



# "THE SILENT STRAIN: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF POOR LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING"

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## Abstract:

In modern workplaces, the role of leadership in shaping employee mental health and well-being has gained significant attention. This study aims to explore the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected from employees across various industries through interviews and surveys.

The findings reveal that poor leadership behaviors, such as lack of support, micromanagement, and inconsistent communication, can have detrimental effects on employees' mental health. Employees reported feelings of stress, anxiety, and burnout due to these leadership practices. Additionally, poor leadership was found to negatively impact employee morale, job satisfaction, and overall well-being.

**Keywords:** Poor leadership, Mental health, well-being, stress, job satisfaction, employee morale.

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## Introduction:

In contemporary workplaces, the significance of effective leadership in fostering employee well-being and mental health cannot be overstated. While leadership is often associated with guiding teams toward success and achieving organizational goals, its impact on the psychological well-being of employees is equally profound. This study delves into the often-overlooked aspect of leadership—its influence on employees' mental health and overall well-being. Specifically, it seeks to explore the repercussions of poor leadership practices on employees' psychological health and offer insights into potential mitigation strategies.

The workplace landscape has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with the emergence of diverse work arrangements, technological advancements, and evolving organizational structures. In this dynamic

environment, the role of leaders has become increasingly complex, requiring them to navigate diverse challenges while ensuring the welfare of their teams. However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of leadership in fostering employee well-being, instances of poor leadership persist in many organizations.

Poor leadership can manifest in various forms, ranging from authoritarian and micromanaging styles to passive-aggressive behaviors and lack of empathy. Such leadership practices not only undermine employee morale and engagement but also pose serious risks to their mental health. Employees subjected to poor leadership may experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout, leading to adverse effects on their overall well-being.

Moreover, the impact of poor leadership extends beyond individual employees to affect



team dynamics, organizational culture, and ultimately, business outcomes. High turnover rates, decreased productivity, and increased absenteeism are often observed in environments characterized by ineffective leadership practices. Despite these consequences, the issue of poor leadership and its implications for employee mental health remain inadequately addressed in many organizational contexts.

Recognizing the critical importance of addressing this issue, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being. By examining real-world experiences and perspectives from employees across different industries, the study aims to shed light on the underlying mechanisms through which poor leadership exerts its detrimental effects.

Furthermore, the study endeavors to identify potential strategies and interventions that organizations can implement to mitigate the negative consequences of poor leadership on employee mental health. Through a proactive approach to leadership development and organizational culture, organizations can create environments that foster psychological safety, trust, and resilience among their workforce.

Hence, this study serves as a call to action for organizations to prioritize the cultivation of effective leadership practices that support employee well-being and mental health. By addressing the silent strain of poor leadership, organizations can create healthier, more productive, and sustainable work environments for their employees.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for understanding the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being can be approached from various perspectives. Here, we will discuss several key theoretical frameworks that provide insights into this phenomenon:

1. **Transactional Leadership Theory:** This theory posits that leadership is based on a transactional relationship between

leaders and followers, where leaders motivate followers through rewards and punishments. Poor transactional leadership, characterized by a lack of consideration for employees' well-being, can lead to negative outcomes such as stress and dissatisfaction.

2. **Transformational Leadership Theory:** Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve exceptional performance. However, when transformational leadership is lacking, employees may feel demotivated and disengaged, leading to mental health issues.
3. **Social Exchange Theory:** This theory suggests that relationships are based on a give-and-take exchange of resources. When leaders fail to provide support, recognition, and fairness, employees may feel that the social exchange is unfair, leading to feelings of resentment and stress.
4. **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model:** This model suggests that job demands (e.g., workload, time pressure) and job resources (e.g., social support, autonomy) influence employee well-being and performance. Poor leadership can increase job demands and reduce job resources, leading to negative outcomes.
5. **Stress Theory:** Stress theory posits that stress occurs when individuals perceive a lack of resources to cope with demands. Poor leadership behaviors such as micromanagement, lack of communication, and unrealistic expectations can increase stress levels among employees.
6. **Organizational Support Theory:** This theory suggests that perceived organizational support (POS) is critical for employee well-being. Poor leadership can erode POS, leading to lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions.

7. **Cognitive Dissonance Theory:** This theory suggests that individuals experience discomfort when their beliefs or behaviors are inconsistent. Poor leadership behaviors may create cognitive dissonance for employees, leading to negative emotions and reduced well-being.
8. **Psychological Contract Theory:** This theory suggests that there is an unwritten understanding between employees and organizations regarding mutual expectations. Poor leadership can violate this psychological contract, leading to feelings of betrayal and mistrust.
9. **Emotion Regulation Theory:** This theory suggests that individuals regulate their emotions based on situational demands. Poor leadership can create emotionally stressful situations, requiring employees to regulate their emotions, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between poor leadership and employees' mental health and well-being. This multidimensional approach can inform interventions and strategies aimed at improving leadership. Effective leadership is crucial for organizational success and employee well-being. However, poor leadership can have detrimental effects on employees, particularly concerning their mental health and overall well-being. This article explores the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being, highlighting the importance of addressing this issue in organizational settings. The article discusses various aspects of poor leadership, its manifestations, and its consequences for employees. Additionally, it examines the role of organizational factors in exacerbating or mitigating the effects of poor leadership on employee mental health. Finally, the article provides recommendations for organizations to promote effective leadership practices that support employee well-being.

Leadership styles and behaviors can significantly impact employees, influencing their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall mental health. While effective leadership can inspire and empower employees, poor leadership can have the opposite effect, leading to increased stress, burnout, and decreased well-being. This article explores the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being, highlighting the need for organizations to address this issue proactively.

#### **Types of Poor Leadership:**

Poor leadership can manifest in various forms, each with its unique impact on employees' mental health and well-being. Authoritarian leadership, characterized by strict control and lack of autonomy, can lead to feelings of disempowerment and frustration among employees. Micromanagement, another common form of poor leadership, can cause employees to feel undervalued and demotivated. Additionally, passive-aggressive leadership, where leaders avoid direct communication and conflict resolution, can create a toxic work environment, negatively impacting employee mental health.

#### **Consequences for Employees:**

The consequences of poor leadership on employee mental health and well-being are significant. Employees subjected to poor leadership may experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. These negative effects can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower morale, and increased turnover rates. Poor leadership can also impact employee physical health, leading to issues such as insomnia, headaches, and other stress-related illnesses. Moreover, poor leadership can affect employees' overall quality of life, impacting their relationships outside of work and their overall well-being.

#### **Role of Organizational Factors:**

Organizational factors play a significant role in exacerbating or mitigating the effects of poor leadership on employee mental health. A toxic organizational culture that tolerates or even encourages poor leadership behaviors can amplify the negative impact on employees.

Conversely, organizations that prioritize employee well-being and foster a supportive work environment can help mitigate the effects of poor leadership. Providing resources for employees to cope with stress, such as counseling services or wellness programs, can also help mitigate the negative impact of poor leadership.

#### **Recommendations for Organizations:**

To address the impact of poor leadership on employees' mental health and well-being, organizations can take several steps. First, organizations should invest in leadership development programs to ensure that leaders possess the necessary skills and competencies to lead effectively. Second, organizations should create a culture that values employee well-being and provides support for employees facing challenges. Finally, organizations should promote open communication and transparency to address issues of poor leadership proactively.

#### **Conclusion:**

Poor leadership can have serious consequences for employees' mental health and well-being. The consequences of poor leadership, including increased stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, can significantly impact employees' overall quality of life. Organizational factors, such as toxic cultures and lack of support, can exacerbate these effects, further compromising employee well-being.

To mitigate the impact of poor leadership, organizations should invest in leadership development programs to ensure that leaders possess the necessary skills and competencies to lead effectively. Additionally, creating a supportive work environment that values employee well-being and promotes open communication is crucial. By addressing the root causes of poor leadership and fostering a culture of empathy and support, organizations can create a healthier workplace for all employees.

In conclusion, addressing the impact of poor leadership on employee mental health and well-being is essential for creating a positive and productive work environment. By

prioritizing effective leadership practices and promoting a culture of well-being, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational success.

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