2002) found engagement is linked to charismatic leadership which is often seen as one component of transformational leadership.

Factors shown in various studies to be linked to greater employee engagement include positive leader interactions and communications (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Madlock, 2008; Madlock, & Booth-Butterfield, 2012; Madlock &

Horan, 2009), involvement of employees in decision making (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003), and greater control over day to day running of one’s own work tasks (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli 2006). Indeed, Madlock and Horan (2009) found that almost 18% of the variance in job satisfaction was accounted for by supervisor effective communication. Importantly studies indicate that greater engagement is linked to higher productivity and work performance, customer satisfaction, loyalty, profit, turnover and safety (Harter et al., 2002; Towers Watson, 2008).

Studies have also examined factors associated with greater estrangement. Thus, Sarros and colleagues report that authoritarian, inflexible, less empowering leadership leads to employee estrangement and alienation. They also suggest that transformational styles of leadership avoid these losses by providing workers with the support they need to handle complex job demands effectively (Sarros et al., 2002). Furthermore, Sarros found that transformational leadership lessened the degree of work alienation, whereas transactional leadership increased alienation. In line with this, the degree of centralised control, more formal rules, codified practice and strict authority have all been found to predict the degree of work alienation (Gaziel & Weiss, 1990; Zeffane, 1993). It is suggested that inflexible bureaucracy contributes to alienation by constraining employee autonomy and the extent to which they control their own activities (Kakabadse, 1986; Zeffane, 1993). This led MacLeod & Clark (2009) to suggest that, to enhance employee engagement, leaders need to provide autonomy, empowerment, developmental opportunities, be clear regarding expectations, respect and fair treatment, offer coaching, feedback and training to ensure work is effectively and efficiently designed and allocated fairly.

In terms of discrete leadership styles the evidence is clear, transformational leadership is a driver of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Furthermore, Shamir et al. (1993) found that transformational leadership resulted in increased employee involvement, commitment, performance and relatedness. Importantly, leadership satisfaction appears negatively related to laissez-faire leadership, and positively related to inspirational leadership (Andrews et al., 2012). However, there is some evidence that employees report even greater satisfaction where leaders display both relational and task-oriented behaviours (Castenada & Nahavandi, 1991).

#### **4-5-Productivity**

Research examining work productivity has again demonstrated advantages for transformational forms of leadership, thus transformational leaders have been found to be more productive, both in terms of their own performance and that of their

employees, regardless of the level at which the output is measured e.g. individual, team or company (Barrick et al., 2015; Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Ng (2017) investigated the mechanisms through which transformational leadership might give rise to better performance by conducting a large scale meta-analysis. The results demonstrated that five separate factors could explain some of the effects of transformational leadership on performance. The first factor was labelled affective experience, being led by a transformational leader enhanced the number of positive emotions experienced by followers and thereby led to improved performance. The second factor, labelled motivation, concerned the fact that transformational leadership resulted in greater confidence in followers and excitement regarding their work resulting in performance increments. The third factor was labelled identification mechanism and demonstrated the influence of transformational leadership on employees whereby they would identify with the leader and emulate them as a source of inspiration. The fourth factor was labelled social exchange and suggested that transformational leadership improved the quality of social exchanges between leaders and followers which in turn meant the follower was motivated to reciprocate by performing their job to a higher standard. The fifth and final factor was labelled justice enhancement and suggested to followers that resources would be allocated in a fair way, motivating followers to expend more effort on tasks. These overall results indicate that in the final analysis it was the quality of the relationship that improved performance.

Related to performance increments, Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka (2009) comment “even among leaders, we believe charismatic, intelligent, conscientious leaders perform better (i.e. have higher subjective and objective effectiveness)” (p. 864). Furthermore, they make the critical point that stable characteristics, i.e. personality or leadership style, are unlikely to show utility in all situations. For example, collaborative leadership where decisions are jointly made is likely to be effective in normal circumstances but ineffective in times of crisis or war. By the same token they suggest some socially “dark” or undesirable traits can sometimes be necessary and useful. The same authors conducted a meta-analysis examining the effects of leadership styles on performance. Results indicated that transformational leadership was consistently related to enhanced performance. Contingent reward was also related to better performance and transformational and contingent reward were themselves positively related. Importantly passive leadership and laissez-faire leadership were consistently related to reduced performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

#### **4-6-Effects of transformational leadership on leader stress and well being**

While most studies have focused on the effects of leadership style and behaviours on employee outcomes, a few have investigated the impact of leadership style on stress and well-being in the leaders themselves. These studies report that transformational leadership and its sub-dimensions are positively related to personal accomplishment in the leader (Corrigan et al., 2002). Furthermore, there is some evidence that charismatic leadership is associated with reductions in one component of burnout - emotional exhaustion. A similar study also reported benefits of transformational leadership on well-being in the leader. Thus, transformational leadership was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and positively correlated with personal accomplishment (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2010).

#### **4-7-Gender differences in leadership style**

Research has now demonstrated that there may be gender differences in preferences for leadership style, particularly in Western cultures. Specifically, women have been shown to lead more democratically, preferring participation from other members of the organisation whereas men tend to lead more autocratically (Johnson & Eagly, 1990). A further meta-analysis from Eagly and colleagues (2003) has also shown that female leaders are often more transformational than males. In addition, women were shown to be more consistent in rewarding useful behaviours, thereby being more transactional. In contrast, they found male leaders to be more laissez-faire. However, it is worth noting that the effects were small.

### **5-Conclusions**

The research linking leadership styles with a range of outcomes linked to health, well-being and productivity show a remarkable degree of consistency. Relational and transformational leadership styles show consistent benefits to both the leader themselves and employees in terms of increased well-being, health, and productivity coupled with reduced absenteeism and sickness absence. In contrast, transactional leadership sometimes shows benefits albeit only for contingent reward and some studies report a positive correlation between transformational and contingent reward transactional leadership. However, it is worth noting that even for contingent rewards the outcomes are not always positive and management by exception whether active or passive demonstrated poor outcomes. The outcomes for Laissez-faire and authoritarian leadership are easier to distil. These have been related consistently to poor outcomes in terms of less productivity and workplace engagement

coupled with negative impacts on health and well-being.

However, despite the consistencies reported, a few critical points need to be raised at this juncture. Firstly, the quality of the evidence, while improving has on the whole been limited, with the vast majority of studies being correlational and associative making it impossible to make causal inferences (Arnold & Connelly, 2013). Furthermore, although this chapter has focused on four widely accepted leadership types, these are far from all of the suggested leadership styles (see end of section 3) and there is ongoing debate regarding the number of styles that exist. In addition, the literature is rife with inconsistent use of terminology and simplistic research designs. For example, data is typically collected via self-report and often assessed retrospectively, is often cross sectional and correlational so no causal ascriptions or causal direction can be argued. One critical issue within the literature is the fact that leadership style is rarely objectively verified and mapped onto actual leader behaviour, creating a dichotomy in the literature between perceived leadership style against objective leadership style (Behrendt, Matz & Goritz, 2017; Dinh, et al., 2014). Therefore, although tempting, it is too premature to suggest that transformational leadership leads to the enhanced outcomes.

What is clear is that work environments have changed dramatically in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and employees are now more educated and intelligent than previously. Some have argued these shifts mean it is now necessary for leaders to be more collaborative and transformational to engage their employees (Salacuse, 2013). Towards this end, research indicates that satisfaction with supervisors is related to the leaders perceived competence as an effective communicator (Berman & Hellweg, 1989). Perhaps most important in view of the consistent association with improved employee outcomes, there is good evidence that transformational leadership can be taught (Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996; Kelloway, Barling & Helleur, 2000).

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