

Dynamic Relationships Management Journal

CONTENTS

Volume 12, Number 1, May 2023

Effect of Job Insecurity on Job Performance: Looking Through the Lens of Subjective Well-Being Maliha Sarfraz, Jamil Anwar, Syed Afzal Moshadi Shah	5
A Community Seam: Social Identification and Subjective Resilience in Understanding Social Support During the Covid-19 Crisis in Iraq Omar S. Rasheed, Lucía López-Rodríguez, Marisol Navas	21
Impact of Social Media Networking With Co-Workers: A Study on the Mediating Role of Social Reactions and Comparisons Deepshikha Seth, Priyanka Agarwal, Anubha Vashisht	35
Embracing the Digital Age: The Impact of Proactivity and Big Five Personality Traits on Employee Development Jure Andolšek, Armin Salkić	53
Through Self-Leadership and Followership to Shared Leadership: A Paradigm for Effective Virtual Teamworking Enja Topić, Melisa Čehić, Rok Belingar	73
Empirical Evidence for Hybridization of Corporate Social Responsibility Erik Pelters	87
Highlighting Approaches to Leadership Style in Project Management: The Need for a Broader Research Approach to the Context-Related Use of Leadership Styles Gabriella Cserhádi	107
Author Guidelines	121



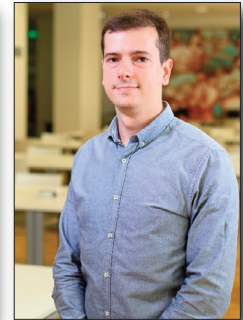
Introduction to the Special Issue Section

6th International Conference on Management and Organization SAM 2022: INTEGRATING ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH: INDIVIDUAL, TEAM, ORGANIZATIONAL AND MULTILEVEL PERSPECTIVES

Aleša Saša Sitar
University of Ljubljana

Ana Aleksić Mirić
University of Belgrade

Matija Marić
University of Zagreb



This special issue section is focused on presenting the **6th International Conference on Management and Organization SAM 2022** hosted by Slovenian Academy of Management, together with School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, and Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, with the support of CEEMAN, organized on June 23-24, 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The theme of the conference was **Integrating Organizational Research: Individual, team, organizational and multilevel perspectives**.

The inspiration for the gathering alike came from the awareness that organizations are multi-level social systems. Even though organizations are complex social systems, most scholars remain entrenched in their own disciplinary, specialized micro (organizational behaviour and organizational psychology), meso (social psychology, business process management, project management) or macro (strategic management, organizational theory and design, engineering/systems management) research camps. Meanwhile, managers in the digitally connected world must prioritize the execution of competitive strategic initiatives and the achievement of challenging business objectives by skilfully managing and continually enhancing the dynamic interactions between various levels of the organizational system. Although these distinct schools of thought have traditionally focused on analyzing or-

ganizational phenomena at different levels of analysis (i.e., individual/job, team/unit, and organization/system), they will undoubtedly persist and provide valuable, specialized insights. Nevertheless, relying solely on single-level perspectives may not be sufficient for effectively addressing the increasing complexity of organizational life.

It is encouraging to see that there is a growing body of research in organizational studies that spans multiple levels, incorporating previously separate research areas and providing fresh perspectives on business practices. The need to bridge the gap between macro and micro levels has been acknowledged by the field of organizational science, particularly in areas such as human resource management, leadership, organizational behavior, innovation management, and organizational learning. Recent developments in multilevel modelling techniques have further emphasized the importance of considering levels in scholarly discussions.

The central premise of multilevel organizational research is that a more comprehensive explanation of phenomena can be achieved by integrating factors from different levels of analysis. The aim and focus of this conference were to explore and tackle theoretical, research, and methodological challenges associated with single- and cross-level investigations, with the goal of advancing our comprehension of the multilevel nature of organizations. Participants from

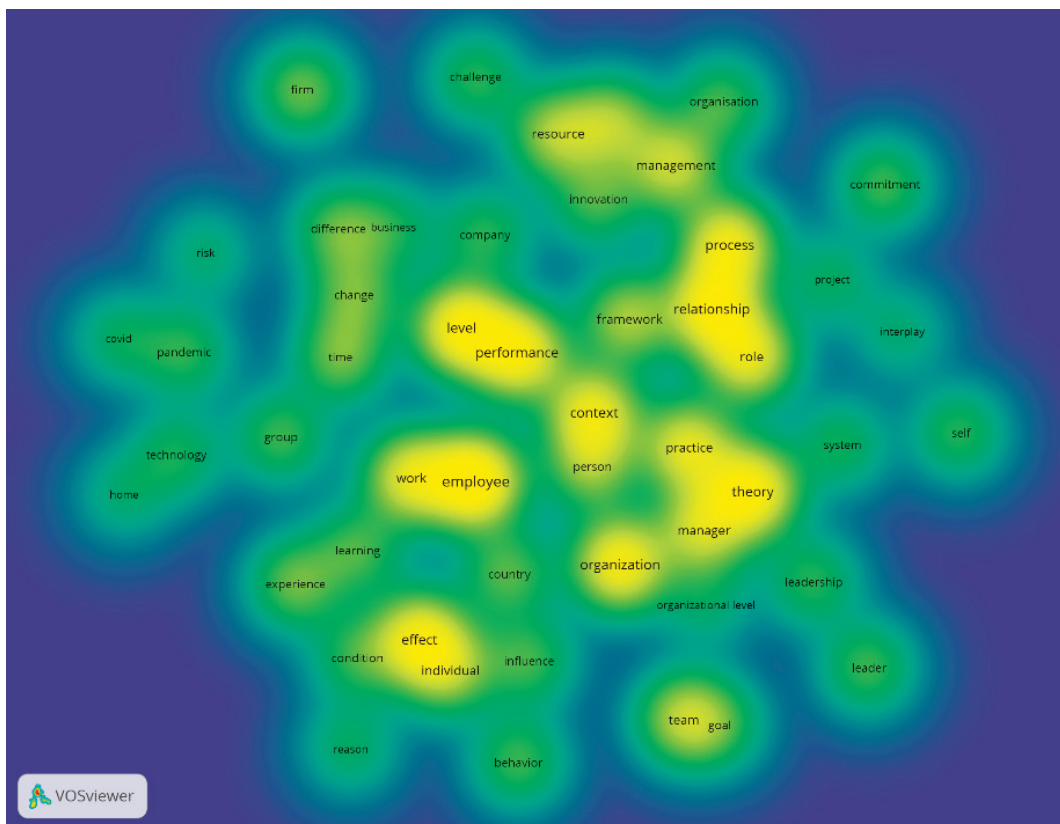
universities and schools from 17 different countries came to Ljubljana and in two days, 43 papers were presented in 10 sessions. A myriad of different participants and topics were present at the conference. The first day of the conference presentations were held in session HRM and OB, Job design, Leadership, Business process management and Digitized work. On the second day, presentations were scheduled in the sessions Macro- and cross-level issues, Innovative work behaviour and Project organizing.

In order to present the wide range of presented studies, we conducted a textual analysis presented in Figure 1. The topics covered within papers include broader fields of **leadership, corporate social responsibility, human resource management, project management, work design**, and many more across different levels (individual, team, and organizational), different industries, and different countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Poland, Albania, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, Canada, USA, Colombia

and Thailand). We strived to provide much-needed synthesis of underlying theories and methodological approaches within the loosely coupled community of organizational scholars by taking account of the fact that micro phenomena are embedded in macro contexts, while macro phenomena often emerge through the interaction and dynamics of lower-level elements. Such an approach may add depth and richness to our theoretical reasoning and likewise improve conversations between researchers and practitioners, by providing insightful details concerning how organizations operate and behave.

For the occasion of the special issue section we have decided to highlight two well-represented and interesting topics from the conference: corporate social responsibility (CSR) and leadership in project management. Both business supporters and business-and-society scholars share a basic conviction that CSR is advantageous not only for the firm but also for its stakeholders and society as a whole (Burke & Logsdon, 1996). It is important to study the

Figure 1: Textual analysis of papers presented at SAM 2022 conference



development of CSR practices in different contexts (implicit vs. explicit CSR) in order to reveal how organizations, address stakeholder needs, as well as the changes in expressed ethical values and its impact on market and the society (Carson, Hagen, & Sethi, 2013). Similarly, projects are invaluable for managing complex problems and implementing changes for the good of organizations and society. Studying leadership in the context of projects is of high importance because project success depends on different characteristics of the project itself such as complexity, size, uniqueness (Mir & Pinnington, 2014). Projects are temporary and as such, largely dependent on the abilities of project managers. And, what is crucial sometimes is how project managers adjust to contingencies of different projects. The two papers in this special issue section address these topics.

The first paper, by Erik Pelters investigates the extent to EU companies mimic the content of codes of conduct from U.S. companies. This is grounded in the process of hybridization, i.e. a gradual alignment between the design of CSR practices by companies in implicit and explicit CSR contexts. Hybridization comes alive with the help of explicitization and implicitization (Matten & Moon, 2008). In his paper, Erik Pelters is focused on empirical evidence of hybridization in terms of changes in codes of conduct over time. Findings point out to a noticeable hybridization where codes of conduct in USA function as templates for EU companies. Explicitization of codes content takes place in companies of the EU context. The same applies to implicitization of CSR practices: content analysis demonstrated that companies embedded new trends within their codes of conduct.

The second paper is written by Gabriella Cserháti. It provides a content analysis of leadership approaches in project management with the focus on interactions between project/organizational characteristics and project manager's leadership style. More precisely, the analysis centred on the dependence of project success on various project characteristics, including project type, complexity, goal clarity, uncertainty, team size, project management practices, and virtuality. Based on these findings, author suggests two implications for future research. First, in order to ensure project success, research ef-

forts should focus on interactions between leadership style and project characteristics. Second, author calls for investigating multilevel interactions between organizational context (such as culture and structure), leadership style and project success.

REFERENCES

- Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2008) "Implicit" and "explicit" CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of corporate social responsibility, *Academy of Management Review*, 33(2), 402-424.
- Burke, L., & Logsdon, J. M. (1996). How corporate social responsibility pays off, *Long Range Planning*, 29(4), 495-502.
- Carson, S. G., Hagen, Ø., & Sethi, S. P. (2013). From Implicit to Explicit CSR in a Scandinavian Context: The Cases of HÅG and Hydro, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 127(1), 17-31.
- Mir, F. A., & Pinnington, A. H. (2014). Exploring the value of project management: Linking Project Management Performance and Project Success, *International Journal of Project Management*, 32(2), 202-217.



EFFECT OF JOB INSECURITY ON JOB PERFORMANCE: LOOKING THROUGH THE LENS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Maliha Sarfraz

COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus, Pakistan
malihasarfraz50@gmail.com

Jamil Anwar

COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus, Pakistan
jamilanwar@cuiatd.edu.pk

Syed Afzal Moshadi Shah

COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus, Pakistan
afzalshah@cuiatd.edu.pk

Abstract

Business competition, rapid technological changes, and government reforms or deregulations around the globe have put companies in difficult situations resulting in the risk of job insecurity, which deteriorates the well-being of the employees, leading to decreased job performance. This research extends the knowledge of the link between job insecurity and job performance by exploring the potential mediating mechanism of Subjective well-being in the food and beverage industry. Data from 357 employees of the food and beverages industry from two districts in Pakistan were collected through a pretested questionnaire. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses using SmartPLS software. Reliability and validity checks were applied to assess the measurements and structural models. The findings reveal that job insecurity has a negative impact on job performance, whereas subjective well-being has a significantly positive influence on job performance. Furthermore, subjective well-being mediates the negative relationship between job insecurity and job performance. Multi-industry analysis can give more-robust and -generalizable results. In addition to subjective well-being, other mediators and moderators can be added for this relationship. Managers can improve their team performance by reducing on-the-job insecurity and improving the working condition and personal care of employees.

Keywords: job insecurity, subjective well-being, job performance; smartPLS, food and beverages industry

1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to pandemic situations such as Covid-19, business competition, rapid technological changes, and government reforms or deregulation around the globe have put companies in difficult situations in adopting numerous strategies such as downsizing, acquisitions, outsourcing, and mergers (Minnotte & Varud, 2020). One of the most evident

outcomes of these situations is the risk of job insecurity (JI) or unemployment. Considerable job loss has amplified the feelings and perceptions of employment insecurity, which aggravates the uncertainty among workforce at global level. Job insecurity is deemed to be a robust hindrance stressor that is linked to a range of damaging impacts in both the short term and the long term (Richter & Naswal, 2018). Job insecurity is expressed as an em-

ployee's concern about the continuity of existing employment in the future (Shin et al., 2019), and is linked closely with a wide range of workplace outcomes, such as anxiety, decreased performance, turnover intention, and emotional exhaustion (Chirumbolo et al., 2020). The consequences of this critical stressor cause detrimental effects on employees' mental and physical health and on their well-being (Choi et al., 2020; De Witte et al., 2016).

An increasing number of studies are addressing the domain of employee well-being (Diener et al., 2018; Saeed et al., 2021). It is an established fact that a satisfied and happy workforce is more productive and effective for organizations (Warr & Nielsen, 2018). It also is acknowledged that the well-being of individuals contributes to sustainable organizational goals and contributes toward economic growth and enduring social justice. In contrast, at the individual level, the perception of insecure employment affects both an employee's physical well-being and subjective well-being (SWB). Similarly, at the organizational level, job insecurity negatively impacts employee work behaviors (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Nella et al., 2015; Saeed et al., 2021; Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Moreover, research also has indicated adverse consequences of job insecurity to job satisfaction and employee well-being (Cheng & Chan 2008; Sverke et al., 2002).

Although a wide range of research has validated the negative association among job insecurity and a number of employee attitudes and organization-level consequences (Darvishmotevali et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2021; Sender et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2019), very little is known about the mechanism by which job insecurity influences performance through subjective well-being (Hu et al., 2018). Recent research (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Richter & Näswall, 2018; Salgado et al., 2019) pointed out that the mediating role of subjective well-being connecting job insecurity to employee job performance (JP) has been less investigated, and suggested that this relationship needs to be investigated further. Because most investigation of job insecurity is conducted in a Western environment (Wang et al., 2014), this relationship has not been investigated in Pakistan (Saif et al., 2020).

Job insecurity is a global matter, including in Pakistan. In Pakistan, most people are unemployed, and those who are employed are encountering tough competition and remain in the fear of losing their jobs under uncertain conditions (Saeed et al., 2021). Empirical evidence has recognized job insecurity as a commonly experienced phenomenon in the private sector of Pakistan (Saeed et al., 2021; Qureshi & Khan, 2016). For example, Awan and Salam (2014) found that private college teachers' performance is negatively related to job insecurity, whereas Saeed et al.'s (2021) findings in the pharmaceutical sector indicated that job insecurity negatively impacts well-being, organizational communication, and employee involvement, whereas perceived employability reduces job insecurity.

Building on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, this research investigated how job insecurity impacts employee job performance via reducing their subjective well-being in the food and beverage industry in Pakistan. The food industry traditionally hires a substantial number of less-skilled employees, who feel more insecure during downsizing and other uncertainty in the market (Wang et al., 2011; Zopist & Orphanides, 2009), thus making this industry a good choice to investigate this relationship.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge of job insecurity, subjective well-being, and job performance in three ways. Firstly, it presents evidence to further the understanding of the process regarding the negative impact of job insecurity on employees' job performance by reducing their subjective well-being, which is critical for both employees and organizations. Secondly, the context of the study, i.e., the country dynamics and the industry (food and beverages) peculiarities, enrich the existing literature. Thirdly, very few studies have used transactional stress theory to investigate the mediating role of SWB by connecting job insecurity with job performance. Lastly, managers can apply the recommendations to achieve greater performance in times of uncertainty, and also can understand how to take care of the subjective well-being of the employees to keep them psychologically relaxed and satisfied.

The remainder of this paper includes the literature review providing theoretical background and hypotheses development; research methodology;

data cleansing and analysis, including assessment of common method variance, measurement model assessment, and structural model assessment; and hypothesis results of both direct and mediating effects. The last section concludes the results with discussion of findings, implications of the study, and limitations and future research guidelines.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Job insecurity describes the subjective perception of an employee regarding losing their employment as a consequence of economic downturns or any changes in organizational structure (Ashford et al., 1989; Cheung et al., 2019; De Witte, 2005; Schumacher et al., 2016). In an uncertain situation concerning job continuity, individuals may experience psychological strain along with perceived uncertainty about the future of their jobs (Burgard et al., 2007; Burgard et al., 2012; Cheung et al., 2019). Prior research in the domain of JI adopted the latent deprivation model (Jahoda, 1982), job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001), and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll et al., 1990) as guiding mechanisms to identify how JI impacts individual well-being and other organizational and behavioral outcomes.

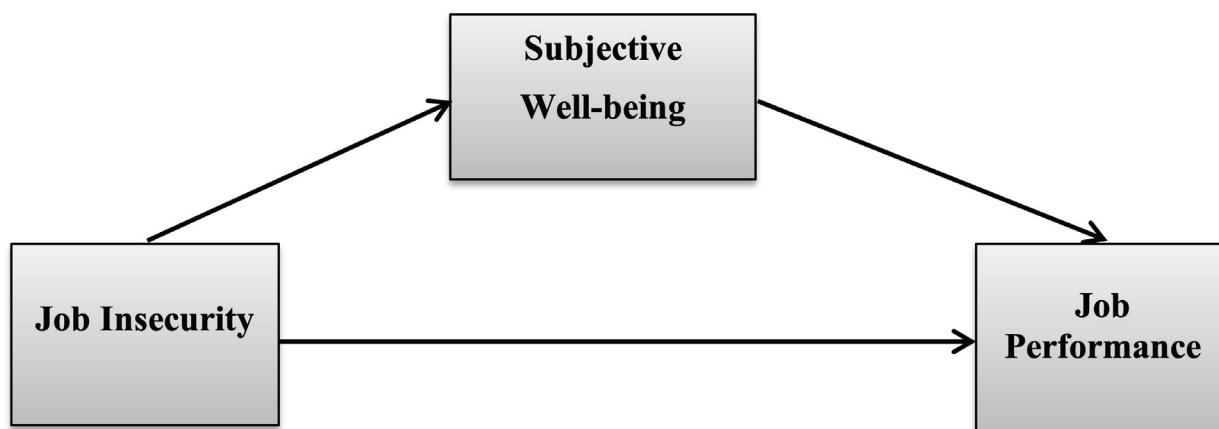
To study how perceived JI influences job outcomes, we adopted the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) as a framework to investigate how JI influences work outcome or performance through subjective

well-being composed of employee’s satisfaction with their life and work. Here, JI is characterized as a kind of work demand that fuels work strain, which in turn causes negative impacts on an organization in terms of decreased performance and job dissatisfaction (Shin & Hur, 2021). Consistent with JR-D theory, JI is assumed to fuel a health-diminishing process within which the cognitive and physiological resources of workers are depleted (Pap et al., 2020). In addition, job resources emphasize social, structural, and physiological factors of the work (Xia, 2021). The JD-R model depicts the dynamic interaction among different job demands in addition to personal resources that impacts employee well-being and performance as a result of those interactions (Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Kwon & Kim 2020).

In the workplace, employees encounter different situations such as daily stress, consistent uncertainty about job loss, and job ambiguity, which hampers performance. These factors increase anxiety, which is a key indicator of lower subjective well-being (Cheung et al., 2019; Darvishmotevali et al., 2017; Darvishmotevali et al., 2020). According to the latent deprivation model (Jahoda, 1982; 1997), it is the lack of latent benefits of work due to unemployment which leads to psychological distress. Thus employees who perceive JI frequently undergo stress due to fear of losing their employment, income, perks, and associated social recognition, which ultimately has a negative impact on employees’ well-being.

Based on the preceding theoretical foundations, the relationships of the variables are presented in the following conceptual mode (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



2.2 Job Insecurity and Job Performance

JI indicates an employee's pressures and fears concerning the stability of their existing job (Chirumbolo et al., 2020; De Witte et al., 2015). Akgunduz and Eryilmaz (2018) described JI from cognitive and affective perspectives. Cognitive insecurity is associated with an understanding concerning the prospect of the loss of position or perks, whereas an affective view is related to the emotional depression and worry about these probable deficits (Huang et al., 2012). The assessment of circumstances at the individual level is concerned with affective insecurity (Sverke and Hellgren, 2002). JI is a hindrance stressor that hampers the personal development and learning orientation of employees at the individual level. It negatively affects the social aspect of corporate sustainability (Karatepe et al., 2020). In consonance with JD-R theory, job demands are the primary source that predicts adverse work strains (Darvishmotevali et al., 2017). According to the JD-R model, job insecurity is considered to be a job demand and a severe employment stressor (Rigotti et al., 2015), and it is related to individual perception concerning working circumstances, specifically employment security and permanence of work association with an organization (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020). Job performance can be defined as actions and behaviors that an individual contributes toward achieving the organizational goals and objectives (Khan & Gufran, 2018). Prior studies have shown a negative association between JI and JP. There are many reasons for that relationship. Firstly, failure of companies to provide contract rights to workers lowers the employees' trust in the organization, which in turns leads to decreased JP (Shin & Hur, 2021; Van et al., 2020; VO-Thanh et al., 2021). For example, prolonged employment pressure can produce dysfunction at work that involves poor or low job performance (Rosario-Hernández & Rovira-Millán, 2020). Employees who suffer stress are unable to assign appropriate drive to their responsibilities in the workplace, which results in reduced job performance (Qian et al., 2019). According to De Cuyper and De Witte (2006), perception of JI was linked with decreased JP. Likewise, Shoss (2017) showed a strong negative relationship between JI and JP. All these views are in line with the research which established job insecurity as a

hindrance stressor that directs employees toward adverse behavioral outcomes on the job (Shin & Hur, 2019). Thus, considering these results we hypothesize that

H1: *Job insecurity has a negative relationship with employee job performance.*

2.3 Job Insecurity and Subjective Well-Being

Well-being can be defined as a universal judgment of emotions, feelings, and the level of satisfaction with life, which varies between despair and contentment. Subjective well-being contains various notions that range from momentary dispositions to universal assessments of satisfaction related to life and the verdicts concerning depression and contentment (Diener et al., 2009). SWB describes an individual's affective and cognitive assessment of life, and it entails the individual's perspective regarding his or her life. It has both positive affect and negative affect on the level of satisfaction with life (Kim et al., 2018). High SWB involves undergoing pleasant feelings, few negative moods or happenings, and high life satisfaction (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020). The extant literature on well-being of employees in the workplace has found that there is a significant impact of a workforce's well-being on the performance of individuals and of organizations (Ali et al., 2021).

In compliance with JD-R theory, certain variations or circumstances in the workplace diminish employee's mental and physical resources due to stressors and demands, and consequently raise the probability of psychological strain, which is an indicator of low subjective well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Many empirical studies have documented the negative association among JI and SWB (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Giunchi et al. 2019; Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Silla et al. 2009; Ferrie et al. 2005). Moreover, Cuyper et al. (2008) and Hu et al. (2018) found a significant and negative association between JI and satisfaction with life. Russo and Terraeno (2020) implied that self-perceived JI negatively impacts employee mental well-being, making this stressor a significant component predicting the occurrence of mental stress (i.e., anxiety or depression) among employees. Furthermore, Giunchi et al.

(2019) showed that JI decreases an individual's well-being and negatively impacts their health. Therefore, we hypothesize that

H2: *Job insecurity is negatively related to subjective well-being.*

2.4 Subjective Well-Being and Job Performance

Job performance is the goal-relevant acts and conduct that individuals control, whether cognitive, interpersonal, or psychomotor (Magnier-Watanabe et al., 2020). Because JP directly affects the overall performance of an organization, firms are interested in its antecedents (Alessandri et al., 2017). According to Pandey (2019), JP is influenced by different stresses that are physical, affective, and cognitive. These stresses are associated with the organization, the individual, and employment. Other researchers proposed that the critical predictors of the success and performance of the organization are the health and well-being of the employees (Bakker et al., 2019; Giunchi et al., 2019). Moreover, well-being of employees leads to several subjective and organizational outcomes, i.e., an increase in organizational performance and productivity (Shin & Konrad, 2017), improved client satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2016), and increased workforce engagement and organizational citizenship behavior (Mousa et al., 2020).

Several studies found a positive relationship between SWB and JP at an individual employee level. The behaviors at the individual level when combined can influence the overall workplace performance, and this indicates that improving workers' SWB ultimately generates financial benefits for the organization (Bryson et al., 2017). Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) found that SWB and JP are positively correlated. Oswald et al., (2015) found a positive relationship between the SWB of students and their exam scores. A positive correlation with different organizational outcomes also has been found in nonprofit businesses, including hospitals (Robertson et al., 1995) and schools (Ostroff, 1992). Patterson et al. (2004) reported the positive casual association among SWB and organization-level efficiency. The well-being of an individual employee impacts overall organizational performance in two ways: firstly, through its prospective influence on the employee's own JP, and

secondly through its prospective impact on the performance of work associates (Bryson et al., 2017). For example, Felps et al. (2006) proposed a model based on the analysis of organizations in which the negative affect and behavior of an individual team member (a so-called "bad apple") provokes unfavorable behavioral reactions in the other team associates. Ultimately these behavioral reactions affect the vital team processes, e.g., the level of creativity and collaboration within the team. Similarly, DiMaria et al., (2020) found that happy and satisfied employees are more productive than unhappy employees. Considering these findings, we hypothesized that

H3: *Subjective well-being is positively related to job performance.*

2.5 Subjective Well-Being as a Mediating Factor

JD-R theory proclaims that high employment demands are the major cause of negative work strain. High job demands decrease the individual's physical and psychological resources, which consequently direct toward energy decline and various psychological health problems (Shin & Hur, 2021). Accordingly, JI is considered to be a job demand (Darvishmotevali & Ali 2020; Rigotti et al., 2015); it describes an individual's perception of their employment, which is at risk. Witte (1999) stated that JI first decreases an individual's well-being, which in turn impacts their work performance. Witte also explained that JI seems to reduce well-being in both the short term and the long term. Cheng and Chan (2008) posited that JI negatively impacts the psychological health of workers. According to Rusil et al. (2008), anxiety and emotional exhaustion mediate the influence of job demands on the individual's recognized satisfaction with life.

Earlier researches support the notion that JI correlate inversely with well-being, like the boost in emotional and physical exhaustion. Darvishmotevali et al. (2017) established that JI decreases JP as a result of anxiety and emotional exhaustion, which are the two indicators of well-being. Hu et al. (2018) found a negative effect of JI on the happiness of employees and a positive impact on employees' depression as the two core factors of subjective well-being, and also found that workers who expe-

rience JI feel less contentment and more despair. When employees experience anxiety, the negative feelings deplete their cognitive resources at the workplace, consequently deteriorating JP (Aguiar-Quintana et al. 2021; Ford et al. 2011). Although previous studies investigated the different outcomes of job insecurity, the effects of job insecurity on subjective well-being and specifically the mediating role of SWB in the relationship between JI and employee performance has not gained enough attention (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Hu et al. 2018; Richter & Näswall 2018). Therefore, the present research tested the association between job insecurity and employee job performance through declining subjective well-being as a form of psychological/cognitive stress/anxiety which is caused by employment stressors. Hence, we hypothesize that

H4: *Subjective well-being mediates the relationship of job insecurity and job performance.*

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

The research sample was collected from the food and beverages industry in Haripur and Abbottabad districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. This sector is dominated by private firms, and the nature of employment generally is contractual (Rigotti et al., 2015). The study investigated how employee's perception of JI impacts their well-being and in turn their performance, in order to enrich the literature on employee well-being and work-related performance (Kundi et al., 2020). A total of 32 firms were operating at the time of data collection. Employees were called to respond voluntarily to the pre-tested questionnaire during working hours after receiving proper approval from the HR departments of the firms. Respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, and anonymity and confidentiality of the data were ensured. A self-administered questionnaire and an empty envelope were provided to the employees; they were requested to return the completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope to the HR department before leaving their job. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed to the employees working in the targeted industry, of which 427 were returned, of which 357 were usable. The response rate was 79.33%.

3.2 Measurement

Pretested multi-item measurement instruments were adopted for the collection of responses. All the study's items were measured with seven-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). JI was measured using four items developed by De Witte (2000) and used by Darvishmotevali and Ali (2020) and Shin and Hur (2021). A sample item is "I will likely lose my job very soon and this makes me anxious." SWB was measured using five items from the satisfaction with life scale developed by Diener et al. (1985) and subsequently used and validated by Chopik et al. (2017), Darvishmotevali and Ali (2020), and Western and Tomaszewski (2016). A sample item is "Life is close to my ideal." Finally, JP was measured using seven items (Williams and Anderson, 1991) that were used and validated by (Lin and Huang, 2020). A sample item includes "I adequately performed my assigned duties."

3.3 Data Analysis

We applied partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based technique for analyzing data and testing the hypothesized relationships, using SmartPLS 3.2.8 software (Latif and Ahmad, 2020). For data analysis and the results presentation we followed the guidelines provide by Hair et al. (2018) and Ringle et al. (2018, 2020).

3.4 Assessment of Common Method Variance

As statistical procedures, we applied two tests for estimating the presence of common method variance (CMV) in our data. Firstly, we performed Harman's single-factor test, and the findings showed that the total variance explained by one factor was 40.12%, which is below the tolerance threshold of 50%, signifying that CMV was not a threat in our research. Secondly, we performed a collinearity check to produce variance inflated factors (VIFs) using PLS-SEM as suggested by Kock (2015). Values of VIF greater than 5 indicate probable collinearity issues among predictor variables (Hair et al., 2018). In our analysis we identified VIF values below the threshold level of 5 (between 1.45 and 4.29), which also proves that CMV was not an issue in this study.

3.5 Measurement Model Assessment

The initial stage in the PLS-SEM analysis involved the assessment of each construct's reliability and validity. Internal consistency, reliability, and convergent and discriminant validity were assessed for each construct. Table 1 presents the results of measurement model assessment, showing the values of factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). The values for outer loadings of each indicator were above the acceptable threshold of 0.60 (Gefen, 2005). Similarly, the values for CR were above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2018). The convergent validity was established by determining the AVE, and discriminant validity was established by applying the Fornell–Larcker criterion for evaluating each variable's validity of the measurement (Cheung and Wang, 2017; Hair et al. 2018). The values of AVE were above the acceptable value of 0.50 as described by Hair et al. (2018).

4 RESULTS

The demographic information indicated that 88.2% respondents were male and 11.8% were female. The respondents were between 19 to 60 years of age. Most candidates had an intermediate level of education (47.6%), followed by a Bachelor's degree (22.4%), matric level (14.8%), and a Master's degree (5.3%); 9.8% had technical diplomas. The respondents were from diverse functional areas, such as manufacturing (49.0%), technical (15.1%), management (14.3%), logistics (13.4%), marketing and sales (7.8%). Blue-collar employees dominated the sample (69%), and white-collar workers accounted for 31%. Most respondents were on short-term contracts (42.3%); others had long-term contracts with three-year terms (28%) and permanent contracts with no fixed term (19.9%), and 9.8% were on-call.

The mean values, standard deviation (SD), intercorrelation, and discriminate validity are presented in Table 2. The results show that on average,

Table 1: Indicators, Loadings, and Validity Indexes

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	Ca*	AVE**	CR***
Job insecurity	J1	0.936	0.953	0.876	0.966
	J2	0.930			
	J3	0.940			
	J4	0.937			
Job performance	JP1	0.838	0.951	0.775	0.960
	JP2	0.915			
	JP3(R)	0.843			
	JP4	0.909			
	JP5	0.854			
	JP6(R)	0.886			
	JP7	0.919			
Subjective well-being	SWB1	0.911	0.938	0.801	0.953
	SWB2	0.892			
	SWB3	0.900			
	SWB4	0.882			
	SWB5	0.890			

Note: *Cronbach's alpha. **Average variance extracted. ***Composite reliability.

the employees felt insecure regarding the continuity of their employment and as a consequence of JI. The responses for SWB and performance had somewhat better averages. To analyze the discriminant validity, the square root of each construct AVE was calculated and presented as diagonal values, whereas other values show correlation among the among variables. JI was negatively and significantly correlated with both JP (-0.559) and SWB (-0.523), and SWB was positively and significantly correlated with JP (0.701). Furthermore, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios also were calculated to assess the discriminant validity, and the results indicated that HTMT ratios were below the acceptable value of 0.85 (Leguina, 2015). All these results confirm that common method bias was not an issue in the present study.

4.1 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was evaluated using R^2 , Q^2 , and the significance of paths. The R^2 measures variance for each endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2018). It explains the explanatory power of the model, that is, how much variation in the endogenous construct is caused by the exogenous con-

struct (Shmueli and Koppius 2011). The results (Table 3) show that the model has satisfactory predictive accuracy, relevance, and acceptable fit based on R^2 , Q^2 , and standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) values, which were within the ranges suggested by Hair et al. (2018), Shmueli et al. (2016), and Hu and Butler (1999), respectively. Finally, path coefficients and their significance were assessed. We tested the hypotheses using a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

4.2 Tests of the Hypotheses: Direct Effect

The results for direct relationships are presented in Table 3. Our first hypothesis (H1) stated that JI has a negative relationship with JP. The results revealed a negative and statistically significant relationship of JI with JP ($\beta = -0.559$, $t = 13.015$, and $p < 0.001$), and thus H1 is accepted. The second hypothesis (H2), that JI has a negative impact on SWB, also is accepted, because the results support this statement as well ($\beta = -0.523$, $t = 12.226$, and $p < 0.001$). The third hypothesis (H3), that SWB has a positive relationship with JP, is accepted as well ($\beta = 0.701$, $t = 18.061$, and $p < 0.001$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Inter-Correlation, and discriminant validity

Variables	Mean	SD	Job insecurity	Job performance	Subjective well-being
Job insecurity	3.6	1.05	0.936	0.584	0.553
Job performance	5	1.03	-0.559	0.880	0.740
Subjective well-being	4.7	1.04	-0.523	0.701	0.895

Note: * $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.05$ (2-tailed test). Square root of AVE for each variable is presented on the diagonal in bold italic font. HTMTs are displayed at the upper triangular of the matrix.

Table 3: Testing Direct Relationships

Direct Relationships	Path Coefficients	t- statistics	p- values
JI à JP	-0.559	13.015	0.000
JI à SWB	-0.523	12.226	0.000
SWB à JP	0.701	18.061	0.000
R^2 (JP) = 0.542	Q^2 (JP) = 0.416		
R^2 (SWB) = 0.274	Q^2 (SWB) = 0.216		

4.3 Tests of the Hypotheses: Mediating Effect

The results for mediation effect are presented in Table 4. The Preacher and Hayes (2008) method was used to analyze mediation by applying a two-step approach. In the initial step, all the direct relationships were assessed in terms of two aspects: the direct association exclusive of a mediator, and the direct association with a mediator. In the second step, all indirect effects were estimated along with their significance via bootstrapping.

The hypothesis (H4) for mediation effect states that subjective well-being will mediate the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. The mediating analysis results confirm that JI negatively effects SWB ($\beta = -0.523, t = 12.226, p = 0.000$), and by decreasing SWB ($\beta = 0.562, t = 10.938, p = 0.000$) it has a negative effect on employee JP. Furthermore, when the mediator was introduced into the model the effect was increased, and the direct relationship was found to be significant ($\beta = -0.265, t = 5.329, p < 0.001$), and the indirect effect of JI on JP through the mediator (SWB) also was found to be significant ($\beta = -0.294, t = 7.831, p < 0.001$).

5 DISCUSSION

To achieve our study's objectives, a model was designed based on the previous literature and existing theories (JD-R theory and transactional stress theory), and then a series of analysis was carried out based on the responses gathered from 357 employees working in the food and beverages industry in Pakistan. Building on JD-R and transactional stress theory, this study first investigated the impact of JI on JP as a behavioral consequence of stress. Because most JI-related studies are from Europe and the United States, this naturally raises the question of the generalization of results across cultures. By providing evidence from the Asian

culture, this study has enriched the literature of JI and JP. Second, we tested the effect of JI on SWB as a psychological consequence, and finally we assessed the psychological mechanism relating JI and SWB to the behavioral outcome, i.e., the mediation effect of SWB on the JI and JP relationship.

The results revealed the presence of JI among the employees of food and beverages industry and showed its negative impact on employee JP. These results are consistent with those of other studies (Darvishmotevali et al., 2017; Qain et al., 2019; Sverke et al., 2019; Vo-Thanh et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2015). The results in the literature regarding this important issue follow the same trend except for those of a few studies (Probst, 2002; Probst et al., 2007). Staufenbiel and Konig (2010) supported the idea of a positive relationship between JI and JP; although their results indicated a dominant negative path, they also showed a weaker positive path. The results confirmed that JI exaggerates the depression of employees and negatively affects the level of employee happiness, which are the two key indicators of SWB. These findings are consistent with the findings of Stiglbauer and Batinic et al. (2015) and Silla et al. (2009), who highlighted that JI is negatively related to SWB. These results deepen the understanding of how JI psychology lowers the individual's subjective well-being. The results also indicated that SWB positively influences employee JP. This is consistent with the findings of Magnier-Watanabe et al. (2020) and Salgado et al. (2019).

Furthermore, the findings confirm the mediating role of SWB of employees and thus deepens the understanding of how JI psychologically impacts employees JP in a negative way. In agreement with JD-R theory, it appears that JI, as an impediment stressor at work, influences employee well-being in a negative way. SWB implies to an individual's evaluation of how his or her life is passing, which is described by high satisfaction with one's life, high positive affect, and

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

Total effect (JI → JP)		Direct effect (JI → JP)			Indirect effects: JI → SWB → JP			
Coeff	p-value	Coeff	t-Value	p-value	Predictor	Coeff	t-value	p-Value
-0.59	0.000	-0.265	5.329	0.000	JI	-0.294	7.831	0.000
					SWB	0.562	10.938	0.000

low negative affect (Darvishmotali & Ali 2020; Diener et al., 2009). Employees with high SWB at work are satisfied with their jobs while experiencing positive and negative feelings in the workplace consistently (Salgado et al., 2019). Under JI conditions, employees encounter a decline in SWB as they face uncertainty of losing their jobs; the most important resource related to employment that can fulfill their necessities of life. Consistent with transactional stress theory, in uncertain circumstances the evaluation process leads to stress and anxiety, and unambitious circumstances in the future makes it difficult for an individual to apply an appropriate coping strategy. These findings are consistent with the findings of Richter and Naswall (2018) and Darvishmotevali et al. (2017), who indicated that anxiety is the indicator of SWB that significantly mediates the relationship between JI and employee JP. These promising findings fill the gap in in the existing literature on the psychological mechanism connecting JI to JP through subjective well-being (Hu et al., 2018).

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The outcomes of the present research support the JD-R theory and add to the existing literature on the relationship of JI and JP through an intermediary role of subjective well-being. The context of the study, the country dynamics, and the peculiarities of the food and beverage industry make the existing literature more diversified. Additionally, very limited empirical research has been conducted on the physical, behavioral, and psychological consequences of job insecurity. This study investigated the behavioral and the psychological effects of job insecurity as a job stressor among employees working in the food and beverages industry. Very few studies have investigated SWB as a mediating mechanism connecting JI to JP. According to Darvishmotali and Ali (2020), the mediating results contribute to the transactional stress theory.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings obtained from this research provide beneficial implications for the management of the food and beverages industry. It is imperative to consider that JI as a critical stressor reduces employ-

ees' psychological well-being as considering the unique aspects of food and beverages industry that are characterized by long working schedules, comparatively low wages, and a mentally exhausting and stressful working environment (Wang et al., 2011; Zopist & Orphanides, 2009). Managers should agree that job insecurity is a nerve-racking concern with irreversible harmful consequences for instance anxiety, depression, and poor well-being (Darvishmotevali et al., 2017; Wang & Lu, 2015). With this knowledge, managers and administrators should take deliberate actions to lessen the detrimental pressure caused by job insecurity, which can have serious mental and behavioral concerns. HR managers should incorporate suitable human resources practices such as promotions, secure contracts, and transparent performance evaluation and performance appraisal systems and procedures.

To reduce the detrimental effects of JI and to improve individuals' well-being, the supervisor can play an important role by providing relevant training and development opportunities. Furthermore, managers can motivate and improve their self-esteem by solving issues, assimilating the information, and providing exposure to the latest technology. Managers should promote an organizational culture in which employees have the opportunity to utilize their full potential, which in turn improves employees' autonomy and SWB (Sharma et al., 2017). Because in the developing countries such as Pakistan it is difficult for organizations to provide job security to the workforce because of the unstable and extremely competitive environment (Kundi et al., 2020; Soomro et al., 2019), organizations must focus on constructive strategies for preventing employee exposure to JI. Another approach for reducing job insecurity is that leaders or managers can engage employees in participative decision-making, because it escalates the control over the circumstances.

This study's results indicated that the negative impact of JI on employee performance passes through poor well-being. Thus, policy makers can make policies to increase employee motivation and satisfaction. For example, employing a job enrichment approach can enhance employee autonomy over the formation and implementation of their tasks, which in turn increases job satisfaction (Piccoli et al., 2021). Additionally, interventions regarding

stress management should focus on urging employees to implement numerous managing or coping strategies such as the use of alternate potentials, working in teams, individuals' personality traits, and being involved in the change process.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

This research has some limitations. Firstly, the researchers focused only on the behavioral consequence of JI. A recommendation for future studies is to focus on other behavioral outcomes of stress, such as negative job attitudes, absenteeism, or turnover intention. Secondly, the existing research focused on a single industry. Therefore, scholars should explore these relations in multiple industries and sectors in which JI and SWB are critical factors, such as the ser-

vice sector (banking or healthcare industry). Thirdly, more mediating variables such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and moderating variables that have vital strategic implications for organizations—for example, psychological capital (psycap), job shaping, or redesign and uncertainty reduction—can be added to the model in this study. Moreover, because SWB has been found to change with age (Magnier-Watanabe et al., 2020), variations among demographic categories may exist, and a subsequent study could compare these subgroups within one country and then across countries. Although the sample size was large enough, we were unable to investigate the potential effects of gender differences due to the small number of women in the sample. Prospective studies should consider this issue.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Poslovna konkurenca, hitre tehnološke spremembe in vladne reforme ali deregulacije po vsem svetu so podjetja postavile v težke razmere, kar je pripeljalo do tveganja negotovosti zaposlitve, ki poslabšuje dobro počutje zaposlenih in vodi v manjšo delovno uspešnost. Ta raziskava razširja znanje o povezavi med negotovostjo zaposlitve in delovno uspešnostjo z raziskovanjem potencialnega mehanizma posredovanja subjektivnega dobrega počutja v industriji hrane in pijače. Podatki 357 zaposlenih v industriji hrane in pijače iz dveh okrožij v Pakistanu so bili zbrani s predhodno testiranim vprašalnikom. Za testiranje hipotez s programsko opremo SmartPLS je bilo uporabljeno modeliranje strukturnih enačb (SEM). Za oceno uporabljenih lestvic in strukturnih modelov so bili izvedeni pregledi zanesljivosti in veljavnosti. Ugotovitve kažejo, da negotovost zaposlitve negativno vpliva na delovno uspešnost, medtem ko subjektivno počutje pomembno pozitivno vpliva na delovno uspešnost. Poleg tega subjektivno dobro počutje posreduje negativno razmerje med negotovostjo zaposlitve in delovno uspešnostjo. Za še bolj robustne in posplošljive rezultate bi bila potrebna večpanožna analiza. Nadalje bi poleg subjektivnega počutja lahko k temu odnosu dodali še druge mediatorje in moderatorje. Vodje lahko izboljšajo učinkovitost svoje ekipe z zmanjšanjem negotovosti na delovnem mestu in izboljšanjem delovnih pogojev ter osebne nege zaposlenih.

REFERENCES

- Aguiar-Quintana, T., Nguyen, H., Araujo-Cabrera, Y., & Sanabria-Díaz, J. M. (2021). Do job insecurity, anxiety and depression caused by the COVID-19 pandemic influence hotel employees' self-rated task performance? The moderating role of employee resilience. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, 102868.
- Akgunduz, Y., & Eryilmaz, G. (2018). Does turnover intention mediate the effects of job insecurity and co-worker support on social loafing?. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 68, 41-49.
- Alessandri, G., Borgogni, L., & Latham, G. P. (2017). A dynamic model of the longitudinal relationship between job satisfaction and supervisor-rated job performance. *Applied Psychology*, 66(2), 207-232.

- Ali, M., Ali, I., Albort-Morant, G., & Leal-Rodríguez, A. L. (2021). How do job insecurity and perceived well-being affect expatriate employees' willingness to share or hide knowledge?. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 17(1), 185-210.
- Ashford, S. J., Lee, C., & Bobko, P. (1989). Content, cause, and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(4), 803-829.
- Awan, W. A., & Salam, A. (2014). Identifying the relationship between job insecurity and employee performance—An evidence from private colleges in Larkana, Pakistan. *Beykent Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(1).
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model : state of the art. *Journal of managerial psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>
- Bakker, A.B., Hetland, J., Olsen, O.K. and Espevik, R. (2019), Daily strengths use and employee wellbeing: the moderating role of personality, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 92(1), 144-168.
- Bohle, S. A. L., Chambel, M. J., Medina, F. M., & Cunha, B. S. D. (2018). The role of perceived organizational support in job insecurity and performance. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 58(4), 393-404.
- Bryson, A., Forth, J., & Stokes, L. (2017). Does employees' subjective well-being affect workplace performance?. *Human relations*, 70(8), 1017-1037.
- Burgard, S. A., Brand, J. E., & House, J. S. (2007). Toward a better estimation of the effect of job loss on health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 48(4), 369-384.
- Burgard, S. A., Kalousova, L., & Seefeldt, K. S. (2012). Perceived job insecurity and health: the Michigan Recession and Recovery Study. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 54(9), 1101-1106.
- Chirumbolo, A., & Areni, A. (2010). Job insecurity influence on job performance and mental health: Testing the moderating effect of the need for closure. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 31(2), 195-214.
- Chirumbolo, A., Callea, A., & Urbini, F. (2020). Job insecurity and performance in public and private sectors: a moderated mediation model. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*, 7(2), 237–253. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOEPP-02-2020-0021>
- Cheng, G. H. L., & Chan, D. K. S. (2008). Who suffers more from job insecurity? A meta-analytic review. *Applied Psychology*, 57(2), 272-303.
- Choi, S. L., Heo, W., Cho, S. H., & Lee, P. (2020). The links between job insecurity, financial well-being and financial stress: A moderated mediation model. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 44(4), 353-360.
- Chopik, W. J., Newton, N. J., Ryan, L. H., Kashdan, T. B., Jarden, A. J., Chopik, W. J., Newton, N. J., Ryan, L. H., & Kashdan, T. B. (2017). Gratitude across the life span : Age differences and links to subjective well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 14(3), 292–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1414296>
- Cheung, G. W., & Wang, C. (2017). Current Approaches for Assessing Convergent and Discriminant Validity with SEM: Issues and Solutions. (eds. G. Atinc), *Academy of Management Proceeding*, 17,(1).
- Cheung, F. Y. L., Wu, A. M., & Ching Chi, L. (2019). Effect of job insecurity, anxiety and personal resources on job satisfaction among casino employees in macau: A moderated mediation analysis. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 28(3), 379-396.
- Cuyper, N. D., Bernhard-Oettel, C., Berntson, E., Witte, H. D., & Alarco, B. (2008). Employability and employees' well-being: Mediation by job insecurity 1. *Applied Psychology*, 57(3), 488-509.
- Darvishmotevali, M., & Ali, F. (2020). Job insecurity, subjective well-being and job performance: The moderating role of psychological capital. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87(February 2019), 102462.
- Darvishmotevali, M., Arasli, H., & Kilic, H. (2017). Effect of job insecurity on frontline employee's performance: Looking through the lens of psychological strains and leverages. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(6), 1724-1744.
- De Cuyper, N., & De Witte, H. (2006). The impact of job insecurity and contract type on attitudes, well-being and behavioural reports: a psychological contract perspective. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, 79(3), 395-409.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). *The Job Demands-Resources Model of Burnout*. 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. B. (2011). The job demands-resources model: Challenges for future research. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37(2), 01-09.
- De Witte, H. (2000). Work ethic and job insecurity: Assessment and consequences for well-being, satisfaction and performance at work. *From group to community*, 52(2), 325-350.
- De Witte, H. (2005). Job insecurity: Review of the international literature on definitions, prevalence, antecedents and consequences. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 31(4), 1-6.
- De Witte, H., Pienaar, J. and De Cuyper, N. (2016), Review of 30 years of longitudinal studies on the association between job insecurity and health and well-being: is there causal evidence?. *Australian Psychologist*, 51(1), 18-31.

- De Witte, H., Vander Elst, T. and De Cuyper, N. (2015), "Job insecurity, health and well-being", (eds. Vuori, J., Blonk, R. and Price, R.H.), *Sustainable Working Lives, Managing Work Transitions and Health throughout the Life Course* (pp.28-109) Springer, Dordrecht.
- Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.
- DiMaria, C. H., Peroni, C., & Sarracino, F. (2020). Happiness matters: Productivity gains from subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 21(1), 139-160.
- Diener, E., Sandvik, E., & Pavot, W. (2009). Happiness is the frequency, not the intensity, of positive versus negative affect. In *Assessing well-being* (pp. 213-231). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Tay, L. (2018). Advances in subjective well-being research. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(4), 253-260.
- Felps W, Mitchell T and Byington E (2006) How, when and why bad apples spoil the barrel: Negative group members and dysfunctional groups. *Research in Organizational Behaviour* 27: 175–222.
- Ferrie, J. E., Shipley, M. J., Newman, K., Stansfeld, S. A., & Marmot, M. (2005). Self-reported job insecurity and health in the Whitehall II study: potential explanations of the relationship. *Social science & medicine*, 60(7), 1593-1602.
- Ford, M. T., Cerasoli, C. P., Higgins, J. A., & Decesare, A. L. (2011). Relationships between psychological, physical, and behavioural health and work performance: A review and meta-analysis. *Work and Stress*, 25(3), 185–204.
- Gefen, D., & Straub, D. (2005). A practical guide to factorial validity using PLS-Graph: Tutorial and annotated example. *Communications of the Association for Information systems*, 16(1), 91-109.
- Giunchi, M., Vonthron, A. M., & Ghislieri, C. (2019). Perceived job insecurity and sustainable wellbeing: do coping strategies help?. *Sustainability*, 11(3), 784-799.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., & Ringle, C. M. (2018). *When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM*. 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>.
- Hellgren, J., & Sverke, M. (2003). Does job insecurity lead to impaired well-being or vice versa? Estimation of cross-lagged effects using latent variable modelling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 24(2), 215-236.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Freedy, J., Lane, C., & Geller, P. (1990). Conservation of social resources: Social support resource theory. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 7(4), 465-478.
- Huang, G. H., Niu, X., Lee, C., & Ashford, S. J. (2012). Differentiating cognitive and affective job insecurity: Antecedents and outcomes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(6), 752-769.
- Hu, S., Jiang, L., Probst, T. M., & Liu, M. (2018). The relationship between qualitative job insecurity and subjective well-being in Chinese employees: The role of work–family conflict and work centrality. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 42(2), 203-225.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural equation modeling: A multidisciplinary journal*, 6(1), 1-55.
- Jahoda, M. (1982). *Employment and unemployment: A social-psychological analysis* (Vol. 1). CUP Archive. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Jahoda, M. (1997). Manifest and latent functions, (eds. Nicholson, N.), *The Blackwell encyclopedic dictionary of organizational psychology* (pp. 317-318). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jiang, L., & Lavaysse, L. M. (2018). Cognitive and affective job insecurity: A meta-analysis and a primary study. *Journal of Management*, 44(6), 2307-2342.
- Jung, H. S., Jung, Y. S., & Yoon, H. H. (2021). COVID-19: The effects of job insecurity on the job engagement and turnover intent of deluxe hotel employees and the moderating role of generational characteristics. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92(6), 102703.
- Karatepe, O. M., Rezapouraghdam, H., & Hassannia, R. (2020). Job insecurity, work engagement and their effects on hotel employees' non-green and nonattendance behaviors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87, 102472.
- Kim, T.T., Karatepe, O.M., Lee, G. (2018). Psychological contract breach and service innovation behavior: psychological capital as a mediator. *Service Business*, 12(2), 305–329.
- Khan, R. U., & Ghufuran, H. (2018). The mediating role of perceived organizational support between qualitative job insecurity, organizational citizenship behavior and job performance. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Organizational Management*, 7(01), 2-15.
- Kock, N. (2015). Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 11(4), 1-10.
- Kundi, Y. M., Aboramadan, M., Elhamalawi, E. M., & Shahid, S. (2020). Employee psychological well-being and job performance: exploring mediating and moderating mechanisms. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 29(3), 736-754.
- Kwon, K., & Kim, T. (2020). An integrative literature review of employee engagement and innovative behavior: Revisiting the JD-R model. *Human Resource Management Review*, 30(2), 100704.

- Latif, K. F., & Ahmad, M. S. (2020). *Servant leadership and employee innovative behaviour : exploring psychological pathways*. 41(6), 813–827.
- Leguina, A. (2015). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 38 (2), 220-221.
- Lin, C. Y., & Huang, C. K. (2020). Employee turnover intentions and job performance from a planned change: the effects of an organizational learning culture and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Manpower* 4 (3), 409-423.
- Lyubomirsky S, King L and Diener E (2005) The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin* 131(6): 803–855
- Magnier-Watanabe, R., Orsini, P., & Benton, C. F. (2020). *Organizational virtuousness , subjective well-being , and job performance Comparing employees in France and Japan*. 12(2), 115–138.
- Minnotte, K. L., & Varud, T. (2020). Job insecurity and coworker support among US Workers. *Sociological Spectrum*, 40(5), 314-328.
- Mousa, M., Massoud, H.K. and Ayoubi, R.M. (2020), Gender, diversity management perceptions, workplace happiness and organizational citizenship behavior, *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 42(6), 1249-1269.
- Nella, D., Panagopoulou, E., Galanis, N., Montgomery, A., & Benos, A. (2015). Consequences of job insecurity on the psychological and physical health of Greek civil servants. *BioMed research international*, 2015(1), 1-8.
- Ostroff, C. (1992). The relationship between satisfaction, attitudes, and performance: An organizational level analysis. *Journal of applied psychology*, 77(6), 963-972
- Oswald AJ, Proto E and Sgroi D (2015) Happiness and productivity. *Journal of Labor Economics* 33(4): 789–822.
- Pandey, J. (2019). Factors affecting job performance: an integrative review of literature. *Management Research Review*, 42(2), 263-289.
- Pap, Z., Virgă, D., Notelaers, G., & Maricuțoiu, L. (2020). A multilevel model of job insecurity and engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 35(8), 529–541.
- Patterson M, Warr P and West M (2004) Organizational climate and company productivity: The role of employee affect and employee level. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 77(2): 193–216.
- Piccoli, B., Reisel, W. D., & De Witte, H. (2021). Understanding the relationship between job insecurity and performance: hindrance or challenge effect?. *Journal of Career Development*, 48(2), 150-165.
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Contemporary approaches to assessing mediation in communication research. (eds. A. F. Hayes, M. D. Slater, & L. B. Snyder), *The Sage sourcebook of advanced data analysis methods for communication research* (pp. 13–54). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Probst, T.M. (2002), Layoffs and tradeoffs: production, quality, and safety demands under the threat of job loss, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 7 (3), 211-220.
- Probst, T.M., Stewart, S.M., Gruys, M.L. and Tierney, B.W. (2007), Productivity, counterproductivity and creativity: the ups and downs of job insecurity, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 80 (3), 479-497.
- Qian, S., Yuan, Q., Niu, W., & Liu, Z. (2019). Is job insecurity always bad? The moderating role of job embeddedness in the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 2(4), 1-17.
- Qureshi, M. A., & Khan, M. A. (2016). Organizational and psychological outcomes of job insecurity: A cross sectional investigation in the private sector organizations of Pakistan using subjective approach of job insecurity. *Pakistan business review*, 18(1), 19-36.
- Richter, A., & Näswall, K. (2018). Job insecurity and trust : Uncovering a mechanism linking job insecurity to well-being. *Work & Stress*, 0(0), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2018.1461709>
- Rigotti, T., Mohr, G. and Isaksson, K. (2015), Job insecurity among temporary workers: Looking through the gender lens, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 36 (3), 523-547.
- Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Mitchell, R., & Siegfried, P. (2018). Partial least squares structural equation modeling in HRM research. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(12), 1617–1643.
- Ringle, C.M., Sarstedt, M., Mitchell, R. & Gudergan, S.P. (2020), Partial least squares structural equation modeling in HRM research, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(12), 1617-1643.
- Robertson A, Gilloran A, McGlew T, McKee K, McInley A and Wright D (1995) Nurses’ job satisfaction and the quality of care received by patients in psychogeriatric wards. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 10(7): 575–584.
- Rosario-Hernández, E., & Rovira-Millán, L. (2020). ADHD and its Effects on Job Performance: A Moderated Mediation Model. *Revista Caribeña de Psicología*, 4(1), 1–25.
- Rusli, B., Edimansyah, B. and Naing, L. (2008), “Working conditions, self-perceived stress, anxiety, depression and quality of life: a structural equation modelling approach”, *BMC Public Health*, 8(1), 48-61.
- Russo, C., & Terraneo, M. (2020). Mental Well-being Among Workers: A Cross-national Analysis of Job Insecurity Impact on the Workforce. *Social Indicators Research*, 152(2), 421–442.
- Saeed, S., Hassan, I., Dastgeer, G., & Iqbal, T. (2021). The route to well-being at workplace: examining the role of job insecurity and its antecedents. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*.

- Saif, N., Khan, M. T., Shaheen, I., & Bangash, S. A. (2020). Neglected field of research related to job insecurity and outcomes in Pakistan. *City University Research Journal*, 10(2), 358-378.
- Salgado, J. F., Blanco, S., & Moscoso, S. (2019). Subjective well-being and job performance: Testing of a suppressor effect. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, 35(2), 93-102.
- Schumacher, D., Schreurs, B., Van Emmerik, H., & De Witte, H. (2016). Explaining the relation between job insecurity and employee outcomes during organizational change: A multiple group comparison. *Human Resource Management*, 55(5), 809–827.
- Sender, A., Arnold, A., & Staffelbach, B. (2017). Job security as a threatened resource: reactions to job insecurity in culturally distinct regions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(17), 2403-2429.
- Sharma, S., Conduit, J., & Hill, S. R. (2017). Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being outcomes from co-creation roles: a study of vulnerable customers. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 31(4), 397-411.
- Sharma, P., Kong, T. T. C., & Kingshott, R. P. (2016). Internal service quality as a driver of employee satisfaction, commitment and performance: Exploring the focal role of employee well-being. *Journal of service management*, 25 (5), 773-797.
- Shin, Y., & Hur, W. M. (2021). When do job-insecure employees keep performing well? The buffering roles of help and prosocial motivation in the relationship between job insecurity, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36(4), 659–678.
- Shin, Y., & Hur, W. M. (2019). When do service employees suffer more from job insecurity? The moderating role of coworker and customer incivility. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(7), 1298.
- Shin, Y., Hur, W. M., Moon, T. W., & Lee, S. (2019). A motivational perspective on job insecurity: Relationships between job insecurity, intrinsic motivation, and performance and behavioral outcomes. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(10), 1812-1832.
- Shin, D., & Konrad, A. M. (2017). Causality between high-performance work systems and organizational performance. *Journal of management*, 43(4), 973-997.
- Shmueli, G., Ray, S., Manuel, J., Estrada, V., & Chatla, S. B. (2016). The elephant in the room : Predictive performance of PLS models. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(10), 4552-4564.
- Shmueli, G., & Koppius, O. R. (2011). Predictive analytics in information systems research. *MIS quarterly*, 35(3), 553-572.
- Silla, I., De Cuyper, N., Gracia, F. J., Peiro, J. M., & De Witte, H. (2009). Job insecurity and well-being: Moderation by employability. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 10(6), 739-751.
- Shoss, M. K. (2017). Job insecurity: An integrative review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Management*, 43(6), 1911-1939.
- Soomro, S. A., Kundi, Y. M., & Kamran, M. (2019). Antecedents of Workplace Deviance: Role of Job Insecurity, Work Stress, and Ethical Work Climate. *Problemy Zarzadzania*, 17(6), 256-269.
- Staufenbiel, T., & König, C. J. (2010). A model for the effects of job insecurity on performance, turnover intention, and absenteeism. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83(1), 101-117.
- Stiglbauer, B., & Batinic, B. (2015). Proactive coping with job insecurity—Beneficial or harmful. *Work Stress*, 29(3), 264-285.
- Sverke, M., & Hellgren, J. (2002). The nature of job insecurity: Understanding employment uncertainty on the brink of a new millennium. *Applied Psychology*, 51(1), 23-42.
- Sverke, M., Låstad, L., Hellgren, J., Richter, A., & Näswall, K. (2019). A meta-analysis of job insecurity and employee performance: Testing temporal aspects, rating source, welfare regime, and union density as moderators. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(14), 2536.
- Sverke, M., Hellgren, J., & Näswall, K. (2002). No security: a meta-analysis and review of job insecurity and its consequences. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 7(3), 242-264.
- Van Vuuren, T., de Jong, J. P., & Smulders, P. G. (2020). The association between subjective job insecurity and job performance across different employment groups. *Career Development International*, 25(3), 229-246.
- Vo-Thanh, T., Vu, T. V., Nguyen, N. P., Nguyen, D. V., Zaman, M., & Chi, H. (2020). How does hotel employees' satisfaction with the organization's COVID-19 responses affect job insecurity and job performance? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 5(3), 1-19.
- Wang, H., & Lu, C. (2015). *Job Insecurity and Job Performance : The Moderating Role of Organizational Justice and the Mediating Role of Work Engagement*. 100(4), 1249–1258.
- Wang, H. J., Lu, C. Q., & Lu, L. (2014). Do people with traditional values suffer more from job insecurity? The moderating effects of traditionality. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 23(1), 107-117.
- Wang, Y. F., Horng, J. S., Cheng, S. Y. S., & Killman, L. (2011). Factors influencing food and beverage employees' career success: A contextual perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(4), 997-1007.

- Warr, P. and Nielsen, K. (2018), "Well-being and work performance", (eds Diener, E., Oishi, S. and Tay, L.), Handbook of Well-Being, DEF Publishers, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Western, M., & Tomaszewski, W. (2016). Subjective well-being, objective wellbeing and inequality in Australia. *PloS one*, 11(10), 1-20.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17(3), 601–617.
- Witte, H. D. (1999). Job insecurity and psychological well-being: Review of the literature and exploration of some unresolved issues. *European Journal of work and Organizational psychology*, 8(2), 155-177.
- Xia, J. W., & Shun, H. T. (2021). Exploring the Mechanisms Influencing the Occupational Well-Being of Early Childhood Teachers—A Qualitative Study Based on the JD-R Model. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 12(12), 4689-4706.
- Zopiatis, A., & Orphanides, N. (2009). Investigating occupational burnout of food and beverage employees. *British Food Journal*, 111(9), 930-944.



A COMMUNITY SEAM: SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION AND SUBJECTIVE RESILIENCE IN UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN IRAQ

Omar S. Rasheed

University of Almería, Spain
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
or221@inlumine.ual.es

Lucía López-Rodríguez

University of Almería, Spain
Center of Study of Migration and Intercultural Relations (CEMyRI)

Marisol Navas

University of Almería, Spain
Center of Study of Migration and Intercultural Relations (CEMyRI)

Abstract

People's behavior during the pandemic raised an intriguing question: How can people display solidarity even in circumstances of adversity? This investigation explored the processes associated with solidarity in times of crisis (specifically during COVID-19) in the vulnerable context of Iraq. We analyzed the specific contribution of three sets of variables to providing help to others affected via coordinated or emotional support: beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, social identity-related processes, and subjective resilience. A total of 299 people (mostly from Arab ethnic backgrounds, as well as Kurds and Assyrians) participated in an online survey. The results showed that social identity-related processes and subjective resilience were significantly associated with providing emotional and coordinated social support to others, affecting beyond sociodemographics and personal beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19. We critically discuss the dynamic associations between subjective resilience and solidarity in times of crisis and the crucial role of reciprocity and agency in community psychology.

Keywords: social identification, social support, resilience, solidarity, COVID-19

1 INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 will be remembered as the time in which the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically convulsed the world. Although COVID-19 is a physical disease, it had an unprecedented psychosocial impact on the population (Bueno-Notivol et al., 2021; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The health crisis provoked by the emergence of COVID-19 altered everyday lives and dramatically changed the way we

interact, work, and view the world around us. Although it is clear that this pandemic increased psychological problems and expanded economic hardship, it also created a sense of cohesion, unexpected solidarity, and resilience among affected people. While still struggling with the dramatic consequences of war, Iraq was vigorously beaten by COVID-19, provoking an alarming situation. In such a vulnerable situation, social cohesion became a central objective, already threatened by existing so-

ciopolitical, economic, and security challenges. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2020) reported that civil society organizations and local community groups rallied to support those in need, revealing multiple examples of support for people from different communities (e.g., Muslims, Turkmen, and Kurdish people).

Although many studies already have addressed several processes related to COVID-19, the lack of studies among non-Western communities, especially in conflict-affected areas, and the understanding of how solidarity is raised in such situations, remains a significant challenge. Therefore, the present research explored the processes associated with solidarity in times of crisis in Iraq during COVID-19. In addition to personal experiences and particular beliefs related to COVID-19, we analyzed the specific contribution of social identity-related processes and subjective resilience to providing help to others affected (via coordinated and emotional social support) during the COVID-19 crisis.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Helping Behavior during Crises: The Role of Social Identification and Reciprocity

Helping behavior during emergencies or crises is the outcome of a complex decision process that needs to meet different requirements such as interpreting the event as an emergency, taking responsibility for providing help, or considering oneself able to help (Latané & Darley, 1970). Several factors can affect and modulate each step of such a decision process. For example, within the context of the COVID-19 crisis, different beliefs and experiences with COVID-19 can affect the interpretation of the event and the motivation to give support to others, such as considering it a risk. Beyond the awareness of the urgency of COVID-19, how can people become responsible for providing help and then feel able to help? We propose that processes related to social identification might be associated with providing more coordinated and emotional support during crises.

Contrary to the traditional belief that during crises the bonds among affected people dissolve and more individualism emerges, the social identity

perspective suggests that helping behavior and coordination among people in crowds appear to be a dominant response in many emergency situations (Alnabulsi & Drury, 2014; Drury, 2012). Social identity, that part of individuals' self-concept derived from belonging to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), has relevant implications for mental health through a sense of social connection (for a review, see Haslam et al., 2021). An analysis based on social identity can motivate a collective approach when fighting the COVID-19 crisis (Jetten et al., 2020).

Shared identity with the person that needs help and the inclusiveness of a salient identity has proven to increase the willingness to help a victim in need (Levine et al., 2005). The responses during emergencies rely on the specific person's social identity salience at that particular moment. Hence, self-identification with other people affected plays an essential role in the individual's course of behavior (Drury et al., 2015; McLeish & Oxoby, 2011). Drury et al. (2009) reported that affected populations faced with risk or common threats develop a sense of "we-ness," which could be associated with a shared common fate, a sense that "we all are in the same boat." Researchers have tested the hypothesis that emergencies create a perceived common fate among survivors, like a strong feeling of togetherness, which in turn gives rise to a shared social identity (Cocking et al., 2009; Drury et al., 2009).

The notion of "we-ness" plays a significant role in collective coordination and cooperation that occurs among people in crowds during emergencies (Drury & Winter, 2003), because shared social identity can determine the level and interpretation of social support (Haslam et al., 2012). Vezzali et al. (2016) argued that in most emergency situations, the collective behaviors among affected people are characterized by providing practical and emotional support to one another. Libal and Kashwan (2020) reported that showing support and solidarity became a prominent norm among the population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Solidarity behaviors, which also involve providing and coordinating support among affected people, can prevent further harm and contribute to psychological and collective well-being (Hawdon & Ryan, 2011; Kaniasty, 2012). Given the value of providing coordinated help

among affected communities, it not only contributes to the sense of connection and well-being but also contributes to a cohesive function over the longer term during crises (Bowe et al., 2022).

Solidarity during emergencies might be affected by observations of the responses of others affected during the crisis—meaning that acts of providing support and coordination among survivors may affect others' solidarity behaviors in a positive way (Drury et al., 2015). Expectations of support might activate a group norm of social responsibility and reciprocity that motivates people to offer their help to others affected (De Cremer et al., 2001). Internalized social norms such as reciprocity also may be crucial when understanding helping behavior (Burger et al., 2009; Gouldner, 1960). Regarding prosocial behavior specifically during the COVID-19 crisis, Zagefka (2021) showed that focusing on global solidarity had positive effects. A recent survey clustering multiple countries found that high levels of perceived social support were most strongly associated with prosocial behavior, followed by high levels of positive affect, perceived stress, and psychological flexibility (Haller et al., 2022).

These studies suggest that shared social identity may motivate people to provide support to fellow group members, and offer a basis for providers and recipients to interpret support in a mutually beneficial way. What is not commonly explored by scholars in the field is how conflict-affected populations during a pandemic come together to show solidarity in the face of adversity, and how people feel able to do it. In a double-vulnerable context (conflict combined with pandemic), we analyzed the specific contribution of social identity-related processes and subjective resilience to providing help to others demonstrated effects beyond personal experiences and particular beliefs related to COVID-19.

2.2 Subjective Resilience as a Reinforcement for Community Solidarity

COVID-19 exacerbated the threshold of psychological pressure. Nevertheless, communities, families, and individuals tried to adapt and bounce back in the face of the COVID-19 difficulties using unconventional methods, revealing the human ability for

resilience (e.g., Killgore et al, 2020; Verdolini et al, 2021). Resilience generally is referred to as a state in which individuals arrive at good psychological outcomes despite suffering from adversities that would be expected to bring about serious consequences (Rutter, 2006, 2012), or the ability to withstand, bounce back, or recover from substantial difficulties such as stress (e.g., Sapienza & Masten, 2011; Smith et al., 2008).

Despite increasing interest, the concept of resilience has received criticism. It has been suggested that it has a certain affinity with neoliberalism and prevents critical agency instead of promoting change (e.g., Evans & Reid, 2015). However, the complex interaction between resilience and solidarity has been explored to some extent. For example, researchers have analyzed “how resilience can emerge in the intensification of mutual aid ties at the community level” and how this might be related to the pursuit of diverse and revolutionary forms of solidarity (Vrasti & Michelsen, 2017, p. 1). Kelly and Kelly (2016) suggested that resilience can be related to solidarity and agency, and can be a helpful concept for analyzing the converging crises that people and societies face.

Resilience is related to a series of psychosocial factors that can contribute to active support in times of crisis. It is positively associated with self-efficacy (Lee et al., 2013), purpose in life, active coping, and mood clarity and optimism (Smith et al., 2013). The relationships between resilience and psychological well-being as well as social support and connectedness are well established (Davydov et al., 2010; Fan et al., 2020; Muldoon et al., 2019; Son et al., 2020). More generally, prosocial behavior has been associated with better well-being across regions during COVID-19 (Haller et al., 2022).

Although some studies explored solidarity and resilience in relation to other related variables, we could not find research on the association of resilience to solidarity in times of crisis in conflict-affected contexts. Accordingly, we believe that it is important to explore the association between subjective resilience and solidarity during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic beyond the beliefs and experiences with COVID-19, and social identity-related processes.

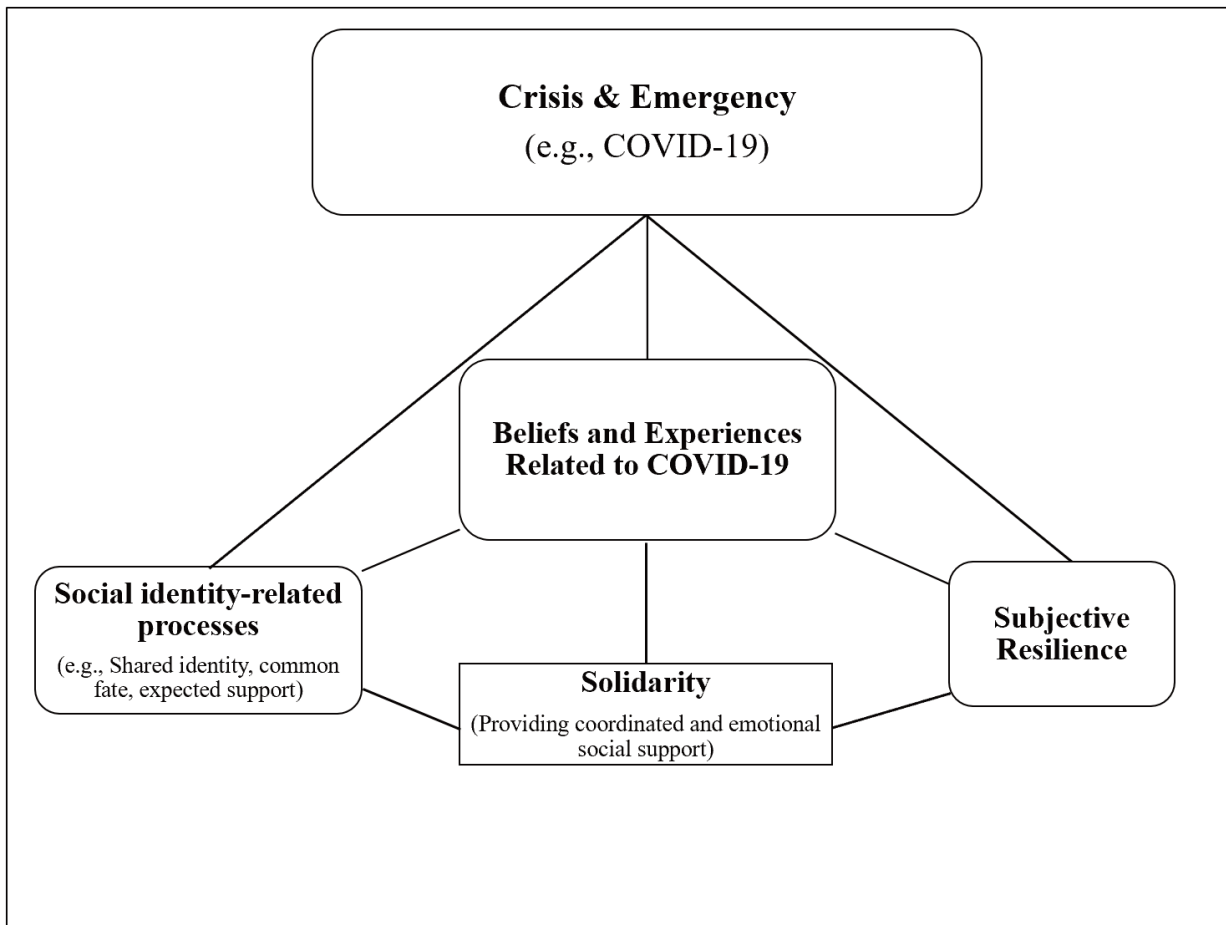
2.3 Present Research

The social identity perspective helps to understand social fragmentation and unity during the pandemic (Abrams et al., 2021; Drury et al., 2021; Templeton et al., 2020). Since the emergence of COVID-19, studies have explored crowd behavior and social identity processes in the context of the pandemic (e.g., Bavel et al., 2020; Drury et al., 2020, 2021; Zagefka, 2021). Fatmawati and Dewantara (2022) went further and analyzed how specific traditional rituals can bolster social resilience within indigenous communities and help deal with COVID-19. In addition, social identity and solidarity have been explored in the context of natural disasters, fire, bombing and, more recently, during the pandemic. However, the beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, the social identity-related process, and

resilience in relation to providing coordinated and emotional social support in conflict-affected contexts have not attracted much attention.

This investigation explored the processes associated with solidarity in times of crisis in Iraq during COVID-19. We analyzed the specific contribution of beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, social identity-related processes, and subjective resilience to providing help to others affected via coordinated or emotional support. A sense of togetherness among the affected population may arise when a community is faced with an emergency (Figure 1). Beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19 combined with social identity-related processes and subjective resilience may contribute to prosocial behavior and motivate people to support others in need.

Figure 1: Beliefs and experiences related to the crisis, social identity-related processes and resilience as associates of solidarity in crisis



Regarding beliefs and experiences related to the crisis, the perception of risk-related events is associated strongly with willingness to take precautionary measures against infection (Dryhurst et al., 2020; Rudisill, 2013). Moreover, having sufficient information is proven to play an important role in people's behavior during an emergency (Bavel et al., 2020). Furthermore, van den Broek-Altenburg and Atherly (2021) found that motivations, beliefs about the effectiveness of measures, and pre-pandemic behavior play an important role in shaping public health behaviors during COVID-19. Therefore, being more aware of the risk, having been affected, or knowing what to do (e.g., having sufficient information) during COVID-19 are important aspects when understanding who will be more prompt in providing support. Therefore, we expected to find a link between these beliefs and experiences and providing emotional and coordinated social support (Hypothesis 1).

Regarding the social identity-related processes, data suggest that social identification with affected population as well as observing supportive behavior could predict solidarity (Drury et al., 2015). Furthermore, subjective perceptions of what others are doing is a reliable predictor for people's behavior (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Haller et al. (2022) showed that high levels of perceived social support are strongly associated with prosocial behavior. Therefore, we hypothesized that social identification with others affected, experiencing a common fate (such as a feeling of togetherness due to the COVID-19 crisis), and having expectations about receiving support from others will be strongly related to provided emotional and coordinated social support to others affected (Hypothesis 2).

Finally, we propose that it is significant to explore the association between subjective resilience and solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq. We expected that, in addition to personal beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, and social identity-related processes, subjective resilience would be strongly related to providing emotional and coordinated social support to others affected (Hypothesis 3).

The significance of this research lies not only in testing the presented hypotheses in a conflict-affected area but also in investigating the specific sets of factors related to COVID-19 (e.g., experiences and

beliefs), social identity-related processes, and resilience in understanding solidarity in the form of social emotional support in the unique context of Iraq.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

A total of 344 participants across Iraq volunteered to participate in this study. After the application of pre-established inclusion criteria (i.e., provision of complete answers, being residents of Iraq, having Iraqi nationality), the final sample was composed of 299 voluntary participants (62.5% males) from 18 to 65 years of age [$M_{age} = 30.33$, standard deviation (SD) = 8.53]. A non-probability convenience sampling was followed to recruit participants via social networks during August–September 2020. About half of the participants were single (50.5%), 47.2% were married, 1.7% were divorced, and 0.3% were widowed, with some missing data (0.3%). Participants were living in conflict-affected areas: 60.2% were identified as belonging to a host community¹, 13.0% were internally displaced persons, and 13.7% were returnees to their original places. Participants came from various cities and zones of Iraq and had different ethnic backgrounds: 42.5% of the sample self-identified as Arab, 29.8% self-identified as Kurd, 8.4% self-identified as Yazidi, and 3% self-identified as Assyrian. In terms of religion, 78.3% of the participants were Muslim, 9.7% were Yazidi, 3.0% were Christian, and 4.0% defined themselves as non-believers. Regarding employment status, 61.9% of the participants were working, and 35.1% had no job (3.0% missing data).

3.2 Variables and Instruments

Beliefs and Experiences Related to COVID-19: Participants were asked to report their beliefs and experiences during the COVID-19 crisis by answering di-

¹ A host community in conflict-affected areas refers to members of the country or location who have not left their place of origin, where asylum seekers, refugees, or displaced persons live. In the context of refugee camps, the host community may encompass the camp or may simply be a neighbor of the camp, having interaction with or being affected by the refugees residing in the camp or the community.

chotomous questions with “yes” (coded as 1) or “no” (coded as 0) to the following variables: COVID-19 as a risk (“Do you believe COVID-19 poses a risk to your life?”), Affected by COVID-19 (“Do you have someone close who is infected by COVID-19?”), Respect for COVID-19 measures (“Do you follow COVID-19 protective measures, e.g., wearing masks?”), Informed about COVID-19 (“Do you think you have sufficient information about COVID-19, e.g., how it spreads?”), and Received voluntary help (“Have you received any voluntary support during COVID-19?”)².

Common Fate: Participants reported the extent to which they believed that they and other people around them shared the same fate in relation to the pandemic and their current situation, using three items extracted from Drury et al. (2015): “We are all in danger,” “We all share the same fate,” and “It is all of us against the COVID-19 pandemic” ($\alpha = 0.78$; $\omega = 0.78$). Participants rated each statement on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Social Identification with Others Affected: Participants were asked to what extent they identified with others who were affected by the same crisis, using four items (Drury et al., 2015): “I felt at one with the people around me,” “I identified with the other people affected,” “I felt unity with others,” and “I felt that other people affected by COVID-19 are like me” ($\alpha = 0.69$; $\omega = 0.69$). The same answer scale was used as for the previous measure.

Expected Support: Three items assessed the extent to which participants expected to be supported by others in the immediate context of the pandemic (Drury et al., 2015): “I come to expect other people to be cooperative,” “It becomes the norm for others to be supportive of my actions,” and “I realized that other people would give help if I asked for it” ($\alpha = 0.65$; $\omega = 0.68$). The same answer scale was used as for the previous measures.

² We included two additional questions regarding providing support “Are you taking part in COVID-19 response (e.g., health workers, online support, etc.)?” and “Have you participated in any volunteering acts to support people affected by COVID-19?” They were not considered to be predictors because they overlapped with the criterion variables.

Resilience: To capture the subjective perception of personal resilience, we used the brief resilience scale (BRS) (Smith et al., 2008). Participants were asked to what extent they agreed with six statements regarding their ability to stand and face difficult times. Three items had a positive formulation and captured the ability to have recover easily: “I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times,” “I tend to recover quite fast from a stressful event,” and “I usually come through difficult times with little trouble” ($\alpha = 0.62$; $\omega = 0.66$; inter-item correlation values ranged from 0.22 to 0.48). The other three items had a reversed formulation and captured the difficulty of recovery: “I have a hard time making it through stressful events,” “It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens,” and “I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life” ($\alpha = 0.76$; $\omega = 0.76$). They used a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). We considered resilience with positive items (hereafter “resilience-easy recovery”) and resilience with negative items (hereafter “expressed hard recovery”) without reversing the scores separately³. Resilience-easy recovery captured the ability to recover easily from difficult times and experiences, whereas expressed hard recovery captured the difficulty of recovering from difficult times and experiences.

Provided Emotional Social Support: Three items measured how much participants were involved in providing emotional social support to affected people in the context of crises (adapted from Drury et al., 2015): “I give emotional support,” “I show re-

³ Initially, reversed items were inverted. However, the internal consistency of the scale including the six items together (both positive and reversed items after they were recoded) was low ($\alpha = 0.54$; $\omega = 0.59$). An exploratory factor analysis (principal-axis factoring) with oblimin rotation revealed that the scale was composed of two subdimensions (instead of a unique dimension), and that positive and reversed items loaded on two different factors. The mean of the positive subdimension was significantly higher ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.25$) than the mean with the reversed items after they were recoded ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.58$), $t(298) = 9.33$, $p < 0.001$. These findings might indicate that for our sample (Arabic speakers), the reversed items might not work in the same way as the positive formulated items when assessing resilience.

spect for others,” and “I show concern for others’ needs” ($\alpha = 0.77$; $\omega = 0.80$). The same answer scale was used as for the previous measure.

Provided Coordinated Social Support: Five items assessed the extent to which people took part in collective and coordinated activities to support the community during the pandemic (adapted from Drury et al., 2015): “I participate in groups which have been organized to provide support to people in need,” “I work together with strangers,” “I act together with others in response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” “I participate in the coordinated rationing of basic needs such as food,” and “I participate in community-organized groups to raise awareness about the pandemic” ($\alpha = 0.87$; $\omega = 0.87$). The same answer scale was used as for the previous measure.

Socio-demographic variables: Participants also reported their sociodemographic details, including gender (0 = female; 1 = male), age, educational level, civil state, employment status, country of origin, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and situational or residential status.

3.3 Procedure

The previous measures were included in a questionnaire designed in Google Forms and administered by researchers online via social networks (e.g., Facebook). Participation was voluntary and anonymous, no economic compensation was offered, and the required consent was obtained before data collection. Upon giving consent, participants could continue to take part by completing the questionnaire, which took about 15 minutes.

4 RESULTS

Regarding the beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, at the time of the survey, most participants believed that COVID-19 posed a risk to their lives (84.3%, vs. 15.7% who did not believe so). Most of the respondents considered that they had sufficient information about the virus and the protective measures to combat it (80.9%, vs. 18.1% who reported a lack of information). Over half of the participants (57.2% vs. 42.1%) reported not having someone close to them who had been affected by COVID-19 (e.g., infected, or lost someone), and 17.1% of participants received voluntary support from fellow community members during COVID-19.⁴

Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among variables are presented in Table 1. Both “Provided emotional social support” and “Provided coordinated social support” were strongly or moderately associated with social identity-related process (e.g., common fate with others affected, social identification, and expected support) and resilience-easy recovery. These positive correlations revealed that higher scores for identified with oth-

⁴ Around half of the sample was not involved in any responses against COVID-19 during the pandemic (52.5% vs. 46.5%). In terms of voluntary acts to fight the virus, only 21.4% provided voluntary support to other affected persons. These two questions were not included in the analyses because they overlapped with the criterion variables of providing emotional and coordinated support.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations of variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Common fate with others affected	5.14	1.61	—						
2. Social identification with others affected	4.95	1.41	0.47**	—					
3. Expected support	4.38	1.35	0.35**	0.43**	—				
4. Resilience-easy recovery	5.10	1.24	0.35**	0.42**	0.33**	—			
5. Expressed hard recovery	4.00	1.58	0.21**	0.17**	0.14*	0.03	—		
6. Provided emotional social support	5.98	1.17	0.40**	0.42**	0.43**	0.48**	-0.01	—	
7. Provided coordinated social support	4.59	1.71	0.33**	0.38**	0.43**	0.48**	0.08	0.56**	—

Notes: Scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). ** $p < 0.01$.

ers, sense of common fate, expected support, and resilient led to higher scores for provided emotional and coordinated social support offered to others affected.

To understand the distinct contributions of three sets of variables to providing coordinated and emotional social support, we conducted two hierarchical regressions. We controlled for sociodemographic variables in Step 1; included specific beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19 in Step 2; included social identity–related processes related to common fate, social identification, and expected support in Step 3; and included resilience–easy recovery and expressed hard recovery in Step 4. We focused on the significant contribution of each set of variables and the increase in *R*-squared in each step.

Although employment status was positively related to providing coordinated and emotional support, gender was associated only with providing emotional support, with women reporting providing more emotional support (Table 2). After controlling for socio-demographics, respect for COVID-19 measures and being adequately informed about COVID-19 were positively associated with providing both coordinated and emotional support in Step 2.

The inclusion of the second set of social identity–related process highly increased the explicative power of the model in Step 3, with expected support positively associated with providing both coordinated and emotional support and social identification with others affected associated with providing more emotional social support.

Finally, Step 4 showed a significant improvement in the model when considering subjective resilience. In this final step, expected support from others and resilience–easy recovery were positively associated with providing both coordinated and emotional support. Social identification and being properly informed about COVID-19 were associated with providing more emotional support, which was negatively associated with expressed hard recovery. That is, participants were more prompt to provide emotional support when they were properly informed, felt identified with others affected, expected support from others, believed they could recover quickly from adversity, and reported less difficulty in recovery. All of this was found by control-

ling the effects of gender. Providing coordinated social support also was associated with expected support from others, resilience, and a commitment to follow COVID-19 measures. The variance explained was considerable in both cases.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The crisis provoked by the COVID-19 altered the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the world. Although extensive research has been conducted about its consequences, impact, and buffering variables, we were interested in understanding how people keep showing solidarity behavior in a context with a particular vulnerability combined with facing years of violent conflict. This investigation explored the processes associated with solidarity in times of the COVID-19 crisis in Iraq. We analyzed the specific contribution of three sets of variables to providing help to others affected via coordinated or emotional support: beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19, social identity–related processes, and subjective resilience.

Although this study focused on the three mentioned set of variables, the role of sociodemographic factors could not be dismissed. Results showed that among sociodemographic variables, having a job was associated with providing coordinated and emotional social support. Gender was associated only with providing emotional social support.

The first result was associated with beliefs and experiences related to COVID-19. Results showed that being properly informed about COVID-19 was positively associated with providing coordinated and especially emotional social support, partially confirming Hypothesis 1. In an era in which it is difficult to manage a vast quantity of information, having sufficient information about the virus was associated with providing support to others. Sharing information and involvement of the public has been critical not only to counter the misinformation but also to manage the public behavior during COVID-19. In this regard, Elcheroth and Drury (2020) advocated that authorities should follow three guiding principles: share available information, communicate about the limits of current knowledge, and admit that citizens are better equipped to live with

Table 2: Hierarchical regression analyses to predict providing coordinated and emotional social support

Step		Providing coordinated support			Providing emotional support			
		β	t	p	β	t	p	
1	Intercept		10.34	<0.001		23.41	<0.001	
	Ethnicity	0.006	-0.09	0.928	-0.04	-0.65	0.514	
	Gender	-0.003	-0.04	0.969	-0.24	-3.31	0.001	
	Civil state	0.04	0.55	0.584	0.10	1.42	0.157	
	Employment	0.21	2.83	0.005	0.19	2.54	0.012	
	Education	-0.03	-0.38	0.708	-0.08	-1.23	0.220	
			$F(5,232) = 2.27, p < 0.048, R^2_{adj} = 0.026$			$F(5,232) = 3.56, p = 0.004, R^2_{adj} = 0.051$		
2	Intercept		4.87	<0.001		15.89	<0.001	
	Ethnicity	-0.002	-0.03	0.973	-0.07	-1.03	0.306	
	Gender	0.03	0.44	0.657	-0.21	-2.98	0.003	
	Civil state	0.01	0.20	0.841	0.08	1.20	0.232	
	Employment	0.19	2.60	0.010	0.17	2.43	0.016	
	Education	-0.05	-0.70	0.484	-0.10	-1.53	0.128	
	COVID-19 as a risk	0.11	1.61	0.108	-0.02	-0.25	0.799	
	Respect COVID-19 measures	0.21	3.26	0.001	0.15	2.36	0.019	
	Affected by COVID-19	-0.04	-0.67	0.501	-0.04	-0.64	0.524	
	Informed about COVID-19	0.18	2.88	0.004	0.23	3.71	<0.001	
	Received voluntary help	0.06	1.03	0.306	0.07	1.10	0.274	
			$F(10,227) = 4.15, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.117, \Delta R^2 = 0.108, p < 0.001$			$F(10,227) = 4.18, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.118, \Delta R^2 = 0.084, p < 0.001$		
	3	Intercept		0.37	0.712		9.79	<0.001
Ethnicity		0.02	0.26	0.793	-0.05	-0.86	0.388	
Gender		0.07	1.03	0.302	-0.17	-2.72	0.007	
Civil state		-0.01	-0.16	0.876	0.05	0.85	0.399	
Employment		0.12	1.89	0.060	0.11	1.71	0.088	
Education		-0.02	-0.38	0.704	-0.09	-1.48	0.140	
COVID-19 as a risk		0.01	0.22	0.827	-0.12	-2.03	0.043	
Respect COVID-19 measures		0.18	3.02	0.003	0.13	2.21	0.028	
Affected by COVID-19		-0.06	-0.97	0.334	-0.06	-0.97	0.333	
Informed about COVID-19		0.10	1.81	0.071	0.13	2.39	0.018	
Received voluntary help		0.04	0.63	0.530	0.03	0.54	0.588	
Common fate		0.11	1.56	0.119	0.08	1.20	0.230	
Social identification		0.11	1.65	0.101	0.24	3.65	<0.001	
Expected support		0.31	4.88	<0.001	0.29	4.76	<0.001	
		$F(13,224) = 7.76, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.270, \Delta R^2 = 0.156, p < 0.001$			$F(13,224) = 9.73, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.324, \Delta R^2 = 0.205, p < 0.001$			

4	Intercept		-1.71	0.089		7.94	<0.001
	Ethnicity	0.01	0.20	0.840	-0.05	-0.91	0.363
	Gender	0.08	1.23	0.220	-0.16	-2.69	0.008
	Civil state	-0.02	-0.34	0.731	0.05	0.84	0.402
	Employment	0.09	1.38	0.168	0.07	1.22	0.224
	Education	0.04	0.62	0.536	-0.05	-0.82	0.411
	COVID-19 as a risk	0.02	0.33	0.744	-0.11	-1.95	0.052
	Respect COVID-19 measures	0.12	2.15	0.033	0.08	1.47	0.144
	Affected by COVID-19	-0.04	-0.65	0.518	-0.04	-0.72	0.470
	Informed about COVID-19	0.09	1.74	0.084	0.12	2.25	0.025
	Received voluntarily help	0.05	0.88	0.381	0.04	0.69	0.489
	Common fate	0.08	1.26	0.210	0.08	1.19	0.236
	Social identification	0.01	0.14	0.888	0.17	2.59	0.010
	Expected support	0.27	4.48	<0.001	0.27	4.56	<0.001
	Resilience-easy recovery	0.34	5.68	<0.001	0.26	4.42	<0.001
	Expressed hard recovery	-0.03	-0.55	0.586	-0.12	-2.22	0.028
		$F(15,222) = 9.87, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.360, \Delta R^2 = 0.090, p < 0.001$			$F(15,222) = 11.06, p < 0.001, R^2_{adj} = 0.389, \Delta R^2 = 0.067, p < 0.001$		

Note: Statistically significant predictors and values are shown in bold.

difficult but shared truths than with isolating confusion. The role of transparent and time-bounding information is significant in shaping public behavior during emergencies (e.g., Carter et al., 2020; Drury et al., 2013).

Obviously, we cannot infer any directionality with correlational analyses and cross-sectional data. However, these findings suggest that information is a powerful weapon to respond to crises and that people who are not informed about the crises they face might have difficulty knowing how to help and offering adequate support.

The second finding was related to the contribution of social identity-related processes such as social identification and expected support from others to offering help during crisis. The role of social identification and a sense of “being in the same boat” as a motivation to support the ingroup is well established (Drury & Winter, 2003), and our results confirm it in a conflict-affected area. Cooperation, helping behaviors, and coordination are positive consequences of shared identity (Drury, 2012; McLeish

& Oxoby, 2011; Zagefka, 2021). Individuals who identify with a group display better coordination and collaboration toward fellow members. The sense of “we-ness” that exists among members of a particular ethnic group contributes to better coordination also could be developed among strangers during an emergency in the face of a threat (Drury, 2012; Drury et al., 2010; Sime, 1985).

Furthermore, Drury and Winter (2003) argued that perceiving a threat to others as a threat to oneself during an emergency (facing a common threat) maximizes the sense of shared identity and further enhances survivors’ helping behaviors. As expected (Hypothesis 2), our results show that social identification with others affected and expected support in times of COVID-19 contribute significantly to providing emotional social support to other people. Expected support also is positively related to providing coordinated support. Expected support entails a certain norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which is important in prosocial behavior. People are motivated to help when they have received or expect to receive help from others.

Finally, this study showed that subjective resilience—in terms of perceived tendency to bounce back quickly after hard times, recovering quickly from stressful events or coming through difficult times with little trouble—was positively associated with providing both coordinated and emotional support, partially confirming Hypothesis 3. Contrarily, the expressed hard recovery (having a hard time making it through stressful events, considering it hard to snap back when something bad happens, and taking a long time to get over setbacks in life) was negatively associated with providing emotional support. Kelly and Kelly (2016) suggested that resilience can motivate solidarity, contribute to recovery and strengthen agency, and help people find creative and meaningful responses to crises.

Helping others may involve a considerable sense of agency and motivation to act for others. A dynamic and bidirectional relationship between providing coordinated and emotional support and subjective resilience could be established. Helping others also can be a source of strength that can reinforce subjective resilience. On the other hand, feeling resilient may motivate an individual to help others. The same reasoning might be applied in terms of low perceived agency, something that may inhibit helping others. These dynamic relations might be crucial for community psychology.

5.1 Implications

A contribution of this research is bringing together the social identity perspective and resilience. Additionally, investigating these processes among a population in Iraq might help widen the knowledge. Most studies designed to understand the impact of COVID-19 from the social identity perspective were conducted in Western societies, characterized by an increasing individualism. This study explored the social identity-related processes of different ethnic groups in the specific social context of Iraq, a vulnerable area affected by a lasting conflict and categorized as less individualistic and more collectivist than other contexts (Almutairi et al., 2020). Our findings contribute to the previous literature and emphasize the importance of community engagement in guaranteeing well-being and the significance of public behavior in response to a crisis.

It could also help health authorities to take into consideration community involvement in the response to crisis (e.g., to share time-bound and precise information, including the limitations, with the public; and encourage community-based responses which are adapted to the local context and resources; and utilize social identity-related processes when designing crisis responses).

5.2 Limitations and Future Directions

The results presented in this study are not free of limitations. In addition to the low reliability of variables conformed by only three items, other constraints are a lack of adequate sample representation due to internet access, inequality in the sample for each ethnic group, and language barriers. We cannot conclude that all groups are equal in their feelings, experiences, and attitudes. Given the small and unequal sample size of the different ethnic groups, we could not make reliable comparisons among them. Lastly, we also recognize the limitation of using cross sectional data and avoid any assumption of causation of these processes.

Future studies should include representative samples across different groups and guarantee equal opportunities to participate to delve into the differences among groups. It also is suggested that researchers adopt an interview-style methodology to collect qualitative data using open-ended questions in order to clarify responses and have a deeper comprehension of the processes analyzed. Although the mentioned limitations are real, we are confident about the findings of this study that highlight the importance of beliefs and experiences (to have information and respect to COVID-19 measures), of the social identity-related process during the pandemic and other humanitarian emergencies, and especially the emphasized role of subjective resilience (of easy recover), in providing social support (emotional and coordinated) to other fellow community members.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings of this study are a reminder of the importance of changing the mainstream understanding about the population in emergencies. The vital message is to encourage authorities and poli-

cymakers to utilize the findings from social psychology research to invest in the sense of community during crises rather than undermining it. This finding refers to the importance of sharing information and preparing people to counter an emergency. Furthermore, the lesson that could be drawn from the current study is that providing support to others, whether it is emotional or coordinated, is related to resilience among affected people. People feel more

empowered when they can choose to help and to be involved in the process of providing aid. This could be one important lesson for the humanitarian aid sector to enhance community involvement throughout assistance projects, because giving support seems to be especially related to experienced resilience. As Zafra (2021, p. 11) noted, "it is in the need for solidarity of others where fragility becomes a community seam."

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Vedenje ljudi med pandemijo je sprožilo zanimivo vprašanje: Kako lahko ljudje izkažejo solidarnost tudi v težkih okoliščinah? Ta članek je raziskoval procese povezane s solidarnostjo v času krize (zlasti med COVID-19) v ranljivem kontekstu Iraka. Analizirali smo poseben prispevek treh sklopov spremenljivk k zagotavljanju pomoči drugim prizadetim prek usklajene ali čustvene podpore, in sicer specifično prek: prepričanja in izkušenj povezanih s COVID-19, procesov povezanih s družbeno identiteto in subjektivne odpornosti. V spletni anketi je sodelovalo 299 ljudi (večinoma arabskega etničnega porekla, pa tudi Kurdi in Asirci). Rezultati so pokazali, da so bili procesi povezani z družbeno identiteto in subjektivna odpornost, pomembno povezani z zagotavljanjem čustvene in usklajene družbene podpore drugim, onkraj sociodemografskih podatkov in osebnih prepričanj ter izkušenj povezanih s COVID-19. Kritično razpravljamo o dinamičnih povezavah med subjektivno odpornostjo in solidarnostjo v času krize ter o ključni vlogi vzajemnosti in delovanja v psihologiji skupnosti.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, D., Lalot, F., & Hogg, M. A. (2021). Intergroup and intragroup dimensions of COVID-19: A social identity perspective on social fragmentation and unity. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 24(2), 201-209.
- Almutairi, S., Heller, M., & Yen, D. (2020). Reclaiming the heterogeneity of the Arab states. *Cross Cultural & Amp; Strategic Management*, 28(1), 158–176.
- Alnabulsi, H., & Drury, J. (2014). Social identification moderates the effect of crowd density on safety at the Hajj. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 111(25), 9091-9096.
- Bavel, J., Baicker, K., Boggio, P. S., Capraro, V., Cichocka, A., Cikara, M., ... Willer, R. (2020). Using social and behavioral science to support COVID-19 pandemic response. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4(5), 460-471.
- Bowe, M., Wakefield, J. R. H., Kellezi, B., Stevenson, C., McNamara, N., Jones, B. A., Sumich, A., & Heym, N. (2022). The mental health benefits of community helping during crisis: Coordinated helping, community identification and sense of unity during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 32(3), 521–535.
- Bueno-Notivol, J., Gracia-García, P., Olaya, B., Lasheras, I., López-Antón, R., & Santabárbara, J. (2021). Prevalence of depression during the COVID-19 outbreak: A meta-analysis of community-based studies. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 21(1), 100196.
- Burger, J. M., Sanchez, J., Imber, J. E., & Grande, L. R. (2009). The norm of reciprocity as an internalized social norm: Returning favors even when no one finds out. *Social Influence*, 4(1), 11–17.
- Carter, H., Drury, J., & Amlôt, R. (2020). Recommendations for improving public engagement with pre-incident information materials for initial response to a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident: A systematic review. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 51, 101796.

- Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 591–621.
- Cocking, C., Drury, J. & Reicher, S. (2009). The psychology of crowd behaviour in emergency evacuations: Results from two interview studies and implications for the Fire and Rescue Services. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 30(1) 59-73.
- Davydov, D. M., Stewart, R., Ritchie, K., & Chaudieu, I. (2010). Resilience and mental health. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 30(5), 479-495.
- De Cremer, D., & van Lange, P. A. M. (2001). Why prosocials exhibit greater cooperation than proselves: the roles of social responsibility and reciprocity. *European Journal of Personality*, 15(1), S5–S18.
- Drury, J. (2012). Collective resilience in mass emergencies and disasters: A social identity model. In J. Jetten, C. Haslam, & S. A. Haslam (Eds.), *The Social Cure: Identity, Health, and Well-Being* (pp. 195–215). Psychology Press.
- Drury, J., Brown, R., González, R., & Miranda, D. (2015). Emergent social identity and observing social support predict social support provided by survivors in a disaster: Solidarity in the 2010 Chile earthquake. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(2), 209-223.
- Drury, J., Carter, H., Ntontis, E., & Guven, S. (2021). Public behavior in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Understanding the role of group processes. *British Journal of Social Psychology Open*, 7(1), E11.
- Drury, J., Cocking, C., & Reicher, S. (2009). Everyone for themselves? A comparative study of crowd solidarity among emergency survivors. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(3), 487–506.
- Drury, J., Cocking, C., Reicher, S., Burton, A., Schofield, D., Hardwick, A., Graham, D., & Langston, P. (2010). Cooperation versus competition in a mass emergency evacuation: A new laboratory simulation and a new theoretical model. *Behavior Research Methods*, 41(3), 957–970.
- Drury, J., Novelli, D., & Stott, C. (2013). Representing crowd behaviour in emergency planning guidance: ‘mass panic’ or collective resilience? *Resilience*, 1(1), 18–37.
- Drury, J., Reicher, S., & Stott, C. (2020). COVID-19 in context: Why do people die in emergencies? It’s probably not because of collective psychology. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(3), 686-693.
- Drury, J., & Winter, G. (2003). Social identity as a source of strength in mass emergencies and other crowd events. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 32(4), 79-93.
- Dryhurst, S., Schneider, C. R., Kerr, J., Freeman, A. L. J., Recchia, G., van der Bles, A. M., Spiegelhalter, D., & van der Linden, S. (2020). Risk perceptions of COVID-19 around the world. *Journal of Risk Research*, 23(8), 994 –1006.
- Elcheroth, G., & Drury, J. (2020). Collective resilience in times of crisis: Lessons from the literature for socially effective responses to the pandemic. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(3), 703–713.
- Evans, B., & Reid, J. (2015). Exhausted by resilience: Response to the commentaries. *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, 3(2), 154-159.
- Fan, J., Hu, K., Li, X., Jiang, Y., Zhou, X., Gou, X., & Li, X. (2020). A qualitative study of the vocational and psychological perceptions and issues of transdisciplinary nurses during the COVID-19 outbreak. *Aging*, 12(13), 12479-12492.
- Fatmawati, J., & Dewantara, A. (2022). Social resilience of indigenous community on the border: Belief and confidence in anticipating the spread of COVID-19 through the *Besamsam* custom in the Dayak community. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 1-18.
- Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 25(2), 161-178.
- Haller, E., Lubenko, J., Presti, G., Squatrito, V., Constantinou, M., Nicolaou, C., Papacostas, S., Aydin, G., Chong, Y. Y., Chien, W. T., Cheng, H. Y., Ruiz, F. J., García-Martín, M. B., Obando-Posada, D. P., Segura-Vargas, M. A., Vasiliou, V. S., McHugh, L., Höfer, S., Baban, A., . . . Gloster, A. T. (2022). To Help or Not to Help? Prosocial Behavior, Its Association With Well-Being, and Predictors of Prosocial Behavior During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.
- Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Jetten, J., Bentley, S. V., Fong, P., & Steffens, N. K. (2021). Social identity makes group-based social connection possible: Implications for loneliness and mental health. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 43, 161-165.
- Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., & Levine, M. (2012). When other people are heaven, when other people are hell: How social identity determines the nature and impact of social support. In J. Jetten, C. Haslam, and S. A. Haslam (Eds.), *The social cure: Identity, health and well-being* (pp. 157–174). Psychology Press.
- Hawdon, J., & Ryan, J. (2011). Social relations that generate and sustain solidarity after a mass tragedy. *Social Forces*, 89(4) 1363-1384.
- Jetten, J., Reicher, S. D., Haslam, S. A., & Cruwys, T. (2020). A social identity analysis of COVID-19. In Jetten, J., Reicher, S. D., Haslam, S. A., & Cruwys, T. (Eds.), *Together apart: The psychology of COVID-19* (pp. 20–31). Sage.
- Kaniasty, K. (2012). Predicting social psychological well-being following trauma: The role of post disaster social support. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 4(1), 22-33.

- Kelly, U., & Kelly, R. (2016). Resilience, solidarity, agency – grounded reflections on challenges and synergies. *Resilience, International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, 5(1), 10-28.
- Killgore, W. D. S., Taylor, E. C., Cloonan, S. A., & Dailey, N. S. (2020). Psychological resilience during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113216.
- Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1970). *The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?* Appleton-Century-Croft.
- Lee, J. H., Nam, S. K., Kim, A., Kim, B., Lee, M. Y., & Lee, S. M. (2013). Resilience: A meta-analytic approach. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 91(3), 269-279.
- Levine, M., Prosser, A., Evans, D., & Reicher, S. (2005). Identity and Emergency Intervention: How Social Group Membership and Inclusiveness of Group Boundaries Shape Helping Behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(4), 443-453.
- Libal, K., & Kashwan, P. (2020). Solidarity in times of crisis. *Journal of Human Rights*, 19(5), 537-546.
- McLeish, K., & Oxoby, R. (2011). Social interactions and the salience of social identity. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 32(1), 172-178.
- Muldoon, O., Haslam, A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Kearns, M., & Jetten, J. (2019). The social psychology of responses to trauma: Social identity pathways associated with divergent traumatic responses. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 311-348.
- Pfefferbaum, B., & North, C. S. (2020). Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 383(6), 510-512.
- Rudisill, C. (2013). How do we handle new health risks? Risk perception, optimism, and behaviors regarding the H1N1 virus. *Journal of Risk Research*, 16(8), 959-980.
- Rutter, M. (2006). Implications of resilience concepts for scientific understanding. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1094(1), 1-12.
- Rutter, M. (2012). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Development and Psychopathology*, 24(2),
- Sapienza, J., & Masten, A. (2011). Understanding and promoting resilience in children and youth. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 24(4), 267-273.
- Sime, J. D. (1985). Movement toward the familiar: Person and place affiliation in a fire entrapment setting. *Environment and Behavior*, 17(6), 697-724.
- Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15(3), 194-200.
- Smith, B.W., Epstein, E.M., Ortiz, J.A., Christopher, P.J., & Tooley, E.M. (2013). The foundations of resilience: What are the critical resources for bouncing back from stress? In S. Prince-Embury, & D. Saklofske (Eds), *Resilience in Children, Adolescents, and Adults* (pp. 167-187). Springer.
- Son, C., Hegde, S., Smith, A., Wang, X., & Sasangohar, F. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on college students' mental health in the United States: Interview survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9): e21279.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1979). An integrative theory of group conflict. In W.G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33-47). Brooks.
- Templeton, A., Guven, S. T., Hoerst, C., Vestergren, S., Davidson, L., Ballentyne, S., ... Choudhury, S. (2020). Inequalities and identity processes in crises: Recommendations for facilitating safe response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(3), 674-685.
- van den Broek-Altenburg, E., & Atherly, A. (2021). Adherence to COVID-19 policy measures: Behavioral insights from The Netherlands and Belgium. *PLOS ONE*, 16(5), e0250302.
- Verdolini, N., Amoretti, S., Montejó, L., García-Rizo, C., Hogg, B., Mezquida, G., Rabelo-da-Ponte, F. D., Valle-spir, C., Radua, J., Martínez-Aran, A., Pacchiarotti, I., Rosa, A. R., Bernardo, M., Vieta, E., Torrent, C., & Solé, B. (2021). Resilience and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 283, 156-164.
- Vezzali, L., Drury, J., Versari, A., & Cadamuro, A. (2016). Sharing distress increases helping and contact intentions via social identification and inclusion of the other in the self: Children's prosocial behavior after an earthquake. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 19(3), 314-327.
- Vrasti, W., & Michelsen, N. (2017). Introduction: on resilience and solidarity. *Resilience, International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, 5(1), 1-9.
- United Nations Development Programme (2020). *Impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion in Iraq*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNDP%2520Iraq%2C%2520Impact%2520of%2520Covid-19%2520and%2520Social%2520Cohesion.pdf>
- Zafra, R. (2021). *Frágiles: Cartas sobre la ansiedad y la esperanza en la nueva cultura* (1st ed.). Editorial Anagrama.
- Zagefka H. (2022). Prosociality during COVID-19: Globally focussed solidarity brings greater benefits than nationally focussed solidarity. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 32(1), 73-86.



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING WITH CO-WORKERS: A STUDY ON THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL REACTIONS AND COMPARISONS

Deepshikha Seth

Amity Business School, Amity University Noida, India
deepshikha_seth@hotmail.com

Priyanka Agarwal

Amity Business School, Amity University Noida, India

Anubha Vashisht

Sharda University, Noida, India

Abstract

Social media has become an important part of life. People of all age groups are using the various networks of social media. Social media keeps us connected with one another and gives us an opportunity to share our accomplishments with friends and family. Businesses also have been using its ever widening reach to promote their objectives and have used it to build supportive relations among co-workers. However, it was found to be consuming a great deal of time and energy of the users. This draining of two valuable resources has a serious impact on the behavioral and psychological well-being of people, which leads to burnout and ultimately shows in their performance at work. Social media also is seen as a cause of deteriorating interpersonal relations in the workplace, almost contrary to the purpose for which it was adopted. Previous studies indicated a mediating role of social comparisons and social reactions. This study explored the impact of social media networking with workplace colleagues. A hypothesized model was developed to examine the impact of various factors using path analysis. Data were collected from 287 full-time private sector employees located in the National Capital Region of India. The respondents comprised different age groups and all employment levels and experience.

Keywords: social media, workplace dynamics, social media use, social media addiction, social comparison, social reaction, burnout, workplace relations, work performance

1 INTRODUCTION

Social psychology studies have shown that people evaluate their own social situation by comparing it with those of others. The concept of social comparison was first given by psychologist Leon Festinger as early as 1954 (Festinger 1954). Subsequent studies confirmed that people continuously look at others to judge their own living conditions. This applies to lifestyle, popularity, accomplishments, pos-

sessions, health, family, and happiness. Everyone wants to be seen on a higher pedestal among their acquaintances. Social comparison motivates people to achieve more, but at the same time puts pressure on everyone. This psychology does not let people enjoy whatever they have or wherever they are (Zivnuska et al., 2019).

With omnipresent social media (SM) platforms, obtaining information about others has become easier than before. In addition to providing us an op-

portunity to stay connected with our friends and family, social media in a way also promotes social comparison (Ding et al., 2018). As social media enters the workspace and as we become connected with our colleagues on these social media platforms, we obtain easy access to personal information about them, which previously was not possible (Schmidt et al., 2016).

However, this social comparison may interfere with life order and disrupt psychological balance as both the sender and viewers come under pressure. Senders struggle to post enviable content (pictures and text), and viewers constantly judge their own life on the basis of the posted content. Add to that the stress of garnering and adding reactions to each post, and social media emerges as a major stress-booster (Carlson et al., 2016). What started as an endeavor to bring colleagues closer by providing a means to understand their views and opinions soon gave way to evaluation, envy, disagreements, conflict, and separation. This in turn influences working and interpersonal relationships, leads to burnout, and affects performance at work. This also consumes a great deal of time and energy of the users, which could have been used to accomplish work goals and develop relationships (Schmidt et al., 2016).

Although social media has entered work life, there is limited research on its impact from the individual perspective. Most studies have focused on how organizations can use social media for greater employee engagement (Kaupins & Park, 2011; Landers & Goldberg, 2014) and HR processes, including marketing (Carr & Walther, 2014; Chiang & Suen, 2015) and hiring (Davison, Marist, & Bing, 2011; Kleumper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012; Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, & Junco, 2013). Some studies have explored the personal side, but that has been limited to the way people behave on social media platforms and the types of stories, photos, and comments they post (Weidner et al., 2012). Studies also have investigated the impact of comparison and reactions related to social media (Kende, 2016).

Therefore, the impact of social media networking in the workplace remains in need of thorough research, especially when studies have shown that 60% of employees (Weidner, Wynne, & O'Brian, 2012) had one or more colleagues as "Facebook

friends." The percentage of co-worker social media connections has a positive relationship with perceived organizational support and spontaneity (Schmidt, 2016), but there seems to be scope for studies to explore the effects of social media networking in the workplace on work behavior and relationships. For example, little research has examined whether a peek into the "beyond-work life" of a colleague impacts a person's attitude, feelings, and behavior toward the colleague at work, or if the lifestyle of a colleague affects a person's satisfaction with his or her own accomplishments—and if all of this can lead to job burnout.

This study used the theory of conservation of resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001) as a basis to understand how social media addiction can affect performance at work. The COR theory suggests that stress results when there is threatened or actual loss of valued resources. However, people have an innate tendency to conserve, uphold, and support these resources; it is this desire that motivates people in stressful situations. Furthermore, the loss is more significant than the gain, and this loss leads to more loss. This theory has received much empirical support, and helps in examining the relationship between stress and health, especially coping with long-term effects of occupational burnout.

There are two types of resources people want to conserve: contextual or external sources (physical things and social support) and personal resources that come from within, such as personality traits, beliefs, and energy (Hobfoll, 2001; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). As one grows, both types of resources are accumulated, and can be re-invested to generate new resources. This is called a resource spiral (Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011). For example, a positive resource spiral may occur when job resources lead to work engagement, which causes personal satisfaction (Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008). The accumulated resources also mitigate any stressors on the way, but when this resource deployment is not adequate to manage stress triggers, it leads to resource loss. As stressors build up unrestricted, more resources are lost, leading to further stress (a downward spiral) (Hobfoll, 2001). The present research focuses on how social media addiction may deplete resources and affect relations and performance at work.

This study explored the impact of social media in the workplace. Due to the changed working environment in wake of the COVID pandemic, digital and remote working has become the new normal, and social media has emerged as a new tool to remain connected with co-workers. However, this has started to have a significant impact on the working behavior of people. Employees are struggling to cope up with the differences they find in the content posted by their colleagues and the persons they knew so far. The relationships are being tested as lines between work and personal lives become blurred. By examining the causes of negative behavior toward relationships and productivity at work, this study investigated whether employers can reorient this phenomenon for a profitable impact.

This study examined how social media networking at work affects employee relationships. The use of social media was projected as a means to strengthen bonding among employees, but recent studies have shown an opposite effect. In addition to the effects on interpersonal relationships at work, social media use is reported to have an adverse impact on the emotional well-being of a person, causing exhaustion, lack of interest in work, and depression (all of which are signs of burnout), resulting in lower job performance. This research answered the following questions:

1. Do social media connections at work impact employees' interpersonal relations?
2. Do social media connections at work cause job burnout?
3. Does social media networking at work result in low performance?

This paper advances the literature of social media impact in the workplace by focusing on the mediating function of social media reactions and comparisons. It is proposed that there is a significant and positive relationship between the addictive use of these "connecting platforms" and employees' work behavior.

This research examined the impact of personal connections with work colleagues on professional behavior. This understanding can be used to suggest possible solutions that employers can adopt to re-

duce burnout, improve interpersonal relationships and motivate employees to achieve work goals. This research assessed the elements of social media usage at the microlevel (in terms of time spend, social reactions, and social comparisons) that contribute to negative emotions, especially related to job performance and behavior in the workplace.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have shown that any kind of addiction—excessive monitoring of social media, compulsive gambling, and even workaholism (De Carlo et al., 2014)—ultimately leads to emotional fatigue, strain, depression (Dieris-Hirche et al., 2017), a decrease in interests and lifestyle (Ferraro, Caci, D'Amico, & Blasi, 2007), and seclusion (Moody, 2001).

This study used the COR theory as a basis to understand these traits. It suggests that workers may turn to social media more when they face stress triggers. Initially, the stress seems to decline slightly, but soon grows rapidly. In fact, the more resources an employee puts into this addiction, the severer the effects become due to loss of more time and energy, and job performance suffers more. For example, when an employee spends time monitoring social media platforms in an effort to expand their network (Treem & Leonardi, 2013), the expected boost in relationships and motivation still remains elusive (Safioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014), but the loss of time and energy proves to be all the more detrimental.

The interactive feature of social media makes it very stimulating; people are able to share their achievements, activities, pictures, possessions, feelings, and opinions—and obtain others' appreciation, reactions, and feedback. This boosts their morale and confidence (Kende et al, 2016). Equally interesting is the freedom to visit other people's posts and share one's opinion (Moqbel, 2013). This helps to explore and reinforce bonds in the workplace (Junco, 2012). Probably for this reason, the popularity of various social media platforms is increasing throughout the world. In 2017, there were 2.86 billion social network users in the world; in 2021 this figure reached 3.78 billion, and it is expected to exceed 4.4 billion by 2025 (Statista Research Department, 2021).

Addiction level can be understood by the reported numbers—64% of adults check Facebook every day, and, on average, a smartphone user checks Facebook at least 14 times each day (Taylor, 2013). Addiction to social media has been equated with compulsive gambling (Meerkerk et al., 2009), mainly due to certain similar symptoms associated with use and mood modification, including withdrawal, lack of control and relapse, time loss, and conflict (Andreassen, Torsheim, Burnborg, & Pallesen, 2012).

As the urge to check social media posts turns into an addictive habit, it takes away the time and attention that otherwise could have been put to productive use at work or with family. Excessive use of social media further distances the user from work accomplishments, and with time, leads to lack of control and all the negative consequences associated with its use. This explains why social media use is considered to be a major reason for organization deviance (Carlson et al., 2016), solitude (Kross et al., 2013), melancholy (Safiroglou & Greitemeyer, 2014), mental fatigue (Cambron, Acitelli, & Steinberg, 2010), and low self-esteem (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012).

When social media entered the workplace, employers found it very useful because it helped employees expand their professional reach, learn about industry updates, and even obtain suggestions and views from colleagues and managers (Carlson et al., 2016). Through social media, employees can get to know their workmates better, and learn their preferences and opinion on local issues, politics, environment, and culture, and also learn about their personal lives. This helped foster strong ties in the workplace because, as per the COR theory, people try to uphold, defend, and endorse their conditioned beliefs, opinions, and values (Hobfoll, 2011).

However, what started as an effort to build supportive relationships at work soon was held responsible for deteriorating interpersonal relationships (Nowland, Necka, & Cacioppo, 2018). In addition, it also is seen as a major cause of depression. Previous studies indicated that social comparisons and social reactions (Nabi & Prestin, 2013) play a mediating role in this.

When a user clicks Like (or any other response) or reacts to a post with a comment, it is called a social media reaction. The platform keeps a count of

these, so reactions to a post are not only a measure of the reach of the post, but also indicate how many viewers paid attention to it. Over the years, this has become the main reason for posting content on social media. Positive reactions boost the confidence of the writer, whereas negative reactions (or the absence of any reaction at all) creates negative emotions about the viewers, friends, and followers on the social media; and when these reactions are associated with work colleagues, it influences their relationships at work as well.

Social media reactions also include the emotional response of viewers when they see the posted content. When users view and read other users' posts, they also obtain feelings of happiness, envy, and other emotions in response to the latter's achievements, lifestyle, and beliefs. (Nowland, Necka, & Cacioppo, 2018).

The main idea behind social media was to provide a platform to communicate with friends, family, colleagues, and like-minded people to strengthen bonds with them, feel happy, and be inspired (Carlson et al., 2016). However, social media users report negative effects (Carlson et al., 2016) when such sharing causes distress (Koerner, 2010), narcissism (Andreassen et al., 2017), and deviance (Carlson et al., 2016), and at times even anger, frustration, and burnout. This happens when users start comparing their lifestyle and achievements with the posted information.

Burnout is a state of mental, emotional, and physical fatigue. For long, it was considered to be caused by severe stress for a long period. A person feels emotionally drained, loses energy and will to work. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently updated this definition by describing burnout as an outcome of prolonged workplace stress that has not been managed successfully.

People with burnout generally show the following three symptoms: (1) emotional and physical exhaustion or feeling of energy depletion, (2) work alienation or a mental distance from one's job or negative feelings towards one's career, and (3) low self-fulfilment or reduced professional productivity.

When ignored for a long time, job burnout can lead to lack of sleep, increased sadness, anger and irritability, and depression and anxiety, and the per-

son may turn to alcohol or substance misuse. This not only affects people’s work performance, but personal interactions as well. Burnout also has been associated with certain physical conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 diabetes. Therefore, it is important to identify the signs of burnout at the earliest and work to reduce the causes before it becomes a threat.

Studies as early as 1982 (Maslach & Jackson) and 1997 (Maslach & Leiter) talked about burnout as an individual’s response to stress, marked by exhaustion, tiredness, cynicism, and low performance at work. Subsequent studies also defined burnout as depletion of energy and will to work (Bakker, Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006). This indicates that when a worker suffers burnout, the employer suffers resource loss.

3 HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

To understand the impact of social media use, a relationship model was used. Hypotheses were formulated regarding the mediating role of social media comparisons and reactions on the development of burnout, which ultimately affects work performance. The performance also is impacted by the interpersonal relationships among colleagues, in which these mediators also play a significant role.

On the basis of the review of the available literature, the following concept model was prepared

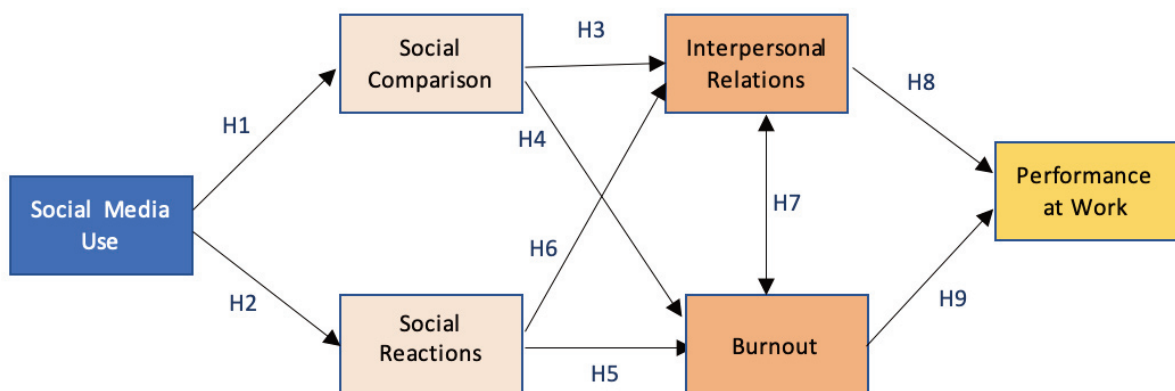
to show the impact of social media use on work performance (Figure 1). It takes into account the mediating role of social comparisons and reactions to determine how they influence interpersonal relationships with work colleagues and cause physical and mental burnout. All this ultimately affects performance at work.

3.1 Social Media Use and Social Comparison

Among the popular social network platforms, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp handle around 60 billion messages every day. Facebook has 1.91 billion users globally (Facebook, 2021)—340 million of which are in India—and WhatsApp users have exceeded 1 billion (Statista, 2021). On these and other social media sites, people share many personal details, such as their relationships, vacations, recent purchases, achievements, activities, habits, and feelings and views on various events.

However, this sharing of personal information leads to social comparisons as people start comparing the lifestyles and achievements of others with their own. Some studies have indicated that people spend more time checking others’ pages than posting their own details. (Joinson, 2008). This easy access to others’ lives can either lead to motivation (positive effect) or may cause envy and depression (negative impact).

Figure 1: Model showing impact of social media use on work performance



It also has been revealed that social networking sites are used more by people who are interested in learning about others. Surprisingly, it is the same set of people who are affected negatively by the comparison. This frame of mind results in low evaluation of self (Vogel et al., 2015). There seems a direct relationship between the time spent on social networking and such negative emotions (Safioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). Sharing personal details on social media puts almost equal pressure on the senders as well, because they are aware that they will be evaluated for their choices, possessions, and success. (Xie & An, 2006). This formed the basis of the first hypothesis of this study:

H1: *There is a positive relationship between social media use and social comparison.*

3.2 Social Media Use and Social Reactions

Social media reactions can be described as emotional responses to social media posts. When co-workers are connected on social media, they see great deal of personal content posted by each other. This may generate varying degree of emotional responses. They may feel happy for a friend, or may experience envy, anger, bitterness, resentment, and even spite. The reactions depend upon the viewers' situations, capabilities, availability of resources, needs, and aspirations. In addition, reactions affect the people who post the content as well—they want to project themselves in a particular way through their posts. The number of likes, comments, and shares that their posts receive boosts their confidence and morale. This makes them post more content. In addition, as mentioned previously, social networking sites are frequented more by those who want to know about others, so more posts mean more reactions as well (Zivnuska et al., 2019).

H2: *There is a positive relationship between social media usage and social reactions.*

3.3 Social Comparison and Interpersonal Relationships

Social comparison can have a positive or negative influence on interpersonal relations, depending upon the social standing of the viewer with respect to the source of the content. An upward comparison

leads to a feeling of low self-esteem, and therefore, a negative impact. On the other hand, downward comparison boosts one's confidence, and causes a positive impact. Therefore, the result of social media comparison is dependent on the user's personality and social standing, and on the direction of the comparison (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Because personality traits can be a complete behavioral study, we limited the scope of this study to the user's situation and the direction of the comparison.

H3: *There is a negative relationship between social comparison and employees' interpersonal relationships.*

3.4 Social Comparison and Job Burnout

Studies of burnout have hinted that social comparison is one of its main causes. Comparison drains one emotionally because it makes one's achievements seem less than those posted by others (Maslach et al., 2001). Michinov (2005) showed that people exhibit lower burnout when social media use is controlled. In addition, social comparison was found to having a mediating role between job satisfaction and job burnout (Kitchel et al., 2012). When a colleague is promoted, others at the same level become more jealous than those in a junior or senior position, especially if the promotion is at a higher position (Zhao et al., 2017). Based on these findings, the next hypothesis is proposed:

H4: *There is a positive relationship between social comparison and job burnout.*

3.5 Social Media Reactions and Burnout

Often, colleagues' reactions to one's social media posts have an intense emotional impact on the writer, and may lead to job burnout. Strong emotions (such as anger) affect one's mood (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and also are linked to certain somatic conditions, such as increased blood pressure (Dimsdale et al., 1986), heart rate, adrenaline (Brosschot & Thayer, 2003), and muscle tension (Brosschot & Thayer, 2003). The body in turn allocates resources to reducing these impacts. This means that the body spends energy first on the

emotions, and then on fighting the impact of emotions. This energy loss makes one exhausted and can cause job burnout. Looking at the opportunity loss, all this energy could have been used more productively and in better ways.

Harsh reactions and feedback generally leave people emotionally exhausted or close to burnout. They also cause stress that makes one more vulnerable to emotional trauma (Fox & Moreland, 2015). This also is true in the case of social media reactions. Emotions control our mood (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and according to the COR theory, when employees experience the stressful stimuli of strong and harsh social media reactions, the body allocates energy to mitigate the mental response. As energy stockpiles are used, employees experience mental fatigue, a major sign of job burnout.

H5: *There is a positive relationship between social reactions and burnout.*

3.6 Social Media Reactions and Employee Relations

According to the COR theory, social media reactions have a significant impact on emotional energy (Hobfoll, 2001; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). When employees are connected on social media, it is difficult to separate personal and work relationships. On social sites, people post personal content, such as pictures of their cars, outings, hobbies, birthdays, children, and even political opinions. This way, co-workers obtain extensive information about each other, which is not possible otherwise. Social networking in the workplace was viewed as an effort to enhance interpersonal bonding and friendliness at work. Personal posts give employees a chance to expand their networks—for example, they can connect with colleagues who share their interest in exercise, reading, poetry, trekking, or photography. However, it was found to have an underlying impact as well—not everyone can be happy looking at a co-worker's house, vacations, and other achievements; some people may show signs of jealousy, frustration, and anger, especially when a manager posts pictures of an out-of-city conference with industry seniors while his team is working.

These feelings of anger or jealousy in reaction to a colleague's social media post are likely to make people lose interest in their work. As part of their reactions, they may start talking ill of them or even confront them, leading to direct or indirect conflicts and unfriendliness.

H6: *There is a negative relationship between social reactions and employees' interpersonal relations.*

3.7 Burnout and Interpersonal Relationships

Job burnout and interpersonal relationships at work, two major outcomes of social media interactions, have a two-way linkage. Each leads to the other (Innstranda, Langballe, Espnes, Falkum, & Aasland, 2008). For example, one of the symptoms of burnout is emotional fatigue (Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006), and when one is emotionally worn out, one cannot have happy relationships. Similarly, when due to the moderating impact of social comparison and social reactions, relationships between two individuals are affected, there is demotivation, and the result is job burnout. The opposite also is true. When colleagues are supportive, one feels happy, inspired, and confident in their company, which means that there is less chance of job burnout (Kanwar, Singh, & Kodwani, 2009). This also is supported by the COR theory, which says that resource depletion due to burnout may lead to the depletion of other resources.

H7: *Job burnout and interpersonal relationships are negatively correlated.*

3.8 Burnout and Work Performance

Employees who are emotionally stressed, distracted, or low on energy display low levels of performance. Job burnout depletes these resources that are important for high levels of performance (Maslach, 1993). COR theory suggests that when employees experience burnout, they exhibit continuous emotional and physical exhaustion (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998) and cannot perform at the same level as their colleagues. The higher the degree of burnout, the lower is the in-role output. When an employee is dissuaded with his or her work, the chances are remote that he or she would step up

for extra-role assignments. This would keep him or her away from all opportunities for advancement in career, and would result in lower performance (Demerouti, Verbeke, & Bakker, 2005). This supports our next hypothesis that job burnout has a negative spiral impact on job performance.

H8: *There is a negative relationship between burnout and performance at work.*

3.9 Interpersonal Relationships and Work Performance

Personal relationships with colleagues and other employees in the workplace are a significant part of working. Employees often rate an organization based on what they learn about the people working there (Reich & Hershcovis, 2011). The bond employees have with one another often has been studied from a negative perspective, but for many, these bonds can be an encouraging factor because good relationships help people “fulfill the need to belong” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This forms the basis of our hypothesis that harmony and trust among co-workers lead to a healthy work environment, and ultimately help to enhance performance at work:

H9: *There is a positive correlation between interpersonal relationships and performance at work.*

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

The data were collected through an online survey of a working population sample in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi, India, during September–October 2021. Convenience sampling was adopted; respondents were from various age groups, both genders, varying education levels, and different professional areas. A web link to the online questionnaire was shared through social networking sites. The snowballing method was used to expand the sample size. In all, responses were received from 287 participants. Details of descriptive statistics of the participants are presented in Table 1. All 287 respondents were actively using one or more social media sites.

4.2 Demographic Variables

The demographic variables (age, gender, and education) of the respondents are described in Table 1. Initially, it was expected that gender, age, and current working hours have an impact on job burnout. Therefore, these variables were used as background variables in the regression model. However, the results showed that occupation and education do not significantly affect job burnout. To maintain consistency of the measurement variable levels, these were not included in the final model.

4.3 Measurement Scales

A five-point Likert scale was used for all the questions (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Table 2 lists the measurement scales used for each variable. The complete set of questions for each value and factor is listed in the Appendix.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

Path analysis with structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to investigate the proposed mediation pathways. In the covariance structure analysis, maximum likelihood of estimation was used. In SEM, the exogenous variables were control variables, and Instagram use, social comparison, self-esteem, and social anxiety were endogenous variables. Paths were drawn from exogenous variables to all endogenous variables. Paths also were drawn from social media use to social comparison, from social comparison to self-esteem and burnout, and, finally, to low output at work.

5 DATA INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS, AND RESULTS

Correlation tests showed that social media use had a significant and positive correlation with social comparison, and with job burnout. However, no significant correlation was found between social comparison and job burnout. Those using social media for longer durations and more frequently had a higher degree of job burnout; they also were found to resort more to social comparison (Table 3). However, people who had a greater tendency for social comparison did not necessarily complain of job burnout.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of survey participants (N = 287)

Division		N	Ratio (%)
Gender	Male	160	44.3
	Female	127	55.7
Age	24 and less	13	4.5
	24–34	84	29.3
	35–44	115	40.1
	45–54	50	17.4
	55 and above	25	8.7
Education	Graduate	235	81.9
	Master’s degree	48	16.7
	Doctorate	4	1.4
Work experience	Less than 5 years	71	24.7
	5–9 years	89	31.0
	10–14 years	51	17.8
	15–19 years	47	16.4
	20–24 years	19	6.6
	25 years and more	10	3.5
Connected with co-workers on social media	Yes	253	88.2
	No	34	11.8
Average daily time spent on social media	No SM	0	0.0
	0–2 hours	7	2.4
	2–4 hours	111	38.7
	4–6 hours	135	47.0
	More than 6 hours	34	11.8
Social media use	Facebook	273	95.1
	WhatsApp/Telegram	277	96.5
	Instagram	156	54.4
	LinkedIn	88	30.7
	Twitter	34	11.8

A structural equation model analysis was used to check the suggested theoretical model. First, item-level covariances were used to test the measurement model. This is an important step for structural equations analysis because it matches the measures with theoretical constructs. It also helps to determine how the latent variables are associated with their measures, and to ensure that the measurement model fits before the structural model is interpreted (Weston & Gore,

2006). This was followed by examining the hypothesized model (Figure 2). To confirm that this was the best-fitting model, two alternative models were tested, and the two social media variables were examined to determine their impact on work performance. As the final step, the Process feature of SPSS (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) was used to determine the indirect effects. In both the cases, after estimating the path, a bootstrapping confidence interval was calculated.

Table 2: Measurement scale details for each variable

No.	Measure	Scale used	No. of questions	Cronbach's alpha
1	Social media usage	Social media addiction scale compiled by Jamal Al-Menayes (2015)	5	0.830
2	Social media reactions	Developed from previous studies	5	0.805
3	Social media comparison	Iowa–Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999)	11	0.761
4	Job burnout	Maslach Burnout Inventory–based questionnaire	5	0.932
5	Job performance	Based on the general job performance instrument developed by Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell (1993)	5	0.834
6	Interpersonal relationships at work	Adapted from Carlson et al.'s (2009) scale to measure interpersonal relationships with co-workers	4	0.713

Table 3: Means, standard deviations, and correlations (N = 287)

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Social media use	Social media reactions	Social media comparison	Burnout	Interpersonal relationships at work
Social media use	3.284	0.771	—	—	—	—	—
Social media reactions	3.452	0.761	0.512	—	—	—	—
Social media comparison	3.868	0.747	0.643	0.460	—	—	—
Burnout	3.571	0.948	0.647	0.417	0.491	—	—
Interpersonal relationships at work	2.682	0.603	-0.367	-0.318	-0.388	0.387	—
Work performance	2.885	0.660	-0.308	-0.313	-0.331	0.569	0.473

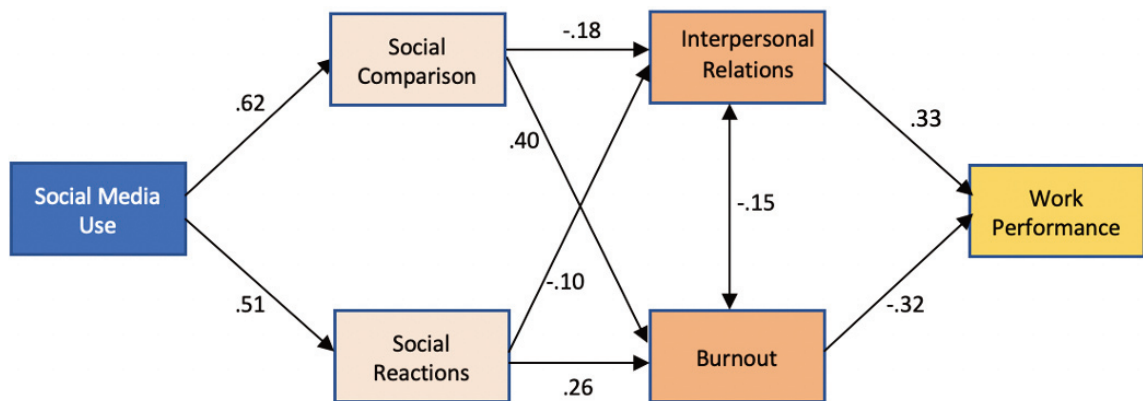
First, the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables in the study were obtained (Table 3). The measurement model comprising 33 indicators and 5 factors was tested—one for each scale in the study—and the items within each scale were correlated. Then the hypothesized model and relationships were examined (Figure 2). This model builds on the previously established measurement model incorporating nine hypothesized paths.

Seven of the hypothesized paths were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$).

A positive relationship was found between social media usage and social comparisons ($b = 0.62$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.00$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 predicted that social media addiction is positively related to social reactions ($b = 0.51$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.00$); it also is supported. The negative

path from social media comparisons to interpersonal relationships also is supported (Hypothesis 3) ($b = -0.18$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.00$). Similarly, Hypothesis 4 is supported: burnout is positively related with social comparisons ($b = 0.40$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = 0.00$). Hypothesis 5, social reactions lead to burnout, also is supported ($b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = 0.00$). Hypothesis 6 also is supported, which predicted social media reactions are negatively correlated with interpersonal relationships at work ($b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.05$). Hypothesis 7 suggested a negative correlation between interpersonal relationships and burnout; it also is supported ($b = -0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.01$). In fact, it showed a clear correlation, indicating that a higher degree of burnout leads to a deterioration of interpersonal relationships, and that better interpersonal relationships at work can minimize the possibility of job burnout. Furthermore, the positive relationship between interpersonal re-

Figure 2: Standardized path loadings



relationships and performance at work (H8) is supported ($b = 0.33$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.01$), as is the negative relationship between job burnout and job performance (H9) ($b = -.32$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.01$). Thus, the indirect effect of social media addiction on performance is supported.

6 DISCUSSION

The study used the COR framework (Hobfoll, 2011) to investigate how social media use (including the mediating effect of social media reactions and comparison) is linked with interpersonal relationships and job burnout—both of which are significantly relevant to performance at work. Overall, the results supported the theory, demonstrating that social media reactions and comparisons affect job performance negatively. Specifically, it was found that job performance can be affected by social media in two ways: (1) addictive use causes exhaustion and loss of time that depletes focus on work, and (2) the tendency to compare one's situation with the social media posts of others leads to emotional burnout that affects relationships with co-workers and job performance.

The findings significantly linked social media use with interpersonal relationships at work and with job burnout, highlighting the ways in which social media addiction can affect job performance.

The physical implications of social media addiction were measured in terms of the time and energy spent on social media—time and energy that could have been spent on work. Social media addiction also depletes a good amount of emotional resources, which affects organization behavior. Respondents with tendency to measure feedback on their social media posts were more likely to report job burnout, mainly due to the pressure of posting likeable content and comparing it with co-workers' posts. This comparison also is as a major cause of the decline in good relationships among co-workers. Envy, frustration, and anger over social media posts and reactions to them affect the way in which people deal with each other. Therefore, there are two types of responses to social media—physical exhaustion, and emotional fatigue. The latter is different from the behavioral path, which is more about the characteristic manner in which a person acts or conducts themselves, especially toward others. Behavior is more of a permanent nature, whereas emotional reaction is a dynamic response to a situation.

Another focus area that this study explored was the implications of social media connections among co-workers. These connections initially were considered to be beneficial for improving communication among co-workers and promoting a feeling of camaraderie, of mutual trust and friendship. It helped employees get to know one another better by communicating on other-than-work grounds. How-

ever, over time, comparisons and reactions on social media posts led to feelings of frustration, envy, and even anger. This setback to interpersonal relationships was exactly the opposite of the planned objective.

Amid this physical and emotional exhaustion at work due to increased social media use and the urge to share all of one's details (personal and professional), it was found that job burnout also has an impact on personal relationships, though this effect is not very strong. A possible reason could be that the loss of energy and drive in the case of a burnout also affects interest in and attention to other people.

This study has important practical contributions for both employees and managers. The path analysis of addictive social-media-use burnout, poor interpersonal relationships, and an ultimately negative impact on job performance suggests that the adverse effects of social media use can be managed to some extent by good time management. If there is a restriction on the time to use social media, employees will stop checking their social media accounts constantly throughout the day (and this may soon become a habit). If organizations restrict social media use to 2–3 times per day, employees can dedicate their time and energy to work and improve their efficiency. Further studies can be conducted to determine how interpersonal relationships can be improved by using social media networking with co-workers.

This study also highlights several possibilities for future research, for example, the impact of different types of social media. This study uses the term social media collectively for all the networking apps, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, but the differences between the use of Facebook (Tang, Chen, Yang, Chung, & Lee, 2016) WhatsApp, Twitter, and LinkedIn can be explored, and may provide more insight. Because most of the respondents admitted to overlapping use of multiple social media networks, this factor also can be considered. It would be very interesting to explore how employees differentiate between different platforms for attaining social and work goals. Exploring the reasons behind the growing use of social media, even to the extent of addiction, at the cost of work and among all age groups also is an interesting area of study. It is hoped that future studies will try to gain deeper insights into these in-

fluences of social media networking in the workplace to help organizations encourage employees to utilize social media connections productively.

7 CONCLUSION

Social media is an important tool to build up a business—and also the organization. Despite all the negative influences, its use is increasing mainly due to its role in the instant distribution of information in today's digital world. Because most employees today are connected with co-workers on social media, it is important to understand the impact of such connections on individual performance at work and on the organization as whole. This study focused on the possible impact of social media connections with co-workers on interpersonal relationships and performance at work so that businesses can take measures to mitigate any negative effect. It was found that the addictive use of social media and connecting with work colleagues affects one's performance and behavior at work—through the mediating variables of social media reactions and social media comparison. Because co-worker social media connections form a vital organizational construct, future research can build on these results to help create a positive work environment.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Družbena omrežja so postala pomemben del življenja ljudi vseh starostnih skupin. Le-ta nas namreč povezujejo med seboj in nam dajejo priložnost, da svoje dosežke delimo s prijatelji in družino. Zaradi njihovega čedalje večjega dosega, so ga za promocijo svojih ciljev in za vzpostavitev podpornih odnosov začela uporabljati tudi podjetja. Ugotovljeno je bilo, da družbena omrežja uporabnikom vzamejo veliko časa in energije. Črpanje teh dveh dragocenih virov resno vpliva na vedenjsko in psihično počutje ljudi, kar vodi v izgorelost, ki se na koncu odraža tudi v njihovi uspešnosti pri delu. Družbena omrežja prav takoo veljajo za vzrok slabšanja medsebojnih odnosov na delovnem mestu, kar je skoraj v nasprotju prvotnega namena vzpostavitve le-teh. Prejšnje študije so že pokazale posredniško vlogo družbenih primerjav in družbenih reakcij, ta študija pa je raziskala vpliv družbenih omrežij na sodelavce na delovnem mestu. Za preučitev vpliva različnih dejavnikov z analizo poti, je bil razvit hipotetični model. Končni vzorec je zajemal 287 zaposlenih v zasebnem sektorju s polnim delovnim časom, ki se nahajajo v regiji glavnega mesta Indije. Anketiranci so bili različnih starostnih skupin in vseh stopenj zaposlitve ter izkušenj.

REFERENCES

- Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between excessive online social networking, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive Behaviours*, 64, 287–293.
- Bakker, A. B., Emmerik, H. V., & Euwema, M. C. (2006). Crossover of burnout and engagement in work teams. *Work and Occupations*, 33(4), 464–489.
- Baumeister, R. M., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497–529.
- Brosschot, J. F., & Thayer, J. F. (2003). Heart rate response is longer after negative emotions than after positive emotions. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 50, 181–187.
- Buunk, B.P., Ybema, J.F., Gibbons, F.X., & Ipenburg, M. (2001). The affective consequences of social comparison as related to professional burnout and social comparison orientation. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 31, 337–51.
- Buunk, A.P., & Gibbons, F.X. (2007). Social comparison: the end of a theory and the emergence of a field. *Organization Behaviour and Human Decision Process*, 102, 3–21.
- Cambrom, M., Acitelli, L., & Steinberg, L. (2010). When friends make you blue: The role of friendship contingent self-esteem in predicting self-esteem and depressive symptoms. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36, 384–397.
- Carbonell, X., & Panova, T. (2017). A critical consideration of social networking sites' addiction potential. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 25, 48–57.
- Carlson, J. R., Zivnuska, S., Carlson, D. S., Harris, R., & Harris, K. J. (2016). Social media use in the workplace: A study of dual effects. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, 28(1), 15–28.
- Carr, C. T. & Walther, J. B. (2014). Increasing attributional certainty via social media: Learning about others one bit at a time. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19, 922–937.
- Chen, S., Westman, M., & Eden, D. (2009). Impact of enhanced resources on anticipatory stress and adjustment to new information technology: A field-experimental test of conservation of resources theory. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 14, 219–230.
- Chiang, J. K. H. & Suen, H. Y. (2015). Self-presentation and hiring recommendations in online communities: Lessons from LinkedIn. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 48, 516–524.
- Davison, H. K., Maraist, C., & Bing, M. N. (2011). Friend or foe? The promise and pitfalls of using social networking sites for HR decisions. *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 26, 153–159.
- De Carlo, N. A., Falco, A., Pierro, A., Dugas, M., Kruglanski, A. W., & Higgins, E. T. (2014). Regulatory mode orientations and well-being in an organizational setting: The differential mediating roles of workaholicism and work engagement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 44(11), 725–738.

- Demerouti E, Bakker AB, Nachreiner F, Schaufeli WB (2001) The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 499.
- Dieris-Hirche, J., Bottel, L., Bielefeld, M., Steinbuchel, T., Kehyayan, A., Dieris, B., & Te Wildt, B. (2017). Media use and internet addiction in adult depression: A case-control study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 96–103.
- Ding, M. , Liu, Y. and Li, Q. (2018) The Interpersonal Impact of Social Comparison. *Psychology*, 9, 797-808. doi: 10.4236/psych.2018.94051
- Dimsdale, J. E., Pierce, C., Schoenfeld, D., Brown, A., Zisman, R., & Graham, R. (1986). Suppressed anger and blood pressure: The effects of race, sex, social class, obesity, and age. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 48, 430–436.
- Facebook (2022). *Facebook - American social networking sites*. Retrieved from: <https://baike.so.com/doc/5340534-5575977.html>
- Ferraro, G., Caci, B., D'Amico, A., & Blasi, M. D. (2007). Internet addiction disorder: An Italian study. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 10, 170–175.
- Festinger L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117-140.
- Fox, J., & Moreland, J. (2015). The dark side of social networking sites: An exploration of the relational and psychological stressors associated with Facebook use and affordances. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 168–176.
- Frings, D., Albery, I. P., & Monk, R. L. (2017). The whys and hows of psychosocial approaches to addiction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 47(3), 115–117.
- Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(1), 129–142.
- Griffiths, M. (2000). Does internet and computer “addiction” exist? Some case study evidence. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 3, 211–218.
- Hakanen, J. J., Peeters, M. C. W., & Perhoniemi, R. (2011). Enrichment processes and gain spirals at work and home: A 3-year cross-lagged panel study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84, 8–30.
- Hakanen, J. J., Perhoniemi, R., & Toppinen-Tanner, S. (2008). Positive gain spirals at work: From job resources to work engagement, personal initiative and work-unit innovativeness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(1), 78–91.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The Influence of Culture, Community, and the Nested-Self in the Stress Process: Advancing Conservation of Resources Theory. *Applied Psychology*, 50-3.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (2011). Conservation of resources caravans and engaged settings. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84, 116–122.
- Innstranda, T., Langballe, M., Espnes, A., Falkum, G., & Aasland, G. (2008). Positive and negative work-family interaction and burnout: A longitudinal study of reciprocal relations. *Work and Stress*, 22, 1–15.
- Jamal, A.M. (2015). Psychometric properties and validation of the Arabic social media addiction scale. *Journal of Addiction*, 291743.
- Joinson A.N. (2008). Looking at, looking up or keeping up with people? Motives and use of Facebook. In: Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on *Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1027–36. Florence.
- Junco R. (2012). The relationship between frequency of Facebook use, participation in Facebook activities, and student engagement. *Computer Education*, 58, 162–71.
- Kanwar, Y. P. S., Singh, A. K., & Kodwani, A. D. (2009). Work-life balance and burnout as predictors of job satisfaction in the IT-ITES industry. *The Journal of Business Perspective*, 13, 1–12.
- Karatepe, O.M., & Tekinkus, M. (2006). The effects of work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and intrinsic motivation on job outcomes of front-line employees. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 24, 173-193.
- Kaupins, G. & Park, S. (2011). Legal and ethical implications of corporate social networks. *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journal*, 23, 83-99.
- Kende, A., van Zomeren, M., Ujhelyi, A., & Lantos, N. A. (2016). The social affirmation use of social media as a motivator of collective action. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 46(8), 453–470.
- Kitchel T., Smith A.R., Henry AL, Robinson J.S., Lawver R.G., Park T.D. (2012). Teacher job satisfaction and burnout viewed through social comparisons. *J Agric Educ*, 53, 31–44.
- Kleumper, D. H., Rosen, P. A. & Mossholder, K. W. (2012). Social networking websites, personality ratings, and the organizational context: More than meets the eye? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 42, 1143-1172.
- Koerner, B. I. (2010). *How Twitter and Facebook make us more productive*. Retrieved from http://www.wired.com/2010/02/st_essay_distraction/
- Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS ONE*, 8(8), e69841.
- Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2012). Online gaming addiction in adolescence: A literature review of empirical research. *Journal of Behavioural Addiction*, 1, 3–22.
- Landers, R. N. & Goldberg, A. S. (2014). Online social media in the workplace: A conversation with employees. In M. D. Coovert & L. F. Thompson (Eds.). *Psychology of Workplace Technology* (pp. 284-306). New York: Routledge Academic.

- Liden, R.C., Wayne, S.J., & Stilwell, D. (1993). A Longitudinal Study on the Early Development of Leader-Member Exchanges. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 78(4), 662-674.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1982). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 2, 99-113.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (1997). *The truth about burnout*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B., Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review Psychology*, 52, 397-422.
- Meerkerk, G. J., Van Den Eijnden, R. J. J. M., Vermulst, A. A., & Garretsen, H. F. L. (2009). The compulsive internet use scale (CIUS): Some psychometric properties. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 12, 1-6.
- Michinov N. (2005). Social comparison, perceived control, and occupational burnout. *Applied Psychology*. 54, 99-118.
- Moody, E. J. (2001). Internet use and its relationship to loneliness. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 4, 393-401.
- Moons, W. G., Eisenberger, N. I., & Taylor, S. E. (2010). Anger and fear responses to stress have different biological profiles. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 24, 215-219.
- Moqbel, M., Nevo, S., & Kock, N. (2013). Organizational members' use of social networking sites and job performance. *Information Technology and People*, 26, 240-64.
- Nabi, R.L., Prestin, A. (2013). Facebook friends with (health) benefits? Exploring social network site use and perceptions of social support, stress, and well-being. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 16, 721-7.
- Nowland, R., Necka, E., & Cacioppo, J. (2018). Loneliness and social internet use: Pathways to reconnection in a digital world? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 13, 70-87.
- Preacher, K.J., Hayes, A.F. Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods* 40, 879-891 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879>
- Reich T, Hershcovis S. (2011). Interpersonal relationships at work. *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*, Vol. 3, pp.223-248. American Psychological Association
- Safioglou C., Greitemeyer T. (2014). Facebook's emotional consequences: why Facebook causes a decrease in mood and why people still use it. *Computer and Human Behavior*, 35, 359-63.
- Schmidt, G. B., Lelchook, A. M., & Martin, J. E. (2016). The relationship between social media co-worker connections and work-related attitudes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55 (Part A), 439-445.
- Statista. (2021). *Leading social media sites across India in July 2022*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1115648/india-leading-social-media-sites-by-page-traffic/>
- Tang, J., Chen, M., Yang, C., Chung, T., & Lee, Y. (2016). Personality traits, interpersonal relationships, online social support, and Facebook addiction. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33, 102-108.
- Taylor, C. (2013). *Smartphone users check Facebook 14 times a day*. Retrieved from <http://mashable.com/2013/03/27/facebook-usage-survey/#dAE73jm8Vgq2>
- Ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2012). A resource perspective on the work-Home interface: The work-Home resources model. *American Psychologist*, 67(7), 545.
- Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 36(1), 143-149.
- Van Iddekinge, C. H., Lanivich, S H., Roth, P. L., & Junco, E (2013 December 13). Social media for selection? Validity and adverse impact potential of a Facebook-based assessment. *Journal of Management*, 1-25.
- Vogel E.A., Rose JP, Okdie B.M., Eckles K, Franz B. (2015). Who compares and despairs? The effect of social comparison orientation on social media use and its outcomes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 86, 249-56.
- Weidner, N., Wynne, K., & O'Brien, K. (2012). Individual differences in workplace related use of Internet-based social networking sites. In Schmidt, G. B. & Landers, R. N. (co-chairs). *The Impact of Social Media on Work*. Symposium presented at the 2012 meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, San Diego, California.
- Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 18, pp. 17-19). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Weston, R., & Gore, P. A. (2006). A Brief Guide to Structural Equation Modeling. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 34(5), 719-751. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006286345>
- Wright, T. A., & Cropanzano, R. (1998). Emotional exhaustion as a predictor of job performance and voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(3), 486-493.
- Xie X.Z., An J. (2015) Characteristics of Social Media User's tendency to social comparison. *Doc Information and Knowledge*, 3, 107-12.
- Zhao J.J., Yu S., Wang, Y. (2017). Research on the influence mechanism of colleague promotion to knowledge-oriented staff's job burnout from the perspective of social comparison: based on the roles of episodic envy and face need. *Soft Science*, 31, 75-84.
- Zivnuska, Suzanne, John R. Carlson, Dawn S. Carlson, Ranida B. Harris, and Kenneth J. Harris (2019), "Social Media Addiction and Social Media Reactions: The Implications for Job Performance," *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 159(6), 746-760

Appendix: Measurement Instruments

1. Social Media Use and Addiction

Social media addiction scale (Al-Menayes, 2015)

1. I often find myself using social media longer than intended.
2. I get irritated when someone interrupts me when I'm using social media.
3. Time passes by without me feeling it when I am using social media.
4. My family complain frequently of my preoccupation with social media.
5. I find myself thinking about what happened on social media when I am away from it.

2. Social Media Reaction

Developed from previous studies (Suzanne Z. et al., 2019; Schmidt, Lelchook & Martin, 2016)

1. Knowing things about colleagues through social media makes me feel awkward around them.
2. Learning through social media what my colleagues are doing when I think they should be working makes me angry.
3. Sometimes I get frustrated by the things I learn about my work colleagues through social media.
4. It is hard not to let the information about my work colleagues I get from social media impact my feelings about them at work.
5. Knowing things about colleagues through social media makes me feel like our relationships are fake.

3. Social Media Comparison

Iowa–Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999)

1. I often compare how my loved ones (boy/girlfriend, spouse, family) are doing with how others are doing.
2. I often compare how I am doing socially (such as social skills, popularity) with other people.
3. I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life.
4. I often like to talk with others about mutual opinions and experiences.
5. If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it.

4. Burnout

Maslach Burnout Inventory–based questionnaire (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001)

1. I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.
2. I feel worn out at the end of a working day.
3. I feel tired as soon as I get up in the morning and see a new working day stretched out in front of me.
4. I get the feeling that I treat some clients or colleagues impersonally, as if they were objects.
5. Working with people the whole day is stressful for me.
6. I feel frustrated by my work.
7. I get the feeling that I work too hard.
8. Being in direct contact with people at work is too stressful.
9. I have the feeling that my colleagues blame me for some of their problems.
10. I feel I am not capable of investing emotionally in co-workers and customers.

5. Work Performance

General job performance instrument developed by Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell (1993)

1. I always perform better than an acceptable level.
2. I often perform better than what can be expected from me.
3. I often put in extra effort in my work.
4. I intentionally expend a great deal of effort in carrying out my job.
5. The quality of my work is top-notch.

6. Interpersonal Relationships at Work

Scale to measure interpersonal relationships with co-workers (Carlson et al., 2009)

1. I am always ready to communicate and discuss ideas with colleagues.
2. I do not put enough time into developing deep and trusting relationships.
3. I find it hard to approach people or start up a conversation.
4. Differences of opinion on matters of work and matters other than work puts me off.



EMBRACING THE DIGITAL AGE: THE IMPACT OF PROACTIVITY AND BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS ON EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Jure Andolšek

School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
jure.ando@gmail.com

Armin Salkić

School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
arminsalko45@gmail.com

Abstract

Personality traits are crucial to understanding an individual's behavior, and the Big Five personality traits provide insight into the five core traits that underlie this behavior. A better understanding of an individual's Big Five personality traits can aid in identifying their connection with proactivity, which, in turn, has a positive impact on employee development within a company. This article explores the link between the Big Five personality traits and proactivity, and their combined effect on employee development. Our study emphasizes the significance of distributed work and highlights the positive link between four of the Big Five personality traits (i.e., openness, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) and proactivity. Our research draws upon theoretical concepts and practical case analyses of larger companies, demonstrating the favorable relationship among the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development. This study's findings underscore the significance of affording adequate opportunities for employee development, and highlight the positive impact of distributed work on stimulating employee development. Our study's results are pertinent to researchers conducting further research on this topic, and we recommend that companies invest resources in providing training to their workforce on proactive behavior, which can lead to improved organizational performance and foster individual development within the company.

Keywords: digital age, proactivity, big five personality traits, employee development, case study

1 Introduction

Personality refers to an individual's enduring patterns of behavior and intrapersonal processes that originate within the person (Burger, 2014). Research emphasizes that individuals exhibit consistent patterns of behavior across various contexts (Davis, Smitherman, & Baskin, 2013). Personality comprises multiple traits that collectively shape an individual's behavior, with certain traits distinguishing one personality from another (Cattell, 1946). Although a relatively small number of personality traits are studied to explain individual behavior, the most important traits include neuroticism, open-

ness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness (O'Connor, 2002). The five-factor model of personality traits, initially proposed by McCrae and Costa (1986), provides a basis for understanding individual differences in personality. However, personality traits are subject to change over time as individuals develop and age, with traits becoming more stable during middle age and within specific work environments (Cobb-Clark & Schurer, 2012). Judge et al. (2006) showed that the constancy of the Big Five personality traits varies in elderly individuals, as does their impact on career advancement.

Proactivity is another personality trait that is considered to be significant, particularly due to its association with career success and its high value to employers (Ramus, 2001). Unlike the Big Five personality traits, proactivity is more malleable, and can be acquired through organizational learning, making it a key trait in employee development. It is defined as the initiation and creation of change by assuming control over a given situation (Crant, 2000). Individuals with high levels of proactivity are better able to adapt to the organizational environment, socialize effectively with other employees, and increase task success. Proactive individuals can take advantage of an enriched workplace design and anticipate and prepare for changes, leading to optimal outcomes with appropriate support (Lamovšek, Černe, Radević, & Božič, 2022). Bateman and Crant (1993) introduced the concept of proactive personality in organizational behavior research, positing that it is a desirable trait that motivates individuals to take actions to overcome situational constraints. Within the current developmental context, it is imperative that employees possess proactivity (Dachner, Ellingson, Noe, & Saxton, 2021) and develop high levels of openness to experience and extraversion, among the Big Five personality traits, to achieve optimal development within an organization (Antoncic, Antoncic, Grum, & Ruzzier, 2018). Understanding the influence of the Big Five personality traits and proactivity on employee development is critical for organizations seeking to enhance their human capital. The Big Five personality traits are considered to be a fundamental framework for understanding personality differences, and they have been linked to a range of important work outcomes. By understanding how different personality traits impact employee development, organizations can tailor their training and development programs to meet the unique needs and characteristics of their employees (Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006).

The integration of distributed work in a digital context has given rise to a diverse range of opportunities and challenges for employee development. The use of information telecommunication technologies (ICT) has enabled new distributed work arrangements, thereby allowing employees to work remotely, and the implementation of digital technologies has enabled the creation of more effective and flexible

work arrangements (Lamovšek & Černe, 2023). However, the trend toward agile operations and low hierarchies may necessitate that employees assume more significant responsibility for their own learning and development, highlighting the importance of self-directedness in employee development (Lemmetty & Collin, 2020). Additionally, given the recent transformations in the digital context, emphasizing the importance of distributed work, in conjunction with the aforementioned personality traits, is crucial for achieving optimal results (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

An examination of the available research papers on three crucial concepts, namely the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development, reveals numerous theoretical and practical implications. However, a major research gap observed in the literature is the absence of a comprehensive model that links and explores the interrelationships between the aforementioned key concepts. Moreover, most authors concentrated on the theoretical aspects of the key concepts, without delving into their application in the business practices of large corporations. As a result, it is challenging to apply the existing analyses and findings to concrete business practices, because most authors do not consider digitalization, which continuously transforms both work and the business environment. Thus, the digitalization of work environments must be regarded as a large-scale organizational change that has various implications for employee development (Ostemeier & Strobel, 2022). The existing literature and research do not establish a direct link among all three constructs and their practical implications within the context of a distributed work environment. Instead, they concentrate on examining the individual relationships between each construct.

The contemporary workplace has undergone several transformations that have resulted in a shift toward more employee-driven human capital development practices. This has led to a significant change in the types of activities employees engage in for employee development. Employees increasingly participate in informal and unstructured activities that emphasize learner proactivity, autonomy, and interactions. However, classical employee development theories still follow a traditional approach that limits the understanding of how

employee development happens today, because it places the responsibility for development solely on the employer and an instructor who carries out structured activities. To better align with modern employee development methods, scholars have proposed that development is a shared responsibility between employers and employees, in which proactivity is of significant importance (Dachner et al., 2021). Nonetheless, current research and theories on proactive employee development largely have overlooked the impact of large-scale changes in an organization's environment on an employee's motivation to participate in proactive learning programs (Ostemeier & Strobel 2022).

The Big Five personality traits and proactivity are crucial individual characteristics for employee development. Thus, we propose a contemporary theoretical framework for employee development that highlights the active role of employees in acquiring new skills and knowledge. Our theoretical model emphasizes an employee-led approach characterized by proactive behavior, wherein employees actively create opportunities for professional growth and take accountability for their career advancement (Dachner et al., 2021). To comprehensively understand the evolution of employee development practices over time, we find the employee-led approach to be a valuable tool. We considered Noe's classification of employee-driven development programs implemented by organizations worldwide (Dachner et al., 2021).

To demonstrate the significance of each fundamental concept to organizations, we present multiple case studies of large corporations that effectively implement our theories into practical strategies within authentic work environments. The case studies serve to illustrate the proposed propositions and establish cohesive integration among the concepts.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Employee Development

According to McCauley and Hezlett (2001), employee development pertains to the augmentation of an individual's ability to perform their current or future job responsibilities effectively within their work organization. This entails an iterative intervention by

the organization to facilitate or directly enhance the job-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities of its workforce. A broader approach to employee development, as proposed by Dachner et al. (2021), encompasses an ongoing and continuous process that may comprise voluntary or mandatory activities and formal or informal training, and may be related to one's present job or long-term personal efficacy, undertaken during and/or outside of work hours. In a related vein, Kaše and Svetlik (2021) associated employee development with the acquisition of competencies that enable individuals to execute their future job roles effectively, which may be dissimilar from the present workplace requirements.

In contemporary times, amid the prevalence of a knowledge-based society, there is a growing emphasis on employee development across various domains of human resource management (HRM). Concurrently, organizations actively are seeking effective schemes to cultivate the skills of their workforce with the objective of enhancing their occupational proficiency. In addition to enhancing the adaptability and competitiveness of the organization, employee development also can have favorable effects on its reputation, augment the capacity to attract prospective talented employees, and foster employee retention by providing opportunities to fulfill career aspirations (Kaše & Svetlik, 2021).

Within the literature review, several commonly used concepts for the development of new employees can be identified. This pertains to all the developmental processes utilized to enhance the performance of new employees to desired levels, encompassing all the formal and informal activities in which an organization and employee participate. The pivotal outcome of new employee development is the cultivation of an employee with a high level of job performance, alignment with the job environment, and a sense of loyalty toward their new employer (Holton, 1996). Organizations employ diverse developmental activities, including formal education; job experiences; professional relationships; and personality, skills and abilities assessment, to enable professional growth for employees. However, formal education remains the dominant strategy for employee development in the majority of organizations. Therefore, employees are afforded the opportunity to enroll in classroom instruction, online courses,

college degree programs, and mentorship initiatives, all of which are designed systematically with specific goals, learning objectives, assessment instruments, and expectations (Dachner et al., 2021).

Advanced HRM theory introduces the concept of strategic employee development, which is regarded as a pivotal element of achieving competitive advantage. The distinctive skills and capabilities possessed by an organization and its employees, which are arduous to replicate and imitate by competitors, are deemed to be critical components of competitive advantage. In this regard, strategic employee development facilitates the development of firm-specific knowledge and skills that are in line with the strategic objectives of the organization. Strategic employee development is characterized by several key features, including the integration of employee development activities with the organizational mission and goals, active participation of line managers in designing and delivering employee development programs, the implementation of complementary employee development activities that reinforce the contribution of employee development, and the alignment of employee development initiatives with the organizational culture and values (Garavan, 2007).

Strategic employee development is an essential component of the four dimensions of core capability, namely: (1) knowledge and skills, (2) physical and technical systems, (3) managerial systems of development and education, and (4) organizational values and norms. In this context, the implementation of development programs may result in the generation of distinctive economic values for multiple stakeholders in an organization, including employees, management, shareholders, environment, and customers (Garavan, 2007).

The development of employees is not solely contingent upon their physical presence in the workplace, because opportunities for growth still can arise despite distributed work arrangements. Indeed, in certain cases, distributed working can result in more-effective development outcomes. The rapid emergence of new technologies and employment opportunities has led to an increased likelihood of distributed work, thereby enabling individuals to pursue development opportunities remotely (Wagner, Heil, Hellweg, & Schmedt, 2019).

2.2 Big Five Personality Traits and Employee Development

Personality is a complex and widely recognized construct that embodies an individual's consistent and distinctive patterns of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and social interactions, which define their overall character (Kernberg, 2016). The study of personality differences has been an enduring pursuit throughout human history; ancient Greek philosopher Hippocrates posited four temperaments associated with specific bodily fluids. Modern personality psychology emerged later, and, with advances in technology and access to vast data sets, researchers can now study personality with greater precision and depth than ever before (Montag & Elhai, 2019).

Personality arises from an individual's capacity to experience both internal bodily states and external environmental perceptions, and theories of personality must elucidate its definition, components, organization, and development across time (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Although different psychologists may hold differing views on the exact definition of personality, it generally encompasses more than surface-level characteristics (Feist, Roberts, & Feist, 2021). According to Kernberg (2016), personality comprises the entirety of an individual's subjective experiences and behavior patterns, including both conscious and unconscious factors such as concrete and habitual actions, self-perceptions, perceptions of the world, conscious thoughts, desires and fears, and internal states. In essence, personality constitutes a persistent set of traits, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that remain stable over time and in varying circumstances, constituting an individual's unique and recognizable identity (Boyd & Pennebaker, 2017).

Conversely, personality traits refer to the relatively stable and long-lasting characteristics that distinctively shape an individual's personality (Allport & Allport, 1921). These traits play a vital role in determining an individual's behavior, thoughts, and emotions, contributing to the development of their distinctive personality (Buss, 1989). Personality traits remain an important area of study in the 21st century, because they offer insight into the mechanisms underlying behavior, cognition, and emotion, and can be applied to a range of practical settings,

such as the workplace (Montag & Elhai, 2019). They represent consistent patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that shape an individual's unique characteristics (Diener & Lucas, 2023). Trait psychology postulates that individuals differ in terms of fundamental trait dimensions that remain stable over time and in varying situations (Diener & Lucas, 2023). Popular understanding of personality traits often suggests that they are immutable and exert a direct influence on an individual's behavior (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003).

The Five-Factor Model, also known as the Big Five, is the most commonly used model of traits, and encompasses five broad dimensions represented by the acronym OCEAN, which can be parsed further into smaller facets for detailed analysis of an individual's personality (Hough, Oswald, & Ock, 2015). The Five-Factor Model also can be linked to behavioral content primarily through conscientiousness, and secondarily through extraversion and agreeableness. Cognitive content can be associated with openness, followed by agreeableness and conscientiousness, whereas affective content can be linked to neuroticism, followed by extraversion and agreeableness (Zilig, Hemenover, & Dienstbier, 2002).

The Big Five personality traits have been shown to play a crucial role in the positive development of employees in an organization. Kickhuk and Wiesner (1997) found that a high level of extraversion and agreeableness have been highlighted as being particularly advantageous, and low levels of neuroticism also could enhance the development process. Shahreki (2020) arrived at similar results, highlighting the significance of agreeableness and additionally emphasizing conscientiousness as a contributing factor to successful employee development. In addition to pre-existing cognitive impairments, an individual's openness to experience can serve as an additional factor influencing their positive development within an organizational context (LePine, Colquitt, & Erez, 2000).

Proposition 1: There is a positive relationship between the Big Five personality traits (high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, and a low level of neuroticism) and employee development.

2.3 Big Five Personality Traits, Proactivity, and Employee Development

In general, employee behavior in the workplace can be categorized into two distinct groups: reactive and proactive. Reactive employees typically wait for instructions before they take any action and carry out their tasks with minimal direction. On the other hand, proactive employees are highly motivated and take initiative to identify opportunities to improve processes, share ideas, and enhance their own and others' performance (Campbell, 2000).

Among the array of significant personality traits, proactivity also is considered to be crucial. Proactivity is a quality that entails the tendency to take proactive measures in one's approach to tasks, which encompasses crucial elements such as initiative-taking, forward-thinking, self-regulation, and the ability to facilitate change (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). It is a critical component of personal and professional success, and is defined as taking a proactive approach to tasks, rather than simply reacting to events (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). It encompasses the key aspects of taking initiative, anticipating future situations, exercising control, and causing change (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Proactivity is not only a desirable quality in employees, but also a critical skill that employers look for when hiring new staff (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). An organization's success is dependent on having a significant number of proactive employees, but this requires more than just hiring proactive individuals. A proactive culture must be nurtured within the organization—a culture that values and celebrates achievement, allows for failure, and fosters collaboration and innovation (Joo & Lim, 2009). The categorization of proactive behavior as either extra-role or in-role is subjective, and can vary based on an individual's interpretation of their role and responsibilities (Parker & Collins, 2008). Extra-role proactive behavior refers to actions that are outside the scope of one's formal job responsibilities, whereas in-role proactive behavior is within the bounds of one's official duties (Grant, & Ashford, 2008). Both forms of proactive behavior can contribute to overall success and can help individuals take control of their career and personal development (Parker & Collins, 2008).

The benefits of proactivity, including its positive impact on individuals and organizations, are well documented. Whereas proactive individuals may resort to using various inappropriate methods to achieve their goals, resulting in negative effects on employee morale (Parker, Wang, & Liao, 2019), the positive impacts of proactivity are noteworthy. These include enhanced job satisfaction, better time management, improved problem-solving abilities, and increased success. Similarly, organizations that have a substantial proportion of proactive individuals may experience positive outcomes, especially in terms of high work performance and innovation, which are the most significant benefits achieved by such organizations (Ghitulescu, 2018).

The Big Five personality traits and proactivity are two areas of study that have been researched widely in the field of psychology. Proactivity can be seen as a form of behavior that is influenced by an individual's personality traits. Personality traits, such as conscientiousness and openness, have been shown to positively impact an individual's level of proactivity. This is because conscientious individuals are more likely to take initiative, and are focused on achieving their goals, and open individuals are more likely to be forward-thinking and have a greater propensity to seek out new opportunities (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010). In contrast, individuals with high levels of neuroticism may be less proactive due to their tendency to be anxious and cautious (Miller & Lynam, 2006). The relationship between personality traits and proactivity can help individuals to understand themselves better, and can help organizations to select and develop employees who have a higher propensity for proactivity (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010).

The ongoing digital transformation has led to a shift in the required skill set for organizational success. In light of this, it has become imperative for employees to engage in proactive skills development in order to remain competitive and relevant in the workforce. The rapid advancements in digital technology and its integration into the modern workplace have challenged conventional perspectives on human creativity (Miah & Omar, 2012). This has elicited numerous inquiries from both academic researchers and industry professionals on how to foster creativity among employees in distributed work

environments (Cai, Khapova, Bossink, Lysova, & Yuan, 2020). The notion of employee proactivity in skills development emphasizes the need for individuals to take the initiative and responsibility for their own professional growth and career advancement. This proactive approach to skills development is critical for employees to stay ahead of the changing demands of the digital landscape and to secure their future employability (Ostmeier & Strobel, 2022).

Numerous organizations have implemented new work arrangements, guided by design interventions and the implementation of activity-based workplaces. The anticipated outcomes of these changes are substantial, including more-efficient utilization of space and resources, enhanced job satisfaction, positive client image, improved performance, and reduced costs (Vos & van der Voordt, 2001). Although it is recognized widely that an organization's success is influenced by various factors such as its overall strategy and resource availability (Nasemm, Sheikh, & Malik, 2011), it is equally important to acknowledge the crucial roles of proactivity and innovation as outcomes resulting from the collective thoughts and actions of individual employees. The ability of employees to generate creative and innovative ideas during their daily work routines depends not only on their personal attributes, but also on their perceptions of the workplace environment (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004). Organizations that foster and support proactivity are more likely to have a motivated and engaged workforce committed to continuous improvement and the achievement of organizational goals (Ramus, 2001).

Effective employee development is critical for organizational success, and requires an understanding of the individual employee's proactivity and personality traits. When developing employees, it is important to recognize the unique combination of these factors and how they shape an employee's approach to their work (Turner, 2003). In this way, employee development strategies can be tailored to the individual, enabling them to achieve their full potential and contribute to organizational goals. Understanding the complex interplay of proactivity and personality traits in employee development is a critical element of effective management practices (Crant, 2000).

Proposition 2: The Big Five personality traits (high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness, and a low level of neuroticism) are positively related to proactivity, which, in turn, is positively associated with employee development.

2.4 Distributed Work Settings

The impact of technological advancements on work design for both employees and organizations has been significant (Schwarzmler et al., 2018). Contemporary workplaces have transitioned from traditional to digitalized environments, with a focus on ICT rather than physical infrastructure (Richter et al., 2018). Cloud services, online platforms, and mobile devices are common tools used by employees for constant communication and connectivity with colleagues and stakeholders from different organizations (Schwarzmler et al., 2018). The concept of distributed work arises when employees are able to remain connected to their workplace and co-workers on a continuous basis. Lamovšek and Černe (2023) highlighted that distributed work requires individuals to collaborate with team members via computer-mediated communication technology, both for planning and for coordination, as well as in formal and social interactions. Under these conditions, employees must hone new human capabilities, including prompt problem-solving, continuous learning, and collaborative problem-solving (Richter et al., 2018).

The notion of work settings, also known as distributed work, typically is defined in terms of its spatial dimensions, as per Schwarzmler et al.'s definition, which characterizes it as "working outside the conventional workplace and communicating with it by way of telecommunications or computer-based technology" (Schwarzmler et al., 2018, p. 177). In addition to spatial considerations, temporal flexibility is another vital aspect of this work design, because employees may connect to the workplace and perform their duties outside of customary working hours. Consequently, the advent of disruptive technologies such as mobile computing and virtual reality significantly has eroded the traditional boundaries between online and offline work. For example, telepresence systems have en-

abled employees from diverse geographical locations to attend the same meeting and participate actively, irrespective of physical or temporal constraints (Schwarzmler et al., 2018).

The process of digital transformation is significantly compelling organizations to update the competencies of their employees regularly to sustain their success. In line with this trend, informal and proactive modes of work-related learning have garnered increased significance, because employees are required to take a proactive approach to managing their careers in contemporary times. Consequently, proactive skills development is defined as "the self-initiated, future- and change-oriented acquisition of knowledge and skills that individuals may need to master future job tasks" (Ostmeier, & Strobel, 2022).

Based on empirical research conducted by Dachner et al. (2021), approximately 35% of employee development hours occur in the absence of an instructor. Therefore, companies must identify the educational requirements of their employees and provide them with access to suitable educational programs, and employee proactivity plays a crucial role in acquiring additional knowledge and skills. Employees are expected to take on greater responsibility for developing their current competencies and acquiring new competencies to fulfill current job demands, assume leadership positions, and ensure their own employability. This employee-driven approach is linked directly to proactive employee behavior, wherein employees create opportunities for growth and hold themselves accountable for their career progression, rather than waiting passively for opportunities to be presented to them (Dachner et al., 2021).

Mikołajczyk (2021) reported on a research study conducted by The Association for Talent Development in August 2020, which examined employee development programs in distributed work settings. The results showed that 99% of the organizations surveyed had implemented e-learning methods for their employees. Furthermore, all the participating organizations in the study planned to offer e-learning programs as part of their human resource development (HRD) initiatives in the next few years.

Ostmeier and Strobel (2022) contended that proactive skills development is associated positively with distributed work design. In accordance with their findings, distributed work settings, as well as digital tools and programs implemented by organizations, provide employees with access to diverse information resources and skills development programs. Thus, distributed work is perceived by employees as an opportunity to augment their knowledge and engage in proactive skills development initiatives.

Proposition 3: Distributed work settings are conducive to proactivity, and hence to employee development.

3 Case Studies

3.1 Employee Development Programs That Are Creating Digital Future

Companies constantly are seeking appropriate programs to develop their employees' skills and knowledge, and digitalization and technological progress have provided numerous opportunities for employees to improve their knowledge anywhere and at any time. Digitalization has had a significant impact on employee development in all organizations, from micro companies to large corporations. Most educational activities in companies now are carried out digitally, using ICT and various intermediaries. The share of classic educational programs that occur "in the classroom" is significantly smaller; courses do not provide the flexibility for employees, and require a considerable amount of time and money (Dachner et al., 2021).

Dachner et al. (2021) introduced Noe's classifications of employee-driven development methods, namely formal courses and programs, assessment, professional relationships, and on-the-job-experience. Each of these categories has a brief theoretical background that is presented in the following subsections, along with practical cases of large companies that have implemented these methods. Although the category of professional relationships are not covered, we explore the theoretical foundations and real-world applications of the other three categories.

3.1.1 Formal Courses and Programs

Traditional "in the classroom" educational programs are offered primarily by academic institutions; companies have turned to online platforms to provide their employees with formal educational courses. Such programs serve as autonomous development activities, helping employees to enhance their knowledge, skills, and capabilities. To this end, companies offer access to massive open online courses (MOOCs) that cover a wide range of topics, including computer science, psychology, physiology, health policy, and similar subjects. These programs provide time and space flexibility while still maintaining high quality because they are developed in collaboration with academic institutions. Notable examples include the MOOCs offered by Georgia Tech, Udacity, and AT&T, which provide a Master's degree in computer science. This was the first online Master of Science in Computer Science, and it has gained the attention of companies worldwide. Online learning environments also include webinars, which are lectures, workshops, live seminars, and presentations delivered online. Webinars can be delivered to a large number of participants spread out geographically, and offer real-time question-and-answer sessions, discussion, and immediate feedback. There also is the possibility to record content for review or sharing with others (Dachner et al., 2021).

In contemporary times, online courses increasingly have been adopted by major corporations for the professional development of their employees. Chipotle, an American restaurant chain, is an example of such investments made in employee development. Prior to their investment in employee development, Chipotle was grappling with the issue of high employee turnover rates. In 2018, the company opted to allocate more than one-third of its anticipated savings from tax law changes toward the betterment of its workforce. Subsequently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chipotle made further improvements to its employee development plans by introducing over 5,500 remote courses, which focused on topics encompassing business, technology, and wellness. This initiative was implemented as part of a comprehensive strategy designed to promote a merit-based approach to career growth and development.

The development program was accompanied by the formation of an employee resource group entitled the United Network of Influencers Furthering Inclusion and Ethnic Diversity. The group was established to promote a workplace environment free of discrimination and inequality. Furthermore, the program featured several components, such as mentorship programs targeted toward minority employees, quarterly training sessions aimed at promoting workplace diversity and inclusion, and virtual roundtable events featuring distinguished speakers and panels. These components were designed to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and to enhance the quality of work-life for employees (D'sa-Wilson, 2022).

According to the Chief Diversity, Inclusion and People Officer, Marissa Andrad, Chipotle's efforts were driven by the need to create a conducive environment for their employees to connect and pursue their passions with like-minded co-workers, even in a virtual setting (D'sa-Wilson, 2022).

Several companies have established their own online learning academies to address the challenges posed by the ever-evolving work environment. Urban Company, India's most extensive home services marketplace, is one such example. The company's platform provides customers with the ability to book a diverse range of services, such as plumbing, appliance repair, beauty services, and personal training. With the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, Urban Company was required to radically overhaul its operations, a task that proved to be immensely challenging for an organization with 1,300 office-based employees. To address these challenges, Urban Company turned to innovative solutions and creative workflows. As a result, the company's marketing team was able to reduce creative production costs by a staggering 85% (Wilson, 2022).

Urban Company's ambitious approach extended to its learning and development efforts, because the company recognized the importance of continuous employee skill development. In response, the company launched its own learning and development platform, the Urban Academy, which provides programs covering an array of topics, including Excel skills (basic, intermediate, and expert), leadership, feedback provision, problem-solving,

and SQL. As interest in the platform grew among individual teams and departments, Urban Company bolstered the program by hiring 25 new instructors. Additionally, the company augmented its internal knowledge with a regular series of 2-hour talks featuring influential leaders from various industries (D'sa-Wilson, 2022).

3.1.2 Assessments

Dachner et al. (2021) suggested that assessments can be effective for autonomous employee development, allowing individuals to upgrade their skills and identify opportunities for further development. Accredited institutions and professional societies offer exams to assess candidates' understanding, skills, knowledge, and capabilities, and those who meet the standards receive certification as proof of their expertise. Examples include the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) for HR professionals, and the Chartered Financial Analyst certificate from the CFA Institute for financial professionals.

Many companies have embraced an approach that enables their employees to acquire formal education, certifications, or skills-development programs to enhance their skills and knowledge. For example, Amazon has introduced the Amazon Career Choice program, which is available to associates who have been with the company for at least 90 days. Through this initiative, Amazon covers the costs of various educational programs, including bachelor's or associate's degrees, job training for in-demand fields, and certification for General Educational Development (GED) or English as a Second Language (ESL). Similarly, Starbucks has developed the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, which assists employees in paying for college costs through scholarships and financial aid. Employees are required to fill out federal student aid applications and accept financial aid from the school. Starbucks pays for the remaining tuition costs for a first-time bachelor's degree through Arizona State University's online program (Marquit, 2022).

The Walt Disney Company has established the Disney Aspire program, which enables full-time and part-time employees to enroll in bachelor's or master's degree programs. Employees must attend one

of the partner schools, and Disney covers the costs of textbooks. In contrast, Chipotle Company offers its employees access to online classes from partner institutions and tuition reimbursement of up to \$5,250 each year if they opt for a non-partner institution. To qualify for the program, employees must have worked at least 15 hours/week for 4 months (Marquit, 2022).

3.1.3 On-the-Job Experience

One example of an employee-driven on-the-job experience approach is the job crafting strategy, which involves empowering employees to modify their work situation to achieve a better alignment of employee traits and job characteristics. This bottom-up approach to job design allows employees to shape their work experiences by altering the behavioral, relational, and cognitive boundaries of their jobs. Proponents of this employee development strategy highlight the significance of job design, and two primary designs are suggested: task emphasizing, and job expanding. Task emphasizing entails employees changing the nature of a task or devoting more time and attention to it, whereas job expanding involves selecting new, unfamiliar tasks that often require the use of trial and error to complete (Dachner et al., 2021).

These approaches include traditional on-the-job training methods such as job rotation, mentoring programs, co-worker training, internships, job shadowing, practice simulations, delegation, and coaching. To investigate how large companies implement on-the-job training in the context of digital and remote work design, with mentoring programs serving as interesting examples, this paper explores this topic further (Small, 2021; Dachner et al., 2021).

Cooley, a global law firm operating across 18 offices in the US, Asia and Europe with more than 1,400 lawyers and more than 3,000 personnel, has implemented a virtual mentoring program known as the Cooley Academy Mentoring Program (CAMP). The program is aimed at improving the onboarding process for new employees through pairing them with experienced individuals, thereby facilitating more-efficient assimilation into the company. The mentors in the program are responsible for teach-

ing, training, and supporting new hires, preparing them for more-complex work. Cooley leverages reporting tools to monitor the progress of mentoring relationships, and gathers feedback to enhance the effectiveness of the program (D'sa-Wilson, 2022).

Novartis, a multinational pharmaceutical company with more than 100,000 employees, encountered challenges related to connecting its employees with colleagues from different regions and functional areas. To address this issue, the company launched a mentoring program with a focus on cross-functional and cross-country pairings. Mentee-mentor pairs were generated from Novartis' talent marketplace based on relevant expertise. The program aims to provide associates with the opportunity to establish new networks, collaborate with colleagues they may not have had a chance to meet otherwise, and enhance their skills and knowledge. The entire program, including communication, mentoring, and training, is delivered online via various communication channels and applications, leveraging ICT, smart technology, and digital channels. Currently, more than 460 associates have been paired with a mentor within Novartis, and 75% of these mentoring assignments involve cross-functional connections. The program also enables proactive employees to engage in mentoring on their own initiative (Schreiber-Shearer, 2023).

Deloitte has developed a noteworthy virtual mentoring program known as D-180, which forms an integral part of the company's community response efforts to COVID-19. The program is aimed at university graduates who are in their first few years in the workforce, as well as high school and college students across the Middle East and Cyprus, and seeks to provide them with mentoring and exposure to real work environments through Deloitte volunteer professionals. The main objective of this initiative is to equip young talents with the skills and knowledge required in the new economy. Deloitte mentors are paired with mentees and offer support through virtual meetings to aid their skills-building and employability journeys. Deloitte mentors provide mentees with exposure to the world of work, assist them in setting and pursuing educational journeys or entering the job market, and serve as sounding boards to mentees. This initiative offers mutual benefits to both parties. Young talents are given the opportunity to be mentored by Deloitte profession-

als and learn from their experiences, gain insight into work and employee development, be part of a journey of exploration of the world of work through a series of mutually beneficial virtual meetings, and be challenged to improve their professional and personal skills. Deloitte has the opportunity to attract young, motivated talent and enhance their employer brand (Deloitte, 2023).

3.2 Most Important Personality Traits In the Digital Age

The prevailing notion regarding 21st century skills suggests that students must attain proficiency in the STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering, and math—and acquire programming skills, given the high demand for these skills in the job market (Baran, Canbazoglu Bilici, Mesutoglu, & Ocak, 2019). However, this representation is a gross oversimplification of the knowledge and skills required for students to thrive. Despite its origin as a company that initially assumed that only technologically proficient individuals could comprehend technology, Google has discovered that soft skills, rather than STEM skills, are paramount for success (Miles, 2022).

In 2013, Google conducted a study named Project Oxygen, which scrutinized its employment, termination, and promotion data since its establishment in 1998. The research determined that among the eight most essential attributes of Google's high-performing employees, STEM proficiency ranked at the bottom (Miles, 2022). In contrast, the seven leading indicators of success at Google were soft skills, which encompassed being an effective coach, being adept at communicating and attentive listening, exhibiting insight into others (including their varying values and perspectives), expressing empathy toward and being supportive of colleagues, possessing strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and demonstrating the ability to create connections across intricate concepts (Strauss, 2017).

The significance of soft skills in high-tech settings is underscored by Google's recent investigation, Project Aristotle. This inquiry examined information on innovative and productive teams,

and revealed that the most exceptional teams at Google manifest a spectrum of soft skills, such as impartiality, munificence, inquisitiveness regarding the concepts of colleagues, empathy, and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, emotional safety was found to be the most crucial characteristic. To prosper, every member of the team must feel self-assured to voice their opinion and make mistakes, while being confident that they are being heard (Duhigg, 2016).

The findings align with the results of previous studies of the characteristics sought by employers in job candidates. A recent survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, a non-profit organization comprising both small businesses and large corporations such as Chevron and IBM, revealed that communication skills were rated among the three most desired qualities by recruiters (Koncz & Gray, 2022). This highlights the significance of both interpersonal communication within the workplace and the ability to communicate effectively the company's product and vision to external stakeholders. The digital age of the future likely will place a premium on certain personality traits that are well-suited to the demands and challenges of the rapidly evolving technological landscape (Jackson, & Ahuja, 2016).

In light of the recent technological advancements and innovative research methods, it is expected that the understanding of personality traits will continue to advance and grow in the future. This highlights the importance of staying up-to-date with current developments and advancements within the field, in order to effectively understand and address the changing needs and expectations of employers (Montag & Elhai, 2019). Although STEM skills are fundamental in today's world, technology alone is insufficient. The inclusion of individuals educated in the human, cultural, and social aspects, as well as computational knowledge, also is crucial. Personality traits such as soft skills, as outlined in Project Oxygen and Project Aristotle, play a vital role in achieving long-term success and satisfaction in one's career. By incorporating a passion for the arts, humanities, and social sciences, individuals can prepare themselves not only for the workforce but also for the world at large (Balcar, 2023).

3.3 Encouraging Proactive Behavior In a Digital World

Google places a significant emphasis on cultivating a positive and fulfilling workplace environment for its employees. The company believes that a happy and engaged workforce leads to improved results and outcomes. To achieve this, Google provides its employees with a comprehensive suite of benefits and amenities, including access to gourmet organic cuisine, complimentary dental and health check-ups, subsidized massages, in-house nap pods, and more (Main, 2022). This approach to employee happiness and well-being has proven to be a successful strategy for Google. As a leading company in its field, known for its competitive salaries and distinctive office spaces, Google's commitment to the well-being of its employees has contributed to its prestigious reputation and overall success (Akram, n.d.).

Research conducted by LinkedIn supports this perspective, finding that an excessive workload can contribute to burnout, but also can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction. In the study, 71% of employees who reported having an excessive workload were content in their roles, whereas only 62% of those who reported having too little work were satisfied with their jobs. These data highlight the importance of finding the right balance between work and leisure in order to promote employee happiness and engagement (Main, 2022).

Google's strategy involves three key elements (Main, 2022):

1. giving employees more purpose by giving them more work,
2. getting employees involved in projects outside their direct duties, and
3. setting higher goals to help employees reach new heights.

The company's approach helps employees feel a sense of pride and satisfaction in their work, become more versatile, and build professional relationships. It also enables employers to better understand their employees' strengths and identify those who are well-suited for a promotion (Main, 2022).

Studies have shown that employees are more productive and creative in positive and encouraging environments. For example, Google allows its engineers to pursue passion projects during 20% of their working time, which results in increased motivation and creativity (Akram, n.d.). Google's investment in its luxurious campus and workplace amenities also supports its employees' well-being, leading to increased focus and collaboration, ultimately improving the bottom line (Radford, 2018).

However, creating a proactive culture does not require financial investment. A change in leadership messaging can lead to significant shifts in employee behavior. Leaders must communicate that employee input is valued, and that the company is willing to pursue new ideas. In a proactive culture, negative feedback should be avoided in the event of failure; instead, setbacks and failures should be treated as opportunities for learning (Brunetto, Xerri, & Nelson, 2014).

Encouraging brainstorming sessions and involving leaders in open-door, cross-functional sessions significantly can enhance the performance of teams. The consistent, genuine, and reinforced cultural message must emphasize the importance of seeking new opportunities and improving processes. Employees should be encouraged to ask questions and identify areas for improvement, with a focus on enhancing customer and organizational satisfaction (Argyris, 1994).

In conclusion, creating a proactive culture in the workplace requires a shift in leadership messaging, a focus on positivity, and a supportive environment that fosters collaboration and innovation. By prioritizing employee well-being and encouraging continuous improvement, organizations can reap the benefits of a motivated and highly productive workforce (Papagiannidis & Marikyan, 2020).

4 Integrative Conceptual Model

After analyzing the theoretical framework and findings from the case studies, we formulated an integrative model that effectively connects our three key research concepts into a comprehensive and cohesive structure. Our integrative conceptual model provides a deeper understanding of the

complex and varied interrelationships among the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development by presenting a more thorough and interconnected framework. Notably, our model acknowledges the impact of distributed work settings on these constructs and the consequent effects on employee development within a digital context.

Consistent with our first proposition (Figure 1), our model vividly demonstrates the favorable association between the Big Five personality traits and employee development. Shareki (2007) suggests that agreeableness and conscientiousness are the foremost personality traits required for successful employee development. Furthermore, a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that interpersonal communication was among the three most desirable qualities that contribute to successful employee development and high job performance (Koncz & Gray, 2022).

Our conceptual model is designed specifically to focus on distributed work environments, in which proactivity is deemed to be a crucial personal characteristic for employees involved in development activities. Ostmeier and Strobel (2022) highlighted the importance of informal and proactive forms of learning programs, which have gained significance in the wake of digital transformation and diverse work settings. Therefore, in line with our second proposition, proactivity serves as an additional factor that contributes to the employee development process. To adapt to this trend, companies have modified their employee development programs accordingly (Ostmeier & Strobel, 2022). For example, the American restaurant chain Chipotle has introduced a variety of employee development programs that are accessible through online platforms, enabling employees to pursue their interests and engage in preferred programs independently (Wilson, 2022). Consequently, proactivity represents an extended and developed dimension of personality traits, and forms the second integral part of our model. Employees with high levels of proactivity, in relation to the Big Five personality traits, demonstrate a greater inclination and willingness to participate in skills development courses implemented in distributed work settings (Ostmeier & Strobel, 2022).

After the connection between the Big Five personality traits and proactivity has been established, the final step in developing a model is to create appropriate employee development programs that are suitable for distributed work environments. Given the significance of employee proactivity in such programs, employee-driven development programs prove to be a valuable approach that aligns directly with the proactive conduct of employees in a distributed work setting. Specifically, employees actively seek and create opportunities for personal and career growth, and the organization supports them by providing adequate resources to facilitate this process (Dachner et al., 2021). For example, Starbucks covers the expenses of formal university educational programs for employees who demonstrate self-initiative behavior by selecting and enrolling in such programs. Therefore, employee-driven development programs have emerged as the most desirable type of employee development program in a distributed work environment (Dachner et al., 2021). In this way, we also highlight the third proposition in our model, which describes the positive relationship between distributed work settings and employee development practices.

Our integrative model connects these three concepts by highlighting their interdependence and the importance of considering their impact in distributed work settings within a digital context. The model proposes that specific Big Five personality traits (e.g., openness, agreeableness, and extraversion) are positively associated with proactive employee behavior, which, in turn, is related to employee development initiatives. The model also highlights the importance of employee-driven development initiatives in distributed work environments and the need for organizations to provide adequate resources to support such initiatives.

In conclusion, our conceptual model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex nature of employee development in distributed work settings within a digital context. It highlights the importance of specific personality traits, proactivity, and employee-driven development initiatives, and their interdependence in promoting employee development. The model has practical implications for organizations looking to design effective employee development programs

in distributed work environments, by identifying the key factors that contribute to successful initiatives (Semeijn, Van der Heijden, & De Beuckelaer, 2020; Dachner et al., 2021).

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study addresses several gaps in the literature on employee development, and makes significant contributions to the field. Adopting a mixed-methods approach that combines theoretical insights with practical examples from successful large-scale organizations, our study elucidates how various methods and approaches can enhance economic outcomes, augment employee satisfaction, and promote optimal organizational characteristics.

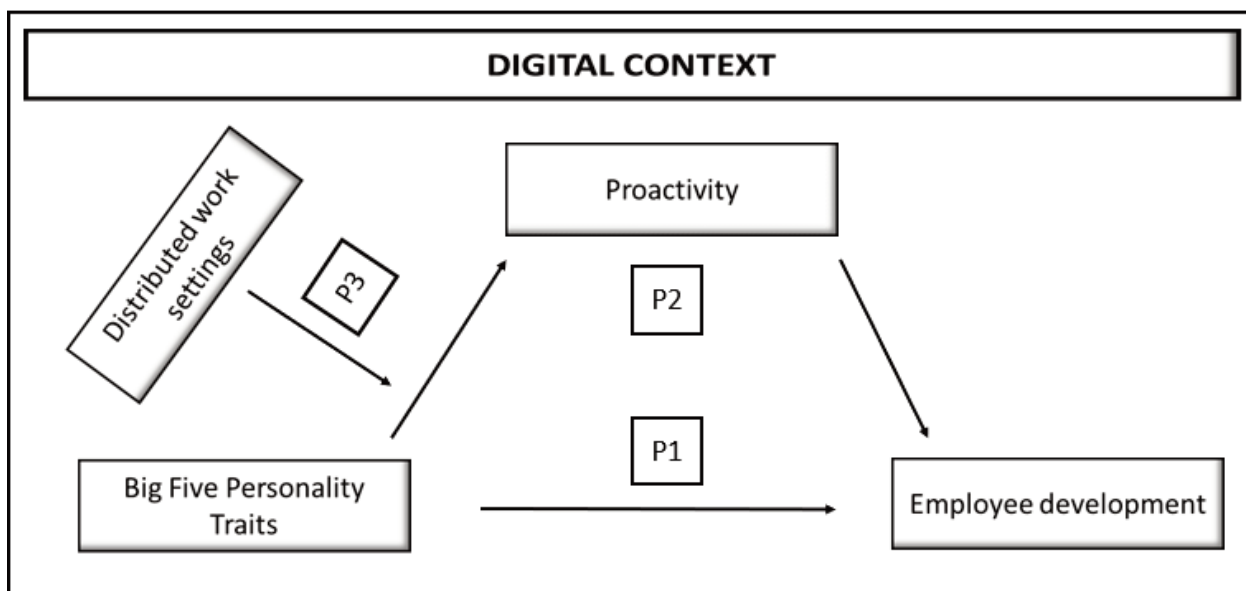
Our investigation focuses on the interplay between the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development in distributed work settings. Prior research has established associations between two of these three constructs, specifically between Big Five personality traits and proactivity (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010), and between proactivity and employee development (Ghitulescu, 2018). Our study builds on this literature by exam-

ining the relationship among all three constructs while also considering the impact of distributed work on employee development. Although we did not conduct empirical research, we provide practical examples from larger organizations that illustrate a positive relationship between these constructs.

Semeijn et al.'s (2020) linear regression analysis investigated the impact of Big Five personality traits on job success, including participation in development activities, and found that these traits have positive implications for job performance, job satisfaction, and skills development. This study confirmed previous claims about the association between Big Five personality traits and employee development (Semeijn et al., 2020).

Moreover, the case studies presented in this paper support Semeijn et al.'s results. For example, Google's Project Aristotle study revealed that the most productive teams exhibit a range of soft skills that can be attributed to the openness and extraversion dimensions of the Big Five classification (Duhigg, 2016). Similarly, a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers showed that most employers seek candidates with high levels of interpersonal communication and openness to interact effectively with external stake-

Figure 1: Integrative conceptual model with propositions



holders (Koncz & Gray, 2022). The case studies suggest that individuals with high scores on traits such as openness, agreeableness, and extraversion are more likely to engage in proactivity and development activities, which is consistent with the management practices of leading companies such as Google, Chipotle, Amazon, and Starbucks.

5.2 Practical Implications

In light of the prevalent utilization of distributed work settings, the cultivation of human capital has gained paramount significance for both employers and employees (Dachner et al., 2021). Given the exorbitant costs associated with the recruitment of fresh talent and the adverse outcomes of elevated turnover rates, the implementation of efficacious employee development initiatives may furnish a substantial return on investment for any given organization (Holton, 1996). Consequently, employee development programs can be regarded as a pragmatic mechanism that enables organizations to attain a competitive edge and maintain a highly advantageous position within the labor market (Dachner et al., 2021).

In the initial phase, organizations may formulate their recruitment strategies by taking into account personality traits such as agreeableness and extraversion, which were identified by Kickhuk and Wiesner (1997) as crucial factors in the employee development process. For example, Google's hiring approach incorporates soft skills such as emotional intelligence, curiosity, and critical thinking, in addition to technical expertise, as supported by empirical research (Strauss, 2017; Duhigg, 2016). After organizations have recruited individuals with favorable personality traits, managers should foster proactive behavior within the organization and create an environment that supports such behavior (Lamovšek et al., 2022). To promote overall proactivity in telework, several essential factors must be prioritized and considered. Two of the most pivotal factors that can positively impact proactivity are internal motivation and digital literacy, according to Siswanto, Wu, Widowati, and Wakid (2022). Internal motivation serves as a potent driving force for proactive behavior, and refers to the inclination to engage in proactive actions that arise intrinsically

rather than externally. On the other hand, digital literacy pertains to the ability to use technology effectively and efficiently, which is increasingly crucial in the current digital era. Google endeavors to foster proactive behavior among its employees by assigning them more-meaningful work, involving them in projects beyond their immediate responsibilities, and setting ambitious goals to encourage them to attain new heights (Main, 2022).

In the final phase, organizations may devise employee-driven development programs, which involve the proactive participation of employees in identifying their developmental needs, exploring growth opportunities, and managing their career progression. According to our third hypothesis, employee-driven development techniques are particularly suitable for distributed work settings (Dachner et al., 2021). Hence, companies can introduce a broad array of employee-driven development methods, such as massive open online courses, webinars, certifications, job expansion, and job crafting (Dachner et al., 2021). These methods already are in place at several prominent companies, such as the Urban Company's online learning academy and Amazon's scholarships and financial assistance to aid employees in acquiring a bachelor's degree (D'sa-Wilson, 2022; Marquit, 2022).

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although existing research has provided valuable insights into the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development, several limitations should be considered regarding the generalizability of these findings. Firstly, this study is based on theoretical work and practical examples provided by established companies, and no empirical research was conducted to obtain data directly from organizations. This approach may limit the ability to capture fully the nuances of how personality traits and proactivity impact employee development in various organizational contexts.

Secondly, although most previous studies suggest a positive relationship between the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), many of those

studies were primarily theoretical in nature. Future research should consider practical implications of these findings to ensure their generalizability in real-world economic environments.

Lastly, this study drew on practical examples only from large international companies, which may not capture fully the experiences of smaller organizations or those with weaker organizational cultures. Therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing these findings to other types of organizations. In summary, although the existing research provides valuable insights into the connection between the Big Five personality traits and proactivity and their effect on employee development, these limitations suggest that further research is needed to understand fully the nuances of this relationship across a wider range of organizational contexts.

To address the limitations of existing research, future studies could explore several directions. Firstly, conducting a longitudinal study with a diverse range of companies could provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development. This study could include a larger sample of companies

with varying characteristics such as size, revenues, and culture to ensure that the results are more broadly generalizable. Secondly, future research should prioritize practical applications and ensure that it extends beyond theoretical frameworks. By examining practical applications, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how personality traits and proactivity impact employee development in real-world contexts.

In conclusion, future research could focus on the impact of interventions aimed at enhancing proactivity and employee development. Specifically, studies could investigate the effectiveness of training programs or coaching interventions designed to promote employee proactivity and facilitate skill development. Such research could help identify effective interventions that organizations can use to enhance employee development and proactivity. In summary, future research should prioritize practical applications, broaden the range of companies under study, and explore the effectiveness of interventions such as training programs or coaching interventions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, proactivity, and employee development.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Osebnostne lastnosti so ključnega pomena za razumevanje posameznikovega vedenja, pet velikih osebnostnih lastnosti pa omogoča vpogled v pet temeljnih lastnosti, ki so podlaga za to vedenje. Boljše razumevanje posameznikovih velikih pet osebnostnih lastnosti lahko pomaga pri prepoznavanju njihove povezave s proaktivnostjo, kar posledično pozitivno vpliva na razvoj zaposlenih v podjetju. Dotični članek raziskuje povezavo med petimi velikimi osebnostnimi lastnostmi in proaktivnostjo ter njihovo skupno povezavo na razvoj zaposlenih. Študija poudarja pomen porazdeljenega dela in izpostavlja pozitivno povezavo med štirimi od petih velikih osebnostnih lastnosti (tj. odprtost, ekstravertnost, prijaznost in vestnost) in proaktivnostjo. Naše raziskave temeljijo na teoretičnih konceptih in praktičnih analizah primerov večjih podjetij, ki dokazujejo ugodno razmerje med petimi velikimi osebnostnimi lastnostmi, proaktivnostjo in razvojem zaposlenih. Ugotovitve študije poudarjajo pomen zagotavljanja ustreznih priložnosti za razvoj zaposlenih in poudarjajo pozitiven vpliv porazdeljenega dela na spodbujanje razvoja zaposlenih. Rezultati študije so pomembni za raziskovalce, ki izvajajo nadaljnje raziskave na to temo, in priporočamo, da podjetja vložijo sredstva v zagotavljanje usposabljanja svoje delovne sile o proaktivnem vedenju, saj lahko le-to privede do izboljšane organizacijske uspešnosti in spodbuja individualni razvoj v podjetju.

REFERENCES

- Akram, U. (n.d.). *Case Study: How Google Boosts its Employees Engagement*. https://inside.6q.io/google-boosts-employees-engagement/?fbclid=IwAR1pkOWVNIyd9MM3AT6_u5EWwS8eUiBIQ5Lokha4mthl3mU58NvwISGOEqA
- Allport, F. H. & Allport, G. W. (1921). Personality traits: Their classification and measurement. *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 6 – 40.
- Amabile, T. M., Schatzel, E. A., Moneta, G. B. & Kramer, S. J. (2004). Leader behaviors and the work environment for creativity: Perceived leader support. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(1), 5 – 32.
- Antoncic, J. A., Antoncic, B., Grum, D. K. & Ruzzier, M. (2018). The big five personality of the SME manager and their company's performance. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 23(04), 1850021.
- Argyris, C. (1994). Good communication that blocks learning. *Harvard business review*, 72(4), 77-85.
- Bateman, T. S. & Crant, J. M. (1993). The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 14(2), 103 – 118.
- Balcar, J. (2023). Is it better to invest in hard or soft skills? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27(4), 453 – 470.
- Boyd, R. L. & Pennebaker, J. W. (2017). Language-based personality: a new approach to personality in a digital world. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 18, 63 – 68.
- Brunetto, Y., Xerri, M. & Nelson, S. (2014). Building a proactive, engagement culture in asset management organizations. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 30(4), 04014014.
- Burger, J. M. (2014). *Personality*. Cengage Learning.
- Buss, A. H. (1989). Personality as traits. *American Psychologist*, 44(11), 1378 – 1388.
- Cai, W., Khapova, S., Bossink, B., Lysova, E. & Yuan, J. (2020). Optimizing Employee Creativity in the Digital Era: Uncovering the Interactional Effects of Abilities, Motivations, and Opportunities. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(3), 1038.
- Campbell, D. J. (2000). The proactive employee: Managing workplace initiative. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 14(3), 52 – 66.
- Cattell, R. B. (1946). *Description and measurement of personality*. World Book Company.
- Cobb-Clark, D. A. & Schurer, S. (2012). The stability of big-five personality traits. *Economics letters*, 115(1), 11 – 15.
- Crant, J. M. (2000). Proactive behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 26, 435 – 462.
- Dachner, A. M., Ellingson, J. E., Noe, R. A. & Saxton, B. M. (2021). The future of employee development. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(2), 100732.
- Davis, R. E., Smitherman, T. A. & Baskin, S. M. (2013). Personality traits, personality disorders, and migraine: a review. *Neurological Sciences*, 34, 7 – 10.
- Deloitte. (2023). *D-180 digital mentoring program*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/xe/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/d180-digital-mentoring-program.html>
- Diener, E. & Lucas, R. E. (2023). Personality traits. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers
- D'Sa-Wilson, M.D. (29.4.2022). *10 Companies with exceptional employee development programs*. <https://www.togetherplatform.com/blog/best-training-and-development-programs>
- Duhigg, C. (2016). *What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>
- Feist, G. J., Roberts, T. & Feist, J. (2021). *Theories of Personality*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Garavan, T. N. (2007). A Strategic Perspective on Human Resource Development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 9(1), 11 – 30.
- Ghitulescu, B. E. (2018). Psychosocial effects of proactivity: The interplay between proactive and collaborative behavior. *Personnel Review*, 47(2), 294-318.
- Grant, A. M. & Ashford, S. J. (2008). The dynamics of proactivity at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 28, 3 – 34.
- Holton III, E. F. (1996). New employee development: A review and reconceptualization. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7(3), 233 – 252.
- Hough, L., Oswald, F. & Ock, J. (2015). Beyond the Big Five: New Directions for Personality Research and Practice in Organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 2, 183 – 209.
- Jackson, G., & Ahuja, V. (2016). Dawn of the digital age and the evolution of the marketing mix. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 17, 170-186.
- Joo, B. K. & Lim, T. (2009). The effects of Organizational Learning Culture, Perceived job Complexity, and Proactive Personality on Organizational Commitment and Intrinsic Motivation. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 16(1), 48 – 60.
- Judge, T. A., Higgins, C. A., Thoresen, C. J., & Barrick, M. R. (1999). The big five personality traits, general mental ability, and career success across the life span. *Personnel psychology*, 52(3), 621-652.
- Kaše, R., Svetlik, I. (2021). Izobraževanje in razvoj sodelavcev. *Menedžment človeških virov. Fakulteta za družbene vede*, 2021.

- Kernberg, O. F. (2016). What Is Personality? *Journal of Personality Disorders, 30*(2), 145 – 156.
- Kichuk, S. L., & Wiesner, W. H. (1997). The big five personality factors and team performance: implications for selecting successful product design teams. *Journal of Engineering and Technology management, 14*(3-4), 195-221.
- Koncz, A. & Gray, K. (15.2.2022). *The Attributes Employers want to see on College Students' Resumes*. <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/press/the-attributes-employers-want-to-see-on-college-students-resumes/>
- Lamovšek, A., Černe, M., Radević, I. & Božič, K. (2022). The Key to Work-Life Balance is (Enriched) Job Design? Three-Way Interaction Effects with Formalization and Adaptive Personality Characteristics. *Applied Research Quality Life, 1*-30.
- Lamovšek, A., & Černe, M. (2023). Past, present and future: A systematic multitechnique bibliometric review of the field of distributed work. *Information and Organization, 100*446.
- Lemmetty, S. & Collin, K. (2020). Self-directed learning as a practice of workplace learning: Interpretative repertoires of self-directed learning in ICT work. *Vocations and Learning, 13*(1), 47-70.
- LePine, J. A., Colquitt, J. A., & Erez, A. (2000). Adaptability to changing task contexts: Effects of general cognitive ability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. *Personnel psychology, 53*(3), 563-593.
- Main, K. (4.11.2022). *Google's Wildly Simple Strategy to Increase Productivity Is Also Making Staff Surprisingly Happy*. https://www.inc.com/kelly-main/google-simple-strategy-increase-productivity.html?fbclid=iwar1vghzrr9_b9kt2p9ipe0hxzdhhadhwqho87zvrcymctceiljgv0foo
- Major, D. A., Turner, J. E. & Fletcher, T. D. (2006). Linking proactive personality and the Big Five to motivation to learn and development activity. *Journal of applied psychology, 91*(4), 927.
- Marquit, M. (29. 11.2022). *12 Companies That Will Pay for Your College Education*. <https://www.investopedia.com/companies-pay-college-6829220>
- Matthews, G., Deary, I. J. & Whiteman, M. C. (2003). *Personality Traits*. Cambridge University Press.
- McCaughey, C. D., & Hezlett, S. A. (2001). Individual development in the workplace. In N. Anderson, D. S. Ones, H. K. Sinangil, & C. Viswesvaran (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial, work & organizational psychology* (313 – 335). London: Sage Publications.
- McCrae, R. R. & Costa, P. T. (2008). The five-factor theory of personality. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins & Pervin, L. A. (Eds), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*, 159 – 181. The Guilford Press.
- Miah, M. & Omar, A. (2012). Technology Advancement in developing countries during Digital Age. *International Journal of Science and Applied Information Technology, 1*(1), 30 – 38.
- Mikołajczyk, K. (2022). Changes in the approach to employee development in organisations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Training and Development, 46*(5/6), 544-562.
- Miller, J. D., & Lynam, D. R. (2006). Reactive and proactive aggression: Similarities and differences. *Personality and Individual Differences, 41*(8), 1469-1480.
- Montag, C. & Elhai, J. D. (2019). A new agenda for personality psychology in the digital age? *Personality and Individual Differences, 147*(1), 128 – 134.
- Naseem, A., Sheikh, S. E. & Malik, K. P. (2011). Impact of employee satisfaction on success of organization: Relation between customer experience and employee satisfaction. *International journal of multidisciplinary sciences and engineering, 2*(5), 41-46
- O'Connor, B. P. (2002). A quantitative review of the comprehensiveness of the five-factor model in relation to popular personality inventories. *Assessment, 9*(2), 188 – 203.
- Orlikowski, W. J. & Scott, S. V. (2016). Digital work: A research agenda. *A research agenda for management and organization studies, 88*-95
- Ostmeier, E. & Strobel, M. (2022). Building skills in the context of digital transformation: How industry digital maturity drives proactive skill development. *Journal of Business Research, 139*, 718 – 730.
- Papagiannidis, S. & Marikyan, D. (2020). Smart offices: A productivity and well-being perspective. *International Journal of Information Management, 51*, 102027.
- Parker, S. K., Bindl, U. K. & Strauss, K. (2010). Making Things Happen: A Model of Proactive Motivation. *Journal of Management, 36*(4), 827 – 856.
- Parker, S. K., Wang, Y. & Liao, J. (2019). When is Proactivity Wise? A Review of Factors That Influence the Individual Outcomes of Proactive Behavior. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 6*, 221 – 248.
- Radford, C. (20.3.2018). *Proactive Employees Are Great; A Proactive Culture is Better*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/proactive-employees-great-culture-better-craig-radford/>
- Ramus, C. A. (2001). Organizational support for employees: Encouraging creative ideas for environmental sustainability. *California management review, 43*(3), 85-105.
- Richter, A., Heinrich, P., Stocker, A., & Schwabe, G. (2018). Digital work design: The interplay of human and computer in future work practices as an interdisciplinary (grand) challenge. *Business & Information Systems Engineering, 60*, 259-264.

- Schreiber-Shearer, N. (11.4.2023). *3 companies showcasing successful mentorship programs*. Top Companies With Successful Mentoring Programs | Gloat
- Schwarz Müller, T., Brosi, P., Duman, D., & Welpel, I. M. (2018). How does the digital transformation affect organizations? Key themes of change in work design and leadership. *Management Revue, 29(2)*, 114-138.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Crant, J. M. (2001). What do proactive people do? A longitudinal model linking proactive personality and career success. *Personnel psychology, 54(4)*, 845-874.
- Semeijn, J. H., Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & De Beuckelaer, A. (2020). Personality traits and types in relation to career success: An empirical comparison using the big five. *Applied Psychology, 69(2)*, 538-556.
- Shahreki, J. (2020). The Relationship between Personality Traits and Individual Performance: A Case Study in Malaysian Hotel Industry. *International Journal of Business Excellence, 1(1)*, 101 – 124.
- Siswanto, I., Wu, M., Widowati, A. & Wakid, M. (2022). The Influence of Internal Motivation and Digital Literacy Towards Students Proactivity. *Journal Pendidikan Indonesia, 11(3)*, 501 – 509.
- Small, G. (8.4.2021). *10 On the job training examples*. <https://www.edapp.com/blog/10-on-the-job-training-examples/>
- Sousa, M. J., & Rocha, Á. (2019). Digital learning: Developing skills for digital transformation of organizations. *Future Generation Computer Systems, 91*, 327-334.
- Strauss, V. (20.12.2017). *The surprising thing Google learned about its employees – and what it means for today's student*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-today-students/>
- Thomas, J. P., Whitman, D. S., & Viswesvaran, C. (2010). Employee proactivity in organizations: A comparative meta-analysis of emergent proactive constructs. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology, 83(2)*, 275-300.
- Turner, J. E. (2003). *Proactive personality and the Big Five as predictors of motivation to learn*. Old Dominion University.
- Vos, P. & van der Voordt, T. (2001). Tomorrow's offices through today's eyes: Effects of innovation in the working environment. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate, 4(1)*, 48 – 65.
- Wagner, M., Heil, F., Hellweg, L. & Schmedt, D. (2019). Working in the digital age: Not an easy but a thrilling one for organizations, leaders and employees. *Future Telco: Successful Positioning of Network Operators in the Digital Age*, 395-410.
- Zillig, L. M. P., Hemenover, S. H., & Dienstbier, R. A. (2002). What do we assess when we assess a Big 5 trait? A content analysis of the affective, behavioral, and cognitive processes represented in Big 5 personality inventories. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28(6)*, 847-858.



THROUGH SELF-LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP TO SHARED LEADERSHIP: A PARADIGM FOR EFFECTIVE VIRTUAL TEAMWORKING

Enja Topić

School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
enja.top@gmail.com

Melisa Čehić

School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
melisa.cehic9@gmail.com

Rok Belingar

School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
rok.belingar@gmail.com

Abstract

Leadership and followership are key to firm performance, so it is important to understand them and find the optimal leader–follower interaction to be implemented in an organization. Understanding these concepts is important, because they help increase the company’s productivity and success in achieving its goals. This paper explores the connection among shared leadership, self-leadership, and followership, and argues that their practice is crucial for virtual teams’ success. The theoretical framework presented is supported by practical study cases of EY Slovenia, Haier, Soldev, and Hershey. The propositions, derived from the case studies, are related to two topics. The first proposition concerns how self-leadership is assumed by one who practices effective followership, and the second proposition concerns how shared leadership styles positively influence the building of trust and fostering of a sense of ownership of employees. With this theory, organizations can navigate the challenges of the modern workplace, and consequently improve their performance, productivity, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, we present a model that shows the influence of self-leadership on effective followership, and emphasizes the benefits of implementing shared leadership styles, especially in digital work, and we discuss the impact of self-leadership, self-awareness, and self-efficacy on the implementation of shared leadership within an organization that operates virtually.

Keywords: *self-leadership, shared leadership, virtual teams, teamwork*

1 Introduction

Leadership is about leveraging social influence to maximize the contributions of a team in order to achieve a common goal (Kruse, 2013). Alattari and Essa (2019, p. 408) stated that “Leadership has an important and effective role to play in achieving the goals. The leader is the captain of the ship who holds the reins of his hand; either he achieves his goals successfully or fails to do so and this eventually will

affect the entire crew.” Leadership and followership are accountable for the breakthroughs or breakdowns in organizations. This paper focuses on exploring the concepts of shared leadership and self-leadership, and the impact they have on followership. Leadership styles for small and medium-sized enterprises, that now are making an appearance in the era of virtual teamwork, are based on service from leaders to their employees, active engagement between leaders and employees, and the necessary

empowerment that employees need in order to complete tasks successfully (Cahyadi, Marwa, Hågen, Siraj, Santati, Poór, & Szabó, 2022). Self-leadership was introduced in the organizational management literature by Manz (1983), who described it as a “comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating” (Manz, 1983, pp. 288-297).

Three core components of self-leadership in virtual teamwork that we describe in this paper are self-awareness, empowerment, and self-efficacy. On the other hand, shared leadership takes place when two or more team members participate in leading the team with the aim of influencing and guiding other members to achieve optimal team performance. (Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012). Four core components of shared leadership in virtual teamwork that we describe in this paper are distributed decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, building trust, and fostering a sense of ownership. The phenomenon of digital transformation has transcended the realm of technical departments and now has become a priority for leaders across all industries, sectors, and regions. The current digital age represents only a starting point in the development of a world that is made possible by the rapid and extensive integration of technology in the workplace. The pace of the digital era is so swift that it is fundamentally altering the operational frameworks of both private and public organizations, demanding that they adopt new modes of thinking when designing their operating models (Mihai & Crețu, 2017). Therefore, the topic of leadership styles and followership is important because it can help organizations to create a more productive work environment, improve leadership effectiveness, and achieve their goals, especially in the era of virtual teamwork, in which employees are dispersed geographically (Malhotra, Majchrzak, & Rosen, 2007).

The combinations of leadership and followership in virtual teamwork are a relatively new area of research, especially after COVID-19, because the research has proliferated since that time, and as a result there are many gaps in the literature on this topic. Leaders often are portrayed as the element

that “makes or breaks” an organization. In contrast, a follower’s role is undervalued or neglected. Followers are treated as silent or passive participants, rather than assertive doers. That is why the leadership literature and research studies are leader-centric, whereas followership has received scant attention, and remains on the periphery rather than at the core of leadership research (Essa & Alattari, 2019). In conclusion, the existing literature lacks the actual connection between leadership styles and active followership in digital work. To date, most of these concepts have been described individually (e.g., for self-leadership, see Manz, Stewart, & Courtright, 2011), and are not related to virtual teamwork, whereas we investigated their optimal combination. In addition, the existing findings lack recommendations of good practice to implement these styles in a company, especially in virtual teams, in which not all employees are always at the same place.

This combination of leadership and followership styles is important theoretically because these leadership styles all take into account the complexities of modern organizations, and active followership emphasizes the importance of followers. The combination also reflects current trends in the era of virtual teamwork, because it promotes collaboration, empowerment, self-awareness, building trust, etc. Studies of leadership have focused primarily on the leader, neglecting the significant contribution of followers to the leader’s effectiveness and the organization’s performance. However, recently there has been a growing recognition of the crucial role played by followers in both the leader’s capacity to lead and the organization’s overall functioning. (Marturano & Gosling, 2008; Novak, 2012). The relationship between a leader and their followers is crucial for the success of both parties and to the achievement of the organization’s strategic objectives (Carpenter, 2009; Gallagher, 2009; Hollander, 2008). We complement the research on each leadership style individually and advance it by connecting self-leadership and shared leadership with active followership, which we find to be the optimal combination for digital work. We show the benefits of implementing shared leadership styles in an organization in the era of digital work. We focus on the connections among empowerment, self-aware-

ness, and self-efficacy, and the successfulness of implementing them in one's personal and professional life. Furthermore, we present a model that shows the connection between leadership styles and active followership.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Self-Leadership, Self-Awareness, Empowerment, and Self-Efficacy

Self-leadership has been introduced as a distinction among different levels of self-influence, and which provides a perspective that goes beyond the discipline and self-management process. Neck and Manz (2010, p. 4) defined self-leadership as "the process of influencing oneself." Manz (1986), who originally introduced the concept, described self-leadership as a person's ability to deliver excellent performance in tasks which motivate them as well as tasks that are challenging because their characteristics are not aligned completely with the person's purpose. Manz also stated that self-leadership is different from classic self-control or self-management because it acknowledges behavioral, cognitive, and intrinsic motivation.

The first supporting aspect we address is self-awareness, which contributes to the development of an individual because it allows a person to respond to their feelings and adjust their actions accordingly. Hultman (2006) defined self-awareness as a person's capacity to be aware of their limitations when it comes to challenges, while having a strong sense of their capability to maximize their personal skills, such as motivation, and the skills they have developed in their area of expertise. Robak, Ward, and Ostolaza (2005) stated that self-awareness is based on (self) observation, through which one can identify the quality of their abilities and recognize those of others. These attributes are a crucial component in successfully adopting the self-leadership approach in an organization. One who is able to regulate their emotions and responses when facing a challenge or a conflict within the team delivers high-quality performance. For example, a person who puts the anxiety and fear of failing aside when presented with a challenging task and manages to coax focus, determination, and best skills out of oneself

undoubtedly will complete the task with excellent results. Being self-aware also means completing one's tasks with integrity, inspiration, and respect for other team members, because self-aware people understand the emotional and behavioral impact on themselves and others.

The second supporting aspect is empowerment, which gives employees the independence to actually make decisions and commitments instead of only suggesting them (Forrester, 2000). It encourages people to become more involved in their environment and proactive in their work, which opens them up to new opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. As Carson and King (2005, p. 1,050) noted, "the root of empowerment is power and employees must be given the ability to exercise that power." Carson and King (2005) also noted that empowerment is the basis for self-leadership to produce positive outcomes in organizations. Because empowerment encourages a display of independence in one's work, lets one perform well in teamwork environments, and gives one a sense of ownership of their position within the organization, it is one of key factors that co-create one's ability to self-lead. It is the organization's responsibility to encourage empowerment among their employees, not only to attain excellent financial results, achieved through maximized productivity, but also to create a well-informed and functional environment that is based on the community rather than on individuals.

The third supporting aspect is self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's perception of his or her capacity to perform a specific task. Bandura (1986) is credited with recognizing the importance of self-efficacy in human agency. He clarified that "self-efficacy is an important variable in cognitive self-regulation (goal-setting, feedback, etc.)." Theoretically and empirically, self-efficacy has been shown to have wide-ranging implications for organizational behavior. Gist and Gist (2013) noted that self-efficacy has been proven to have a positive influence on cognitive self-regulation, especially on leadership and decision-making, and also contributes to predicting differential behaviors in different job situations, such as stress and strain, commitment, adaptability to change, entrepreneurial behavior, and socialization. Self-efficacy is critical to self-leadership because it enables

individuals to pursue new challenges and goals with persistence and determination. The external stimulation a company would have to provide in order to achieve the same results therefore is significantly reduced. Therefore, we propose

Proposition 1: Self-leadership is a prerequisite for effective followership, and is supported by empowerment, self-awareness, and self-efficacy.

2.2 Shared Leadership as a Theoretical Concept

“Shared approaches to leadership question individual level perspective, arguing that it focuses excessively on top leaders and says little about informal leadership or larger situational facts. In contrast, shared leadership offers a concept of leadership practice as a group-level phenomenon.” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 22). Shared leadership theory argues against the traditional top-down approaches and hierarchical structures within an organization, and leans heavily toward a more decentralized approach, that is “distributed and interdependent” (Pearce & Conger, 2003). As a concept, it assumes that individuals within a team or organization possess unique skills, knowledge, and expertise that can be leveraged to achieve the collective goals of the organization. Shared leadership is conceptualized as a set of practices that can and should be enacted by people at all levels, rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes enacted by people at the top. McIntosh (1989) described the individual achievement as being the tip of the iceberg, with collaborative networks creating conditions and supporting and facilitating it from beneath. Shared leadership concepts recognize that teamwork and group leadership practices truly are the enablers of one’s individual success.

Another shift from the traditional leadership approaches lies in embedment in social interaction. Lave & Wenger (1991, p. 23) stated that the “shared leadership is portrayed as a dynamic, multidirectional, collective activity that, like other human action and cognitive sense-making, is embedded in the context in which it occurs.” Again, it contradicts the generally accepted top-down approach, with its strict hierarchical nature of a leader–follower relationship. The followers are recognized for their role in influencing the leader, and not only the other way around. The implementation of the concept of

shared leadership implies certain characteristics of the followers, whose role is changed from a passive to an active one, for which reason they can be described as effective followers. They are characterized by a sense of personal responsibility for achieving the defined goals and sharing the organizational mission (Pearce & Conger, 2003). They take initiative for activities ensuring the improvement of their own potential while trying to recognize and meet the needs of the organization along with the leader. In addition, they are characterized by the ability to express their views clearly and freely and stand up to the leader, if by doing so they can prevent actions that could undermine the integrity or the goals of the organization (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Shared leadership also includes a continuous process of identifying leadership potential among employees and encouraging them to develop these resources, and it is related to the particular quality and characteristics of the social processes in which leadership occurs. Isaac (1999) described the occurrence of collective learning as a safe container of this approach, as well as less likelihood of low fluctuation of information and knowledge within the organization. Scharmer and Käufer (2002, p. 24) noted that

collective learning occurs when individuals are able to move through different talking stages, the “talking nice” stage being the first and most shallow, rule repeating phase where people do not cross the line of expected, “reflective dialogue”, where people begin to speak their minds, engage in conversation actively and defend their perspectives openly, to the “generative dialogue” which occurs when the group loses its individual level focus and truly co-creates ideas. People are open to being influenced by others perspectives and ideologies.

The shift toward collective learning is particularly significant because it highlights the need to expand the individual level skills and characteristics that are related to learning (such as self-awareness) in order to include more group level–focused relational practices and skills such as authenticity, openness, vulnerability, and the ability to anticipate the responses and needs of others, yet not being afraid to fail (Fletcher, 1994, 1999).

We expand the context of shared leadership by incorporating characteristics of the servant leadership style, because it is considered to be one of the ideal styles in terms of human factors. In this leadership style, the leader identifies first as a servant and second as a leader (Parolini, 2009). In the context of virtual teamwork, in which isolation and exclusion due to there being little to no physical involvement among the team members, and they may even be separated geographically, being managed by someone who adopts the servant leadership style significantly reduces the possibilities of asynchronicities in communication and team relationships. Such leaders model behaviors that make their followers feel safe to fail, which results in a high level of trust between the leader and their subordinates (Zanouz et al., 2022). Especially in virtual teams, in which questions usually are put in writing and people tend to be careful what they ask because of the risk of failure or embarrassment, having one's subordinates feel safe enough to turn to them reduces information fragmentation, and consequently weak economic and financial results. Therefore, we propose

Proposition 2: The shared leadership style, which can be manifested through servant leadership, is positively related to building trust and fostering a sense of ownership of employees by distributing decision-making, and boosts collaborative problem-solving.

3 Case Studies

3.1 Self-Leadership through Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy at an Audit Firm in Slovenia

To discuss the importance of self-leadership, we introduce a weekly skills-development workshop, the Audit Hub Weekly Workshop, as an example of good practice suggested by an audit intern at EY Slovenia that was implemented for all assistants and interns in Audit Hub by the management. It is a specific local dissemination of knowledge, in addition to the extensive formal curriculum, which contains in-person and web-based learning. The workshop is held online so that remote workers are able to participate and overcome frequent Excel and audit-related challenges together. The intern who suggested the workshop showed their ability to recognize an area in which the entire team of assistants and interns lacked experi-

ence and knowledge, and the management listened to them and developed a solution that benefited everyone. This indicates a community in which people are rewarded for self-leading, and the management is open to being influenced by their subordinates (Internal Source, 2023).

3.2 Shared Leadership at Haier and Solodev

The example at Haier, described by Hamel and Zanini (2018), involves seeking a compromise between a rigid hierarchical structure and agile shared leadership, because poorly performing leaders are vulnerable to a hostile takeover. If leadership increases people's authority without increasing their compensation, the additional responsibility may well be seen as a burden. Conversely, if leadership grants people stock without increasing their authority, they still will feel like minions. The Haier company operational model, Rendanheyi, is built on microenterprises (MEs) acting as smaller autonomous units within a larger company structure. According to Fischer (2013), microenterprises were assembled in the fourth organizational restructuring of Haier, which took place between 2005 and 2012. The implementation introduced three powers within a microenterprise: the power of decision-making, the power of hiring and firing, and the power of profit distribution. When a new market demand is created, so is a microenterprise that will specialize in the supply, e.g., the creation of the microenterprise that produces and sells three-door refrigerators.

The operational and tactical leadership within each unit is voted on by employees each year, whereas the visionary leadership is directed by upper management. Anyone employed by Haier can apply to work in any microenterprise and to become its leader. Therefore microenterprises are expected to be self-managing, and their freedoms are formally enshrined in three rights. Firstly, an organization decides on opportunities that need to be pursued, sets its priorities, and facilitates internal and external partnerships with a strategy. Based on that, they evaluate their human resources and increase the set, and align individual roles and working relationships. Lastly is the distribution of pay rates and bonuses. (Hamel & Zanini, 2018). Haier has managed to build a competitive internal labor market, in which mutual

selection of heads and employees takes place dynamically (Li, 2017). Its employees not only serve as subordinates, but serve customers on behalf of the company, and are able to decide for themselves the areas in which they are experts. The possibility of applying to any microenterprise within the company enables employees to be linked directly to a business opportunity of their personal choice. By creating value for the customer, they also create value for themselves, through compensation (Li, 2017).

Additionally, Haier expanded the meaning of each employee by implementing a principle that encourages everyone to apply for a leadership role. That makes an employee an effective follower in their team, actively preparing to step into the shoes of a leader at any time. Li (2017, p. 164), refers to an important concept which is crucial for this type of enterprise management: “orders with high value attract competent employees, competent employees complete orders with high value.”

Hamel and Zanini (2018) noted that the aforementioned steps come with great responsibility. Targets are customized for every member of a microenterprise and are specified by periods: quarterly, monthly, and weekly. Compensation is coupled tightly with business performance. The base salaries are low, and opportunities for additional compensation are tied to three performance thresholds. According to Li (2017), compensation is directly related to customer reviews, and has little to do with assessments by superiors as in the traditional salary system.

With so much at stake, it is hardly surprising that microenterprises team members have little tolerance for incompetent leaders. If a microenterprise fails to hit its baseline targets 3 months in a row, a leadership change is triggered automatically. If the microenterprise is meeting its baseline targets but failing to reach its value-adjusted mechanism (VAM) targets, a two-thirds vote of the microenterprise’s members can oust the existing leader. As stated previously, poorly performing leaders are vulnerable to a hostile takeover. Anyone at Haier who believes that he or she could better manage a struggling ME can make a pitch to its team. Performance data for all MEs is transparent across the company, so it is easy to spot takeover opportunities. If an interloper’s plan is convincing, a leadership change ensues. This may

seem extreme, but it is simply an analogue for the market approach to corporate control. If a company consistently underperforms, its board will simply eject the CEO—or the business may be bought by a competitor who believes it can manage the assets more effectively (Hamel & Zanini, 2018).

Haier adamantly follows the concept from the I Ching which refers to dragons flying without a leader. In the organizational context, this means working together to do everything in the team’s power. Assisting each other in need and co-developing prominent solutions creates an environment in which there is no need for a leader (Li, 2017).

In support of the preceding statement, we incorporated another no-CEO case study. Solodev decided to hire a CEO, but the company culture did not respond well to this. Instead, the responsibilities and decisions of the CEO were transferred to an Executive Committee of experts from different departments. The decision-making processes were distributed among them according to their roles in navigating the direction of the company. In the case of paralysis in decision-making, the founders intervene to reduce the confusion by assessing a more centralized opinion. Solodev works on the principle that the goal of an executive is supposed to be building a company that can run without them. This is why it is crucial for leaders to empower their teams to make these decisions, instead of relying solely on the leader (Valamis, 2023).

3.3 Embracing the Role of a Servant Leader: Hershey Case Study

This section presents the benefits of adopting a servant leadership style through a practical case.

McCollum (2022) explained his personal transformation from a budget owner to an influencer in his position at Hershey by being mentored by leaders with a servant leadership style. He explained that the driving force behind the servant leadership must extend beyond the knowledge in one’s area of expertise and must include components such as behaviors and attitude, and strategies and actions, because the servant leadership approach strongly advocates for achieving authority through communication and service to one another, rather than solely through lucrative titles and accreditations. It is the organization’s

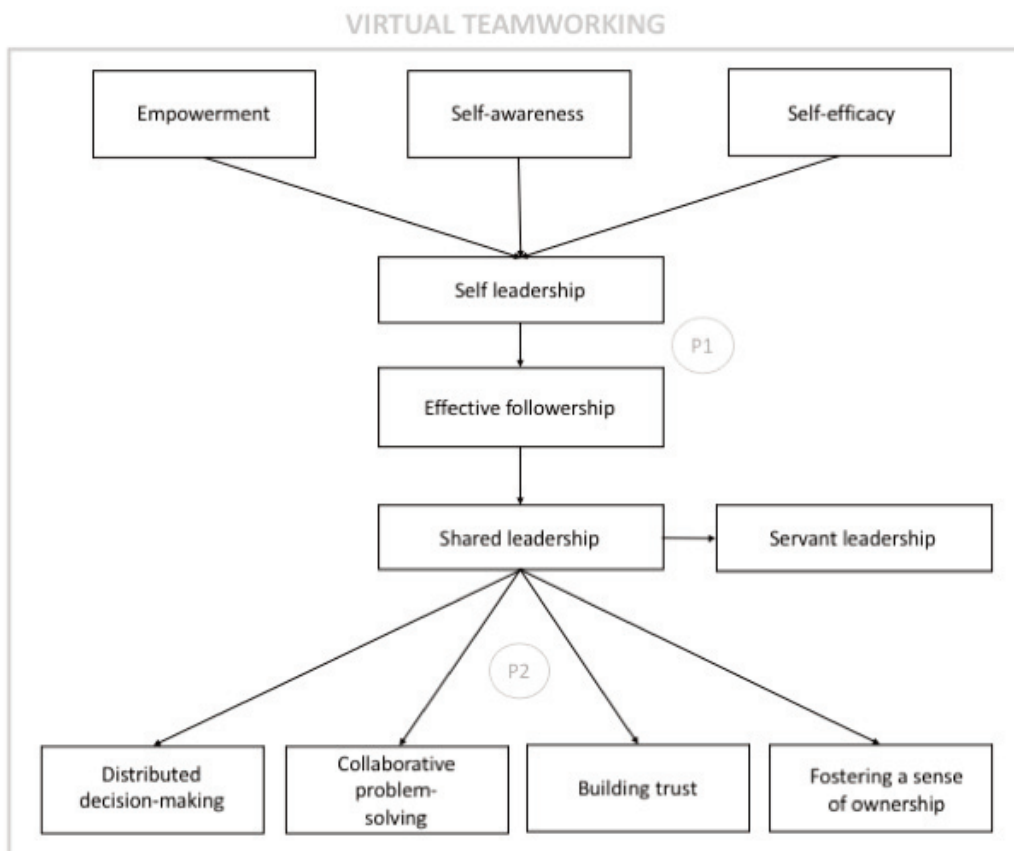
responsibility to adopt the “greater good” concept, which means that the environment must encourage this type of leadership style.

McCollum (2022) stated that because the stakeholders’ interest is to genuinely serve their subordinates, it is easy for them to align their own goals with those of their stakeholder and become personally invested in the company’s success. Alignment is crucial for achieving the planned financial and interpersonal results. Encouraging genuine interest of the employees in the collective investments of the company consequently makes them an extension of the stakeholders’ teams. They will be considered at early stages of every process, such as (re)negotiations of contracts, solving of disruptions, and communicating efficiently with agencies. Such actions create conditions in which stakeholders do not need to be present at all times, because mutual trust is at its peak. Because everyone is empowered to do their best, there is very little need for an actual CEO. McCollum (2022) stated that another benefit of this establishment is allowing employees to be less fearful to come forward regarding

compensation and how success is measured. That is achieved through the servant leader positioning themselves a facilitator and enabler. They pave the way for their subordinates and overcome obstacles with them. Modeling this type of behavior boosts trust among the team members, and it is an excellent approach to empowerment. Servant leader is able to embrace failure as an inevitable effect of a less strict hierarchical approach. By encouraging employees to take on challenges that will fulfill their professional and personal purposes, they serve their own and the company’s greater good. Obviously, the financial targets must be met, but the idea of servant leadership is to accomplish them through active role-modeling (Steelcase, 2018).

4 Integrative Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical research, we propose an integrative conceptual model (Figure 1) that shows the optimal combination of leadership–followership styles in digital work for the optimal team and company performance.



The model displays the first proposition (P1) by connecting empowerment, self-awareness, and self-efficacy in the context of adopting or improving self-leadership among employees. These concepts promote having the ability to self-observe and regulate one's behavior and emotions accordingly, as well as modeling confidence and trust in one's skills in one's area of expertise, and expressing one's perspectives powerfully and on one's own initiative (Lee et al., 2018, Manz, 2015). Self-leadership is an essential skill for anyone working in virtual teamwork, because it involves being proactive, taking initiative, and seeking feedback to improve one's performance continuously. By empowering individuals, fostering self-awareness, and building self-efficacy, organizations can create a culture of self-leadership that encourages individuals to take ownership of their work, stay motivated, and achieve their goals (Taştan, 2013).

This helps individuals to stay productive, motivated, and adaptable, and enables them to succeed in an increasingly competitive and rapidly evolving virtual team working. For example, according to Li (2017), Haier's employees not only serve subordinates, but exist to serve customers on behalf of the company, while deciding themselves upon the areas in which they hold expertise, because they work in an environment that encourages the three concepts of self-leadership, self-awareness, and empowerment. In the role of a follower, such an approach makes a person effective. Effective followership is an essential component of virtual teamwork and virtual collaboration (Carsten et al. 2021), because active followers work collaboratively with the leader and other team members to achieve shared goals, and they take initiative in contributing their ideas, feedback, and suggestions to the group. In the case of reduced physical involvement, as in a highly virtual team, such an approach is necessary for high productivity and excellent financial teamwork. Haier encourages effective followership by implementing the principle that everyone can apply for a leadership role. They establish new microenterprises every time there is an increase in demand for certain goods and services, and anyone at Haier can apply to lead these microenterprises (Li, 2017).

The shared leadership approach, supported by active followership, can help promote collaboration, communication, and trust in a virtual teamwork environment. By working together and leveraging each

other's strengths, teams can be more effective and achieve better outcomes. Exemplary active followership is an essential component of effective teamwork and collaboration. It enables individuals to contribute their best work and promotes a positive and productive team culture that is essential for achieving shared goals. Therefore, to make shared leadership in virtual teamwork as effective as possible, it is essential to foster an environment in which active followership is encouraged and valued. For shared leadership, which is a collaborative approach in which leadership is distributed among team members, rather than being the sole responsibility of one person (Lave & Wenger, 1991), effective followership is a crucial component, because it means mutual collaboration among team members, especially in highly virtual teams, which in turn improves the organizational climate and builds relationships and trust among colleagues. Shared leadership allows the expertise to be distributed across the team, because each employee has different knowledge and skills that can be integrated into successful decision-making.

Shared leadership is a collaborative approach in which leadership is distributed among team members, rather than being the sole responsibility of one person (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which is crucial in the digital era. It encourages mutual collaboration among team members, who often are geographically dispersed, which in turn improves the organizational climate and builds relationships and trust among colleagues. Shared leadership allows the expertise to be distributed across the team, because each employee has different knowledge and skills that can be integrated into successful decision-making. Moreover, the model acknowledges servant leadership as an optimal reciprocal relationship with the active followership style; by encouraging employees to take on challenges that will fulfill their professional and personal purposes, they serve their and the company's greater good. The idea is to accomplish this through active role-modeling (McCollum, 2022). Although the servant leader identifies as a servant first, it is important to acknowledge that their increased responsibility sets them apart from their followers. In our framework, the model is consistent with the second proposition (P2), because in order to distribute the decision-

making and constant collaborative problem-solving, it is essential to build trust and foster a sense of ownership among the team members. Shared leadership directly contributes to the aspects of remote work. Collaborative problem-solving encourages collaboration of smaller groups in the particular department and promotes the sharing of ideas and information, helping to ensure that team members can work together to identify, address, and overcome challenges (Collier, 2016).

It can be particularly challenging to build and maintain trust in a virtual teamwork environment, because there are fewer opportunities to form a relationship. However, trust is an essential component in any team environment, because it increases the team's and the organizations' performance (Ferrin, Bligh, & Kohles, 2008).

Distributed decision-making in virtual teamwork is helping to distribute decision-making authority more evenly and ensuring that decisions are made with input from multiple perspectives (Malone, 2014). Fostering a sense of ownership encourages team members to take ownership of their work and to contribute their ideas and expertise to the team's goals, helping to ensure that everyone feels invested equally in the team's success (Pierce et al., 2001). When team members are working remotely, it can be challenging not only to maintain a sense of ownership and accountability for their work, but also to see their work present in the "bigger picture."

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

This paper shows the benefits of implementing shared leadership styles in an organization, but foremost in an era of virtual teamwork. Furthermore, it discusses the importance of possessing a sense of self-leadership, self-awareness, and self-efficacy in order to co-create an empowered and innovative environment. Shared leadership distributes the powers of decision-making and responsibilities among more people within an organization than does the traditional approach, so it is important that as many people as possible possess these attributes.

The research in this paper is focused on the connections among empowerment, self-awareness, and self-efficacy, and how successful a person is in implementing a self-leadership approach in their life, which directly influences their ability to become an effective or active follower within their organization. By that, we mean a person's capacity to be aware of their limitations when it comes to challenges, while having a strong sense of their capability to maximize their personal skills, such as motivation, as well as the skills they developed in their area of expertise (Hultman, 2006; Bandura, 1986). It is important for one's personal life and professional life. Consciously creating room for improvement is crucial for developing new skills and knowledge, as well as symbiotic coexistence within an organization. It also is significant to have a solid belief system about one's own capabilities in order to take on new challenges.

Although the case study coherently presents the importance and impact of adopting the fact that a person is in the role of a follower, those attributes make them an effective follower who contributes to the organization by fulfilling their own goals and desires, while also preparing for the role of leader because the environment empowers them to express their perspective to their peers. As per McCollum (2022), who transformed from an active follower of his servant leader to a servant leader himself, the most important thing is to include one's heart in every aspect of one's work. Despite a coherent display of the importance and impact of adopting a self-leadership approach and how it transforms a person into an effective follower, and subsequently into a leader, the case study excluded the context of remote or hybrid working, in which it is especially important to be aware of the impact that these attributes have on the quality of work life as well as the functioning of an organization, because people are not present in their offices every day. This research proves that it is very important to be proactive and engage in activities that result in stronger relationships in the work community. It complements the existing theoretical implications by giving fresh insight into the impact of these three individual concepts—self-awareness, self-efficacy, and empowerment—on self-leadership in the context of modernizing workplaces by working remotely or in hybrid mode.

Existing theoretical findings stress the importance of being open to adopting different approaches and constructive behavior when facing challenges, while also being confident in overcoming them with one's abilities and skills. By incorporating another variable, virtual teamwork, we attach even greater importance to self-leadership, lack of physical involvement within a team could mean isolation and dissociation from its common purpose. Collaborative problem-solving then would decline, as would productivity and financial results.

With the implementation of shared leadership styles, for example, the servant leadership style, it is much easier for the people involved to obtain a sense of control over their work and narrative. Because the servant leader is devoted to their team and to serving its purpose, they set an example for their subordinates. This means empowering them to find their true purpose within an organization and helping them to fulfill it. When people are listened to and supported to achieve their personal goals within the work goals, productivity rapidly increases, which is directly beneficial to the organization itself. According to Valamis (2023), "the goal as an executive is to build a company that can run without them. This is why it is crucial to empower your teams to make these decisions instead of relying solely on you."

Our research complements Valamis (2022) by presenting how to lead a team to work in unison and achieve great results. For virtual teamwork, these concepts take on new, greater importance, because the modern ways of working mean significant changes in ways that work teams function. Some virtual employees are very fond of not having to commute to the office every day and interact in person with co-workers and management. If not applied properly, leadership styles can cause asynchronous dynamics within teams that work virtually. Some employees may find that they are doing their job routinely, with no passion for it, because they have little to no contact with other members, no career conversations with their superiors, and therefore no development in their area of expertise. That can cause lower productivity and weak economic and financial results. By introducing shared leadership styles that include collaborative problem-solving and distribution of

responsibilities within a team, employees start fostering a sense of ownership, which contributes to building trust among team members. Although they may not see each other in person every day, their work is organized to maintain contact with one another. If everyone is very well informed about others' tasks and responsibilities, the response to a challenge or a problem is much stronger. Therefore, there is less need for an executive in the shared leadership approaches.

5.2 Practical Implications

5.2.1 *Recommendations for Managers and Staff about Self-Leadership and Supporting Attributes*

Self-leadership has great significance because it enables individuals to achieve their professional objectives and be effective leaders to their followers. The most important self-leadership skills that managers and employees should develop are self-awareness, motivation, decision making, dedication, self-regulation, and accountability (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Having a high level of self-awareness in management is critical for achieving success. Insufficient self-awareness can result in poor decision-making, difficult relationships with co-workers, and feelings of incompetence. Recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses can lead to the development of improvement strategies in a more effective way (Sharma, 2022). Self-awareness in managers can be built by measuring strengths and weaknesses, setting boundaries, knowing one's emotional triggers, considering how one's actions affect others, and, most importantly, asking for feedback from employees (Peek, 2023). However, it is crucial that not only managers are self-aware—followers also must be self-aware. The development of self-awareness in employees is a crucial step in improving how they handle their behavior and relationships with others (Heumann, 2018). Self-awareness in employees can be built with self-reflection, asking for feedback from managers, assessments, and skills development (Arruda, 2023). Self-awareness is important because self-leaders need to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Motivation is crucial be-

cause if managers and employees are highly motivated, they can cope better with challenges. Building self-regulation skills is important because it helps employees and managers cope with challenges instead of reacting to them. A successful self-leader is accountable for his actions and takes the blame if he or she is responsible for a mistake.

Empowerment is significant because it leads to employees feeling empowered, resulting in increased engagement, higher work effort, and greater loyalty toward their employer. The authority granted to them often results in quicker, superior, and more-efficient outcomes (De Smet, Hewes, & Weis, 2020). To empower employees, it is essential for leaders to establish transparent expectations, provide the necessary resources, offer constructive feedback, welcome input and ideas, effectively communicate the organization's vision, and recognize and appreciate the hard work of employees. Establishing transparent expectations is important because it enables employees to make decisions while ensuring that the decisions align with the organization's objectives. Leaders should be specific when they offer constructive feedback, because it provides an opportunity to help employees understand the impact of their actions on a person or project, whether positive or negative. Leaders should encourage the participation of followers in decision-making and goal-setting, because it exposes the organization to innovative ideas and a new perspective. In addition, effectively communicating the organization's vision to employees helps them understand how each team member's efforts contribute to achieving that vision. When employees feel appreciated for their hard work, they are inspired to be more innovative, proactive, and resourceful in problem-solving (Bosworth, 2022).

Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to put forth the necessary effort to attain a desired goal, which increases the chance of achieving it. Having high self-efficacy in leadership can impact one's own performance as a leader and the performance of the group one leads. (Spoelma, 2018). Employees and managers can build self-efficacy by celebrating success, observing others, seeking positive affirmations, and paying attention to others' thoughts and emotions. It is important to cel-

brate success, because accomplishing something creates a strong sense of confidence in one's abilities. Witnessing others making an effort and succeeding also can boost one's confidence in one's own potential to succeed. Positive social feedback can enhance one's sense of efficacy, whereas negative comments can significantly weaken it (Cherry, 2023).

5.2.2 Application of Shared Leadership Concept to the Organizational Structure in the Context of Virtual Teams

According to Valamis (2022), there are steps that must be followed in order to implement the shared leadership concept successfully in the organizational structure. Firstly, a safe working environment is crucial to shared leadership. This means that employees feel safe to propose their own ideas and perspectives that help to transform and grow the businesses, meaning they "feel safe to fail." In order to create such an environment, employees should interact with one another on a personal level, e.g., learning their kids' or pets' names. Still, expectations must be set, especially for virtual teamwork, because direct team management is more difficult due to less physical presence. Pearce and Sims (2002) noted that when the team has a common grasp of a vision, they facilitate goals that are associated with improved performance. Because highly virtual positions incorporate more individuality than do full-time office or hybrid positions, it is important for a team to have a ritual. Bell and Kozwloski (2002) propose creating routines and habits in the early stages of a team lifecycle, because they contribute to the establishment of healthy expectations and reduce any individualistic behavior that potentially could be harmful. Hambley (2007) noted that it is especially applicable in the context of shared leadership, because the responsibilities and tasks are distributed within a group, and therefore all the team members must maintain a standard in the performance of their work.

Secondly, encouraging transparency is a fundamental concept that needs to be implemented in order for shared leadership to function within an organization. Therefore, it is crucial to hire people

who respect transparency. Valamis (2022) highlighted that having employees who value transparency is essential for meeting company standards. The organization itself also must be transparent with its performance and rewards related to performance, because these are crucial for employees to understand precisely their role in the process and how they can maximize their contribution to shared goals. It is very important to provide avenues for communication, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams.

Thirdly, a clear structure must be created. Morgeson (2002) suggested three main parts to the structuring of the leadership: methodology of accomplishing a task, clarification of roles within a team, and time frame. Valamis (2022) noted that in practice, this could be a back-end hub, in which employees co-create and use a decision and/or responsibility map.

Hamel and Zanini (2018) noted that it is essential to reward employees according to their accomplishments. This ensures fairness, which leads to better performance and employee engagement. To reward employees, one option is to implement a social recognition system, in which employees enter their observations of their own work and that of other members of the team. Rewards then are distributed according to the votes. Keeping the reward system transparent and clear is vital (Valamis, 2022). More importantly, every employee must receive feedback. Morgeson (2009) suggested that a certain degree of informal internal leadership must be applied by communicating feedback and task-related results to employees, ensuring greater individual commitment to the team as well as identification with its purpose. In practice, there should be balance in methods of providing feedback. Milestones always must be communicated in a detailed and comprehensive way, whereas smaller-scale tasks can be communicated informally and contemporaneously.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this paper presents many new findings regarding how shared leadership influences teams in the era of hybrid work and the connection

to personal attributes leaders must possess in order to function well within such teams, certain limitations must be considered regarding these findings. Firstly, the research in this paper was not based on empirical work of our own, but on theoretical work and real-life cases of implementation of such practices. Furthermore, the cases were provided by multinational companies, which have an above average amount of resources at their disposal to allocate for many different purposes. Therefore, we could not conclude through this research that applying shared leadership styles would have been as successful in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Secondly, the cases provided are not an empirical study. The information was gathered through (self) observing by the authors of the studies in the workplaces of their choosing, and they listed the positive effects they experienced or noticed in an environment in which shared leadership styles were applied, by mentors or through the functioning of teams (McCollum 2022; Hamel & Zanini, 2018). Therefore, an empirical analysis must be conducted in the future in order to better understand the underlying factors of success in work teams that function under shared leadership styles. Among the personality traits of the followers and their management, financial compensation must be included as a variable in order to measure the impact of self-leadership that is rooted solely in the ability to self-observe and be influenced by others who have adopted similar characteristics. That could be of huge importance to companies that cannot afford to compensate their employees in the manner that others can.

Lastly, any further research, whether empirical or not, must include teams that function in hybrid mode or even completely virtually, because the effects of shared leadership styles are discussed mostly in environments in which people still work in the office full-time. In the case of mismanagement under shared leadership, the less-strict hierarchical structure may cause confusion within the team regarding their direction and goals. In the era of virtual team working, teams are even more prone to this, because they have little to no physical involvement with one another.

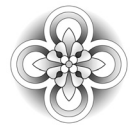
EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Vodenje in sledilstvo sta ključnega pomena za uspešnost podjetja, zato ju je pomembno razumeti in poiskati optimalno interakcijo med vodjo in sledilcem, ki jo je treba izvajati v organizaciji. Razumevanje teh konceptov je ključno, saj pomagajo povečati produktivnost podjetja in uspeh pri doseganju njegovih ciljev. Ta članek raziskuje povezavo med deljenim vodenjem, vodenjem samega sebe in sledenjem ter trdi, da je njihova praksa ključnega pomena za uspeh virtualnih skupin. Predstavljeni teoretični okvir je podprt s praktičnimi študijskimi primeri; EY Slovenija, Haier & Soldev in The Hershey Study. Predlogi za nadaljnje raziskovanje, ki izhajajo iz študij primerov, se nanašajo na dve temi. Prvi predlog govori o tem, kako samo-vodenje prevzame tisti, ki prakticira učinkovito spremljanje, drugi pa o tem, kako deljeni stil vodenja pozitivno vpliva na izgradnjo zaupanja in spodbujanje občutka lastništva zaposlenih. S to teorijo lahko organizacije krmarijo z izzivi sodobnega delovnega mesta in posledično izboljšajo svojo uspešnost, produktivnost in zadovoljstvo pri delu. V nadaljevanju predstavljamo model, ki prikazuje vpliv samo-vodenja na učinkovito spremljanje, poudarjamo pa tudi prednosti implementacije deljenega vodenja, zlasti v kontekstu digitalnega dela, ter razpravljamo o vplivu samo-vodenja, samozavedanja in samoučinkovitosti, pri implementaciji in izvajanju deljenega vodenja znotraj organizacije, ki deluje virtualno.

REFERENCES

- Arruda, W. (2023, February 27). *Why Self-Awareness Is Essential for Career Development—Including Pursuing Your Next Role*. <https://www.td.org/atd-blog/why-self-awareness-is-essential-for-career-development-including-pursuing-your-next-role>
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of social and clinical psychology, 4*(3), 359-373.
- Bosworth, P. (2022, October 27). *How to Empower Employees in the Workplace – 8 Tips*. Leadership Choice. <https://leadershipchoice.com/empower-employees-in-the-workplace/>
- Cahyadi, A., Marwa, T., Hågen, I. Z., Siraj, M. N., Santati, P., Poór, J., & Szabó, K. (2022). Leadership Styles, High-Involvement Human Resource Management Practices, and Individual Employee Performance in Small and Medium Enterprises in the Digital Era. *Economies, 10*(7), 162.
- Carey, M.P. & Forsyth, A.D. (2009). *Self-Efficacy Teaching Tip Sheet*. APA. <https://www.apa.org/pi/aids/resources/education/self-efficacy>
- Carson, C. M., & King, J. E. (2005, August 1). *Leaving leadership: solving leadership problems through empowerment*. Management Decision. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/00251740510610044/full/html?skipTracking=true>
- Carsten, M. K., Goswami, A., Shepard, A., & Donnelly, L. I. (2021). Followership at a distance: Follower adjustment to distal leadership during COVID-19. *Applied Psychology, 71*(3), 959–982.
- Collier, C. (2016, November 21). *How To Adopt A Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach Through “Yes, And” Thinking*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2016/11/21/how-to-adopt-a-collaborative-problem-solving-approach-through-yes-and-thinking/?inf_contact_key=aa43559ebcbce626e419d4f125701b3e4d9098ed842a75e4ff89a2a4c336171a&sh=2745bbf86694
- Dagher, K. (2022, September 16). *The Ultimate Guide to Self-Leadership*. Fellow.app. <https://fellow.app/blog/leadership/the-ultimate-guide-to-self-leadership/#1>
- Day, D. A., & Dragoni, L. (2015). Leadership Development: An Outcome-Oriented Review Based on Time and Levels of Analyses. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 2*(1), 133–156.
- De Smet, A., Hewes, C., & Wiss, L. (2020). *For smarter decisions, empower your employees*. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/for-smarter-decisions-empower-your-employees>
- Essa, E. E., & Alattari, A. (2019). The Relationship Between Followership Styles and Leadership Styles. *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership, 4*(2), 407- 449.
- Ferrin, D. L., Bligh, M. C., & Kohles, J. C. (2008). It takes two to tango: An interdependence analysis of the spiraling of perceived trustworthiness and cooperation in interpersonal and intergroup relationships. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 107*(2), 161–178.

- Gist, M.E., & Gist, A. (2013). *Self-Efficacy*. Oxford Bibliographies. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846740/obo-9780199846740-0043.xml#:~:text=Self%20efficacy%20refers%20to%20an,to%20perform%20a%20specific%20task>.
- Greathouse, K., Gritter, J., & Imhoff, A. (2018). Leadership: Self-Awareness of Leadership Styles in Occupational Therapy. *Work*, 1. https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ot_work/1/
- Hamel, G., & Zanini, M. (2018, October 29). *Yes, You Can Eliminate Bureaucracy*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2018/11/the-end-of-bureaucracy>
- Heumann, K. (2022, February 24). *EQ at Work: Developing Employees' Self-Awareness*. BizLibrary. <https://www.bizlibrary.com/blog/employee-development/developing-employees-self-awareness/>
- Holton, M. J. (2014, September). *The Leader-Follower Relationship: A Leader-Follower Perspective*. National College of Ireland. <https://norma.ncirl.ie/1799/1/michaelholton.pdf>
- Huntoon, D. H. (n.d.). *How Successful Leaders Use Empowerment to Build Trust and Excellence*. <https://www.davidhuntoon.com/leaders/successful-leaders-use-empowerment-build-trust-excellence/>
- Indeed Editorial Team. (2022, July 22). *What Is Self-Leadership? 9 Steps To Develop Your Potential*. Indeed Career Guide.
- Klasmeier, K. N., Güntner, A. V., & Schleu, J. E. (2022). The reciprocity of shared and empowering leadership. *Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*.
- Klösel, K. (2022). Self-leadership: The power behind empowerment. *Journal of the International Council for Small Business*, 3(4), 262–269.
- Kruse, K. (2013, April 9). *What Is Leadership?* Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/?sh=6edb53715b90>
- Lee, A. Y., Willis, S., & Tian, A. W. (2018). Empowering leadership: A meta-analytic examination of incremental contribution, mediation, and moderation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(3), 306–325.
- Lewis, A. (2022, October 26). *Good Leadership? It All Starts With Trust*. Harvard Business Publishing. <https://www.harvardbusiness.org/good-leadership-it-all-starts-with-trust/>
- Lezama, F., Pinto, T., Vale, Z., Santos, G., & Widergren, S. (2021). From the smart grid to the local electricity market. *Elsevier EBooks*, 63–76.
- Malhotra, A., Majchrzak, A., & Rosen, B. (2007). Leading Virtual Teams. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21(1), 60–70.
- Malone, T. (2004). *How Is the Internet Changing the Way We Work?* Change. Retrieved December 1, 2022, from <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/BBVA-OpenMind-How-Is-the-Internet-Changing-the-Way-We-Work-Thomas-w-Malone.pdf.pdf>
- McCollum, K. (2022). Embracing the Role of a Servant Leader: A Hershey Case Study. ANA. <https://www.ana.net/mic-content/show/id/ii-2022-08-hershey-case-study>
- Mihai, R., & Crețu, A. (2019). Leadership in the Digital Era. *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies*, 10(1), 65–72.
- Neuhaus, M. (2023, March 30). *What Is Self-Leadership? Models, Theory, and Examples*. PositivePsychology. <https://positivepsychology.com/self-leadership/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]. (2017, July). *PISA 2015 COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING FRAMEWORK*. oecd.org. Retrieved January 16, 2023, from <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/Draft%20PI SA%202015%20Collaborative%20Problem%20Solving%20Framework%20.pdf>
- Peek, S. (2023, February 21). *Want to Be a Good Leader? Step 1: Know Thyself*. Business News Daily. <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6097-self-awareness-in-leadership.html>
- Pearce, C. L., & Conger, J. A. (2002). *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership*.
- Pierce, J. L., Kostova, T., & Dirks, K. T. (2001). Toward a Theory of Psychological Ownership in Organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 298.
- Sharma, D. (2023, April 2). *6 Great Tips To Build Self-Awareness In Management*. Risely. <https://www.risely.me/awareness-of-self-footsteps-for-managers-towards-greater-efficiency/#6-tips-to-become-and-stay-self-aware-as-a-manager>
- Shuffer, M. L., Wieser, C. W., Salas, E., & Burke, S. (2010). Leading one another across time and space: Exploring Shared Leadership Functions in Virtual Teams. *Revista De Psicología Del Trabajo Y De Las Organizaciones*, 26(1), 3-17.
- Spoelma, J. (2018, August 14). *What Is Self-Efficacy and How Does It Relate to Leadership? — Career Foresight Coaching*. Career Foresight Coaching. <https://careerforesight.co/blog-feed/what-is-self-efficacy-and-how-does-it-relate-to-leadership>
- Taştan, S. (2013). The Influences of Participative Organizational Climate and Self-Leadership on Innovative Behavior and the Roles of Job Involvement and Proactive Personality: A Survey in the Context of SMEs in Izmir. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 75, 407–419.
- Towler, A. (2020, January 11). *Shared leadership*. CQ Net - Management Skills for Everyone! <https://www.ckju.net/en/dossier/shared-leadership-fundamentals-benefits-and-implementation>
- Valamis. (2023, March 23). *Shared Leadership*. <https://www.valamis.com/hub/shared-leadership>
- Zanouz, F., Ghahremani, J., & Tari, G. (2022, March 7). *Civil Servant Leadership in the Health Insurance organization to Achieve the Digital Health System*. *International Journal of Digital Content Management*, 3(4), 165-186.



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR HYBRIDIZATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Erik Pelters

Andrássy Universität Budapest, Hungary
erik.pelters@andrassyuni.hu

Abstract

This study presents empirical evidence of the hybridization of the content of codes of conduct in the US and EU. It links the conceptual frameworks of neo-institutional theory and hybridization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) with current research on codes of conduct. Set within the international context of codes of conduct from the US and the EU, the study adopts a qualitative content analysis using MAXQDA software. Research subjects are the codes of conduct of two multinational companies (MNCs) from the pharmaceutical industry: Bayer AG (EU), and Pfizer (US). The findings show that explicitization within the EU context leads to a strong content alignment between codes of conduct from MNCs of the US and the EU. The contents of the codes in both contexts are aimed mainly at complying with legal requirements. However, codes within the US context still predominantly use explicit CSR, and demonstrate obligations to external stakeholders. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to find empirical evidence of hybridization of CSR by examining the content of codes of conduct. Future research should expand the sample both cross-sectionally and within the pharmaceutical industry to expand the transferability of the results further.

Keywords: code of conduct, explicit CSR, explicitization, hybridization, implicit CSR, implicitization, institutional pressures

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies have stated that the corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices enacted by companies in a country are contextualized by the national institutional frameworks that reflect existing wider policy arrangements at the national level (Barth & Wolff, 2009; Matten & Moon, 2008). Liberal market economies (LMEs), which have less-strict regulatory regimes (e.g., the US), tend to allow corporations to design their own discretionary CSR practices (Barth & Wolff, 2009; Hall & Soskice, 2001; Matten & Moon, 2008). In contrast, coordinated market economies (CMEs), which have strict regulatory regimes (e.g., Germany), are more likely to bind corporate behavior in a mandatory manner and implicitly direct corporations to address society's concerns (Barth & Wolff, 2009; Hall & Soskice, 2001; Matten & Moon, 2008). Therefore, the role of institutional pressures for CSR influences how companies in different societies express and pursue their social re-

sponsibility toward their stakeholders (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003; Amaeshi et al., 2016; Matten & Moon, 2008; Scott, 1995).

The ongoing international market penetration of multinational corporations (MNCs) shows that CSR is a dynamic process, which has led MNCs to take into account the behavioral expectations of different stakeholders along with mandatory requirements of other countries in addition to national circumstances (Matten & Moon, 2020; Moon et al., 2017; Palazzo & Scherer, 2008). Therefore, MNCs increasingly are faced with the challenge that their CSR practices need to serve equally institutional, non-institutional, and other stakeholder expectations of different national contexts (Scott, 1995). As a consequence, those institutional pressures lead MNCs to adopt similar organizational features, which contribute to CSR practices becoming more homogeneous (Ali et al., 2017; Brammer et al., 2012; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This process is called hybridization (Matten & Moon, 2020).

Although several studies have identified the role of institutional pressures on CSR (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003; Amaeshi et al., 2016; Gjølborg, 2009; Matten & Moon, 2008), there is a lack of empirical evidence about how the hybridization of CSR is understood, practiced, and evaluated across national contexts, and how this understanding changes over time (Fifka 2013; Matten & Moon, 2020). Therefore there is a need not only to identify institutional factors, but also to measure empirically the extent of their influence upon MNCs' CSR practices (Matten & Moon, 2020). In addition, empirical CSR literature rarely has acknowledged the multilevel social nature of MNCs. Because the concept of CSR assumes that MNCs have commitments to several diverse stakeholders, it is a dynamic and socially determined construct (Scott, 2008). Multilevel analysis implies that in addition to institutional pressures, the specificities of MNCs' responses to them also influence the adoption of CSR (Dós & Pattarin, 2021). Because MNCs are multilevel social systems (Hedberg et al., 1976; Kesler & Kates, 2015), the effectiveness of CSR practices is not determined solely by their composition or normative validity, but also by actual compliance of the people who are addressed by these CSR practices (Kleinfeld & Müller-Störr, 2010). Therefore, it is of particular interest to gain empirical insight into the way in which MNCs transfer the institutional pressures exerted on them to various internal and external stakeholders within their CSR practices.

As a major part of CSR practices, codes of conduct, with their high degree of dissemination and mostly public accessibility, offer a suitable tool to close this research gap on hybridization. The first insights were given by Carson et al. (2015), who confirmed an increased number of code publications by companies from an implicit context. Sharbatoghlie et al. (2013) found indications of a content alignment between codes of conduct from the US-based Fortune 100 companies and Global 100 companies. However, no empirical study has examined if, and to what extent, a hybridization of CSR practices of MNCs is taking place with regard to the content of codes of conduct in the US and EU contexts. By capturing the topics addressed within the codes of conduct, the urgency with which they are pursued, and the coding of relationships of obligation, this paper

presents empirical evidence for the assumed hybridization. This study is based on the following research questions:

RQ1: Which institutional pressures affect the codes of conduct of MNCs in the US and in the EU context?

RQ2: To what extent do codes of conduct of MNCs in the EU context mimic the content of codes of conduct of MNCs in the US context?

The paper is divided into six sections. After the Introduction (Section 1), Section 2 provides the theoretical framework of hybridization of CSR and codes of conduct. Section 3 introduces the methodical approach and operationalization of the codes' content analysis. Results are presented and discussed in Section 4. The limitations and implications are presented in Section 5, and the paper ends with a conclusion (Section 6).

2 HYBRIDIZATION OF CSR IN THE US AND EUROPE USING CODES OF CONDUCT AS AN EXAMPLE

CSR practices can be seen as a company's expression of responsibility to align economic goals with social and ecological needs (for an overview, see Pelters, 2021, pp. 75–76). Matten and Moon (2008) distinguished between two approaches to CSR: an implicit CSR approach, and an explicit CSR approach.

Implicit CSR practices are mainly a reaction to expectations of a company's role embedded "in the formal and informal institutions that represent the interests and concerns of society" (Matten & Moon, 2008, p. 409), and therefore they are neither company-specific nor voluntary (Brown et al. 2018). Drawing from neo-institutional theory, those expectations can be regulative (pressures exerted by national law obligations), normative (pressures placed by international standards and business associations) or cultural-cognitive (pressures engendered by national culture) (Hahn & Kühnen, 2013; Miska et al., 2018; Scott, 1995; Smith et al., 2011). In Europe, CSR is practiced much less frequently, because many of the corporate social responsibilities are defined and prescribed by law (Barth & Wolff, 2009).

Explicit CSR practices “normally consist of voluntary programs and strategies by corporations that combine social and business value and address issues perceived as being part of the social responsibility of the company” (Matten & Moon, 2008, p. 409). The key difference from implicit CSR is that the type, scope, and direction of any explicit CSR practices are at the discretion of the company, because these practices are beyond any institutionalized requirements of the wider business system (Brown et al., 2018; Matten & Moon, 2008; Porter & Kramer, 2006). The usually explicitly communicated CSR practices can be either implemented proactively and self-directed, or initiated in response to pressure from stakeholders (Yan, 2020).

In the course of globalization, MNCs increasingly are faced with the challenge that their CSR practices need to serve equally both regulatory (implicit CSR) and market-driven expectations (explicit CSR) of different national contexts (Yan, 2020). This causes a blurring of the boundaries between implicit and explicit CSR, which is called hybridization (Matten & Moon, 2020). Hybridization “is an ongoing process by which either norms and rules associated with implicit CSR are adopted in explicit CSR policies” (explicitization), or “by which norms and rules of business responsibility with an explicit CSR nature are built into general obligation of business” (implicitization) (Matten & Moon, 2020, p. 7).

Specifically, explicitization is the process by which norms and rules originally associated with implicit CSR are transformed into explicit CSR policies, practices, and strategies (Matten & Moon, 2020). This means that companies actively communicate those responsibilities that they have already pursued due to embedded and binding policies of the wider business system. Incentives and characteristics of the explicitization process are influenced by the perceived expectations of core stakeholders, society and governmental and non-governmental regulators (for a summary of explicitization, see Matten & Moon, 2020: 20). The reasons for explicitization can be explained by “coercive isomorphism” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150) and “mimetic processes” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 151). In the case of coercive isomorphism, the structures of other companies are adopted compulsorily due to the pressure to meet existing expectations of vari-

ous stakeholders. For example, the increasing visibility of corporate actions in the world through activities of (social) media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or other civil society activists sheds light on corporate responsibility and exposes corporate misconduct. Therefore, society exerts normative pressure on companies to make their CSR practices more transparent. In addition, governments frequently impose new legal framework conditions that need to be met (e.g., reporting obligations). With mimetic processes, MNCs voluntarily decide to imitate organizational structures if these are judged to be successful. In most cases, this involves copying another company’s best practice activities.

Implicitization is the process of normalizing CSR practices in various business areas by embedding explicit CSR practices in binding guidelines for companies (Matten & Moon, 2020). In many of these cases, state and non-state regulators simply take up existing corporate trends and impose a binding framework on them. This establishes a new consensus on what is expected of CSR practices by all groups in society, including companies. Examples of implicitization are non-financial reporting (e.g., sustainability reports), the UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles, or the supply chain law in Germany. (For a summary of implicitization see Matten & Moon, 2020, p. 20.)

A code of conduct is one of the most widely adopted tools to communicate and enhance CSR (Singh, 2011; Wheldon & Webley, 2013). The globalization of markets and the need for core principles that are universally applicable are evidence of its growing importance (Kaptein, 2015). A code of conduct is a “distinct and formal document containing a set of prescriptions developed by and for a company to guide present and future behavior on multiple issues of at least its managers and employees towards one another, the company, external stakeholders and/or society in general” (Kaptein & Schwartz, 2008, p. 113). In other words, it is a tool to implement standards of behavior that are expected of the MNCs external stakeholders (e.g., suppliers, business partners). Every code of conduct therefore contains relationships of obligation of and to internal and external stakeholders, which can be either unilateral or mutual.

The reasons that MNCs adopt a code of conduct vary from the need to react to regulatory and normative expectations (implicit CSR), to avoiding financial or reputational damage or achieving financial or reputational gains, to the voluntary expression of the MNCs commitment in enhancing ethical behavior (explicit CSR) (Bondy et al., 2004). As a central part of CSR practices, codes of conduct are subject to adjustment pressures. Consequently, codes of conduct no longer are limited to one of the aforementioned reasons, but try to cover the whole spectrum of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors. Therefore, more-recent definitions identify codes of conduct as the MNCs' standards of behavior that display "the types of ethical and legal issues employees are likely to face in their organization" (Treviño et al., 2014, p. 638). Formulated more normatively, the aim of a code is to govern "the actions and conduct of employees through the promotion of ethical business practices, thereby avoiding legal consequences" (Erwin, 2011, p. 536).

Drawing on the framework of implicit and explicit CSR, codes of conduct are a special case when comparing the US context with the German context. The peculiarity resides in the fact that, even though the United States is a LME with rather explicit CSR, publishing a code of conduct underlies much more regulative pressure than in the German context. Section 406 of the Sarbanes–Oxley Act (SOX) requires a code of conduct for top financial and accounting officers of publicly traded companies, and instructs the Securities and Exchange Commission to issue rules requiring a public company to disclose whether it has a code (and if they do not, the reason why they do not). Another requirement to adapt and publish a code of conduct applies to listed companies at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) (Sec. 303A.10 Listed Company Manual). Not a requirement, but rather an incentive to publish a code of conduct, is the possibility introduced by the United States Federal Sentencing Guidelines to reduce penalties if a company can demonstrate an effective ethics compliance program at the time of a violation (McKendall et al., 2002). Such formal and informal incentives of the institutional framework led to a massive distribution of codes of conduct (Weber & Wasieleski, 2013).

Beyond their impact on distribution, SOX and NYSE impact the codes' composition. Whereas SOX largely leaves the content of the code of conduct to the discretion of the individual company, the explanations of the NYSE coding rule give topic-structured recommendations. This includes conflicts of interest; handling of business opportunities; protection of data privacy; appropriate behavior toward customers, suppliers, competitors, and employees; dealing with company property; complying with legal and regulatory requirements; and reporting examples of suspected wrongdoing (Sec. 303A.10 Listed Company Manual). The strong orientation toward these suggested topics is reflected in the current literature (for an overview, see Babri et al. 2021, pp. 80–82). Weber and Wasieleski's (2013) survey of ethics and compliance officers of 60 US companies shows that some topics are almost universally covered within the codes of conduct: confidential information, conflicts of interest, discrimination or sexual harassment, corruption, antitrust compliance (all of which appear in 59 of 60 codes) and the use of organizational assets (58 of 60 codes). With that come observed isomorphic similarities with regard to the content alignment of US companies. In a content analysis of codes of conduct of a cross-section of 75 US companies, Holder-Webb and Cohen (2012) identified a convergence of content across companies, independent of the industry. This concerns both the legal-based statements given by SOX and NYSE, but also value-based statements, such as promoting ethical behavior and integrity (Forster et al., 2009).

Although Germany has a coordinated market economy, there is no legal obligation to have a code of conduct. As a private set of rules—so-called "soft law"—the German Corporate Governance Code (DCGK) is neither mandatory nor discretionary. Strictly speaking, the code is in a no man's land between legislation and voluntary initiative, because "soft law" is a term that is a contradiction in terms. The DCGK contains best-practice recommendations that are recognized nationally and internationally as standards of good and responsible corporate governance. The thematic focus is on the reproduction of existing legal regulations for the management and supervision of German companies listed on the

stock exchange, conflicts of interest, and transparency and external reporting. According to Section 161 of the German Stock Corporation Act (AktG), the Management Board and Supervisory Board of a listed company must submit an annual declaration regarding the extent to which they comply with the DCGK (and if they do not, why). This declaration must be permanently accessible to the shareholders and all other interested parties. This usually happens through publication on a company's website. Together with the public availability, the annual declaration puts normative pressure on German MNCs to follow the DCGK's recommendations. The websites of the current DAX 30 companies show that all of them, without exception, have published such a declaration. The associated orientation toward the proposed topics suggests an alignment of the code content of German MNCs with a focus on the reproduction of legal requirements.

Because MNCs increasingly are subject to similar normative (e.g., the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises) and regulative pressures (e.g., NYSE's requirement to publish a code of conduct also applies to foreign companies listed there) by the wider business system, it is reasonable to assume that the US and EU codes of conduct are subject to hybridization. Sharbatoghlie et al. (2013) identified a convergence of codes' content between US codes (U.S.-based Fortune 100 companies) and the Global 100 companies (including German companies) across time. However, their results were based on a data-mining content analysis to determine the frequency of key ethical words contained in the codes. There is a lack of in-depth research that not only captures the topics that are covered within the code of conduct, but also examines the forcefulness with which each topic is pursued, and how this may or may not differ across national contexts. In addition, the study examines which and to what extent internal and external stakeholders are directly affected by the codes' content.

Therefore, the following chapter introduces the methodology and operationalization of such an approach to find evidence for the hybridization of codes' content between corporations in the US and EU contexts.

3 METHODOLOGY AND OPERATIONALIZATION

The first step in finding empirical evidence for hybridization was to compare current codes of the German DAX 30 companies with a collected data set of DAX 30 companies' codes from 2005–2006. Considering the changes in codes of conduct from German DAX 30 companies over time provides conclusions about the extent to which the explicitization of CSR practices in national contexts that have traditionally implicit CSR shown in the literature also applies to codes of conduct. Current versions of a code of conduct, if available, usually can be found on a company's website. Accordingly, the homepages of all DAX 30 companies were examined. In addition, different combinations of "code of conduct + company's name" were inserted in the Google search engine to find results.¹ This method does not apply for earlier versions of a code. Even though the most recent code of conduct is publicly available on a company's homepage, former versions of these codes usually are not available and vanish with each update. Some may say that this is a simple strategy companies use to prevent the setting of time stamps, which can be used to determine when a company has changed or added content. Fortunately, the chair of Business Administration (Corporate Management, Organization and Corporate Social Responsibility) at Andrassy University Budapest offered access to every code of conduct of the DAX 30 companies that was available during the years 2005–2006.

The second step of the investigation diverged from the isolated consideration of only one national context, and involved a comprehensive content analysis of the codes of conduct of two comparable MNCs in the EU and the US contexts. In doing so, the theoretically proclaimed alignment between CSR practices in both contexts was examined empirically. The review was based on the codes of two MNCs that have a significant impact on the lives of people across the world: Bayer AG (Germany), and Pfizer Inc. (US). Hardly any other industry has been as much in focus since the beginning of the coron-

¹ In addition to "code of conduct," this includes other designations such as "code of ethics," "Verhaltenskodex" (German), and "Unternehmenskodex" (German).

avirus pandemic as the pharmaceutical industry. In particular, with the development and worldwide distribution of the Pfizer–BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, Pfizer Inc. has a special responsibility to people. Therefore it is of particular interest to investigate how the American corporation expresses this responsibility within its code of conduct. This also applies to the German counterpart Bayer AG. Not only the up-to-dateness but also similar characteristics of both MNCs offer a solid basis for comparison between Pfizer Inc. and Bayer AG. This also applies to their codes of conduct. Since 2001, Bayer AG has been listed on the NYSE, and therefore is subject to its requirement to publish a code of conduct. Beyond the mere publication, Bayer AG faces the challenge of serving formal and informal expectations of stakeholders from both national contexts (Germany and the US). Therefore, both codes offer an excellent basis for comparison.

The content of codes of conduct in each context was examined in a qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) using the encoding software MAXQDA. The analysis criteria were derived from the guidelines for coding corporate ethical codes (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming). They are a further development of Talaulicar’s (2006) considerations, and offer a multilevel approach to analyze codes with regard to the binding nature of a norm, the form in which a norm is implemented, the topics and the forcefulness with which each topic is covered, and the explicitly articulated relationships of obligation of and to stakeholders (Trautnitz & Pel-

ters, forthcoming). Although the guidelines include more analysis criteria, only those that were relevant to answering the research question are introduced here. Additionally, each criteria is accompanied by a short explanation of how it was coded.

3.1 Binding nature of a norm

As mentioned previously, a code of conduct is a set of guidelines. These guidelines contain norms that determine standards of behavior (Talaulicar, 2006; Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 6). The stronger a norm is, the stronger is the associated call for action. This also applies to any prohibitions of actions. Talaulicar distinguished between two forms of norms: rules, and principles: “Rules contain definitive commands that either can be followed completely or not at all.” (“All-or-nothing-character”) (Talaulicar, 2006, p. 301). A gradual fulfillment of rules is not possible. Principles provide for a binding observance of the action formulated in the norm, but leave the addressee of the norm scope for action (“More-or-less-character”) (Talaulicar 2006, p. 305). A gradual fulfillment of principles is possible. However, codes of conduct do not contain only explicit and binding calls for action or prohibitions. Therefore, sentences that relate to moral aspects and contain an implicit call for action from the code addressee’s point of view are determined to be weak norms (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 9). If there is no call for action at all within a sentence, it is simply information (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 7).

Table 1: Comparison of Bayer AG and Pfizer Inc.

Parameter	Bayer AG	Pfizer Inc.
Context	European Union (Germany)	US
Industry	Pharmaceuticals, Crop Science	Pharmaceuticals
Number of employees	99,637 (2021)	78,500 (2021)
Revenue	44.1 billion Euro (2021)	81.3 billion USD (2021) (with the vaccine) 44.4 billion USD (2021) (without the vaccine)
Listed on NYSE	Yes	Yes
Date of code publication	November 2019	2020
Code length	36 pages, 7,606 words	32 pages, 7,777 words

Source: Bayer AG, Annual Report, 2021; Bayer AG, Corporate Compliance Policy, 2019; Pfizer Inc., Form 10-K Annual Report, 2021.

Table 2: Types of norms

Type of norm	Call for action	Example
Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit call for action • only fully compliance or fully non-compliance possible • “All-or-nothing-character” 	“Any form of retaliation is unacceptable.” (Bayer AG, 2019, p. 12)
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit call for action • Gradual fulfilment is possible • “More-or-less-character” 	“We must use these social media platforms responsibly and in the best interest of Bayer...” (Bayer AG, 2019, p. 15)
Weak norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit call for action • Related to moral aspects • Call for action is at the discretion of the code addressee 	We share responsibility for maintaining a healthy and safe workplace. (Bayer AG, 2019, p. 8)
Information (no norm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational character only • No call for action 	“We have internal processes and systems designed to prevent the use or diversion of Bayer goods, software, technologies or services in improper ways.” (Bayer AG, 2019, p. 9)

Source: own representation based on Talaulicar, *Unternehmenskodizes: Typen und Normierungsstrategien zur Implementierung einer Unternehmensethik*, 2006: 301–306; Trautnitz & Pelters, *Richtlinien zur Codierung unternehmensethischer Kodizes 2.0 (working title)*, forthcoming, pp. 6–9.

How it was coded:

Information must never be coded as a norm. A norm can be a rule, a principle, or a weak norm. A double assignment (e.g., as a rule and as a principle) is impossible. For this study, each (half) sentence was coded as either a norms or as information (see Table 2).

3.2 Preference-based (persuasion) and sanction-based (negative sanction) implementation

The implementation of the code norms can be promoted following two different strategies: preference-based or sanction-based implementation. In the preference-based implementation, it is assumed that the preferences of the code addressee are not given (Talaulicar, 2006, pp. 401–402). Thus, the norm addressee should be convinced as much as possible of the necessity and appropriateness of the norm to support its compliance (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 10). An important instrument for this is persuasion. Persuasion is a convincing argument that consciously underpins the meaningfulness of compliance with the norm (Talaulicar, 2006, p. 411). The sanctions-based implementation assumes that the preferences of the code addressee are given. Therefore, the action situation of the code addressees should be changed through restrictions in such a way

that they decide to behave in accordance with the code, despite their own, possibly conflicting, preferences (Talaulicar, 2006, p. 459). Restriction-related measures, in the narrower sense, are the imposition and enforcement of negative sanctions, which are understood as a disadvantage imposed on a norm-breaker because of a norm violation (Talaulicar 2006, p. 471, Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 11).

How it was coded:

Usually, persuasion and negative sanctions do not appear in every (half-)sentence, and were coded only if there was a corresponding content in the code. Sometimes companies do not include them at all.

3.3 Topics

An important classification criterion within the framework of this study was the allocation of the coded information, norms, persuasions, or negative sanctions to one of the topics listed in Table 3. The topics were taken from the guidelines for coding codes of business ethics (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, pp. 14–16). The selection reflects the findings of the current literature on codes of conduct (for an overview, see Babri et al. 2021).

Table 3: Topics within a code of conduct

Topic 1, "Compliance with the code": Content to enhance compliance with the code of conduct
Topic 2, "Individual responsibility": Content that explicitly addresses each individual (e.g., "Each of us has to...")
Topic 3, "Compliance with law": Content to enhance legal compliance
Topic 4, "Prohibition of corruption": Content to avoid corruptive behavior
Topic 5, "Avoidance of conflicts of interest": Content to avoid discrepancy between the interests of the companies and the interests of the addressee
Topic 6, "Dealing with company property": Content to avoid misuse of company property (including intellectual property)
Topic 7, "Prohibition of discrimination": Content to avoid discrimination of people and to enhance fairness and equality
Topic 8, "Protection of data privacy": Content to avoid data leaks of the company or to enhance data protection of stakeholders
Topic 9, "Sustainability, safety and environmental protection": Content to enhance the conservation of resources, protection of the environment, and health and safety of the people
Topic 10, "Protection of free and fair competition": Content to enhance the equality between competitors in the market
Topic 11, "Interpersonality and integrity": Content to enhance ethical behavior and the quality of human interactions
Topic 12, "Other topics": Topics that cannot be assigned to any of the preceding topics

Source: Topics adapted from Trautnitz & Pelters, *Richtlinien zur Codierung unternehmensethischer Kodizes 2.0 (working title)*, forthcoming, pp. 14–16.

To trace hybrid CSR trends in US and EU codes, the coded topics were analyzed in terms of their relationship with implicit (mandatory) CSR and explicit (voluntary) CSR. Because these "two different types of CSR represent two different systems that normally sit on the two ends of the spectrum" (Yan 2020, p. 269), a standardized classification of every given topic as either implicit CSR or explicit CSR is not possible. Although some are quite obvious at

the implicit-CSR end (Topic 3, "Compliance with law") or the explicit-CSR end of the spectrum (Topic 11, "Interpersonality and Integrity"), most of the others are located somewhere between both types, depending on how the specific topic is presented within the code.

How it was coded:

All coded rules, principles, weak norms, information, persuasions, or negative sanctions were assigned to the topics mentioned in Table 3. Every coded norm or information was combined with at least one topic. If a (half-)sentence could be assigned to several topics, all relevant topics were coded separately. If one of the given topics did not fit the content, the coded (half-)sentence was assigned to Topic 12, "Other topics,"

3.4 Forcefulness

Forcefulness is a newly introduced research criterion that has not yet been tested empirically (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 16). Holder-Webb and Cohen (2012) complained that a lack of normative charging within codes of conduct of different companies give the impression that a code is more of a rational symbolic response in the wake of institutional isomorphic pressure, and less a genuine declaration of intent by the company. As a consequence, a code of conduct remains ineffective if the topics raised are not addressed vigorously. In this study, the forcefulness with which the topics are treated was represented by the number of coded rules, persuasions, and negative sanctions (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, p. 16). The more coded rules there are, the stronger is the normative charge of a topic; the more coded persuasions there are, the more value a company places on convincing its code addressees of the importance of the topic; and the more coded negative sanctions there are, the more non-compliance is being penalized.

How it was coded:

All coded rules, persuasions, and negative sanctions within each topic were added separately (to make a statement about the composition of forcefulness) and together (to make a statement about the overall number of coded forcefulness).

3.5 Relationships of obligation

A code is aimed at various internal and external stakeholders who sometimes are addressed directly. With this direct approach, either the addressees can be obliged to do something, or the people responsible for the code (usually the company's top management) make a commitment to the code addressee (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming, pp. 16–18). As a rule, the main internal stakeholders that are addressed within a code of conduct are employees. There is more leeway when determining the external stakeholders. Frequently represented external stakeholders are, e.g., customers, suppliers, or business partners, but can be any other stakeholder that affects or may be affected by the company's actions. In coding relationships of obligation, it was possible to record which stakeholders are addressed and how often, whether the top management shifts most of the responsibility onto the shoulders of employees, or whether it supports employees in implementing the guidelines.

How it was coded:

A relationship of obligation—either “obligation of...” or “obligation to...”—was coded whenever a stakeholder was mentioned explicitly.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in two subsections. The first subsection presents the findings of the comparison of the codes of conduct of the DAX 30 companies over time to determine evidence for any explicitization of CSR in the EU context. The second subsection presents the results of the content analysis of two codes of conduct of comparable US and EU companies to examine hybrid trends in an international context.

The data set from 2005–2006 indicates that, during this time, only about half of the DAX 30 companies had published a code of conduct, with an overall length of 175 pages and an average of 11.67 pages per code. In contrast, the data set from January 2021 collected in the course of this study revealed that 100% of the DAX 30 companies had a code of conduct that was publicly available on the company websites, with an overall length of 772 pages and an average 25.73 pages per code.

Although the composition of the DAX 30 companies has changed over time, two developments can be identified clearly. Firstly, companies that did not have a code of conduct in 2005–2006, have now published one, although there is no legal obligation to do so. Second, the scope of codes that existed in 2005–2006 has increased significantly.² Both developments are strong indications that support the theoretically proclaimed explicitization of implicit CSR through codes of the EU context.

To illustrate hybrid trends and differences between codes in an international context, the coding results of the codes' contents of comparable companies in the EU (Bayer AG) and US context (Pfizer Inc.) first are presented in Table 5, and then interpreted.

A total of 1,441 codes were assigned in the MAXQDA coding program. Bayer AG accounted for 708 codes, and Pfizer Inc. accounted for 733 codes. At 0.95, both corporations had the same, high norm level. Together with the relatively high number of codes concerning “Compliance with code”—half of which are accompanied by rules, persuasions, or negative sanctions—Bayer AG and Pfizer Inc. seem to be generally committed to the implementation of their codes. This means that both codes are not mere information brochures at their core, but aim to influence the behavior of the code addressees (Kaptein, 2011). However, the data reveal different approaches by the corporations.

On the one hand, with 61 coded rules, Bayer AG puts a strong focus on “all-or-nothing” guidelines for action that must be followed. On the other hand, 67 coded weak norms show that a similar number of codes contain only implicit calls for action, so that the code addressees can decide whether they feel obliged to implement it. Therefore, with regard to guidelines for action, Bayer AG equally serves both ends of a normative continuum. An analysis of the topics and the forcefulness with which these topics are treated in the code reveals which topics are really important to Bayer AG.

² The only exception is the 2006 RWE code. However, this was due only to its oversized resolution.

Table 4: Availability of the DAX 30 codes of conduct in Germany, 2005–2006 vs. 2021

2005–2006*	
With code	Without code
1. Allianz SE (8 pages)	16. Adidas AG
2. Altana AG (6 pages)	17. BMW AG
3. BASF Group (4 pages)	18. Commerzbank AG
4. Bayer Group (25 pages)	19. Continental AG
5. DaimlerChrysler AG (6 pages)	20. Deutsche Börse AG
6. Deutsche Bank AG (8 pages)	21. E.ON AG
7. Deutsche Post AG (5 pages)	22. Fresenius
8. Deutsche Telekom AG (3 pages)	23. Henkel KGaA
9. Linde AG (12 pages)	24. Hypo Real Estate Bank AG
10. MAN AG (11 pages)	25. HypoVereinsbank
11. Metro AG (24 pages)	26. Infineon Technologies AG
12. Münchener Rückversicherungs-Gesellschaft AG (11 pages)	27. Deutsche Lufthansa AG
13. RWE AG (28 pages)	28. ThyssenKrupp AG
14. SAP AG (12 pages)	29. TUI AG
15. Siemens AG (12 pages)	30. Volkswagen AG
50% with code; Σ 175; \emptyset 11.67 pages* The company names were taken as they appear in the codes of conduct.	
2021	
With code	
1. Adidas AG (23 pages)	16. E.ON SE (36 pages)
2. Allianz SE (32 pages)	17. Fresenius SE&Co.KGaA (24 pages)
3. BASF SE (29 pages)	18. Fresenius Medical Care (32 pages)
4. Bayer AG (36 pages)	19. HeidelbergCement AG (8 pages)
5. Beiersdorf AG (19 pages)	20. Henkel AG&Co.KGaA (58 pages)
6. BMW AG (14 pages)	21. Infineon Technologies AG (28 pages)
7. Continental AG (24 pages)	22. Linde plc (21 pages)
8. Covestro AG (37 pages)	23. Merck KGaA (24 pages)
9. Daimler AG (40 pages)	24. MTU Aero Engines AG (19 pages)
10. Delivery Hero SE (15 pages)	25. Münchener Rückversicherungs-Gesellschaft AG (20 pages)
11. Deutsche Bank AG (31 pages)	26. RWE AG (8 pages)
12. Deutsche Börse AG (8 pages)	27. SAP SE (20 pages)
13. Deutsche Post AG (22 pages)	28. Siemens AG (44 pages)
14. Deutsche Telekom AG (12 pages)	29. Volkswagen AG (72 pages)
15. Deutsche Wohnen SE (3 pages)	30. Vonovia SE (13 pages)
Σ 772 pages; \emptyset 25.73 pages	

Source: 2005–2006 data made available by the chair of business administration of the Andrassy University Budapest; 2021 data collected from the companies' websites.

Table 5: Overview of coding results

Code of conduct	Total codes	Information	Rules	Principles	Weak norms	Norm level**	Persuasion	Negative sanctions	Persuasion density***	Negative sanction density***
Bayer AG	708*	9	61	39	67	0,95	18	4	0,82	0,18
Pfizer Inc.	733*	7	38	65	50	0,95	26	1	0,96	0,04
Σ	1441*	16	99	105	117	1,90	46	5	1,78	0,22

*For better reading, coding of the formal characteristics (e.g., headlines) and for this study irrelevant research criteria are excluded from this table, but still are part of the total codes.
 Relation between information and norms (rules, principles, weak norms) *Density denotes the ratio of the number of persuasions to negative sanctions.

Source: own representation

Table 6: Number of coded topics

Topics	Topic 1: Code compliance	Topic 2: Individual responsibility	Topic 3: Compliance with law	Topic 4: Prohibition of corruption	Topic 5: Avoidance of conflicts of interest	Topic 6: Dealing with company property	Topic 7: Prohibition of discrimination	Topic 8: Protection of data privacy	Topic 9: Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection	Topic 10: Protection of free and fair competition	Topic 11: Interpersonal integrity	Topic 12: Other topics
Bayer AG	20	3	49	16	19	17	16	12	29	27	9	14
Pfizer Inc.	15	11	36	15	12	7	23	23	13	12	33	25
Σ	35	14	85	31	31	24	39	35	42	39	43	39

Source: own representation

Table 7: Forcefulness with which each topic is covered (rules, persuasions, and negative sanctions)

Forcefulness	Topic 1: Code compliance	Topic 2: Individual responsibility	Topic 3: Compliance with law	Topic 4: Prohibition of corruption	Topic 5: Avoidance of conflicts of interest	Topic 6: Dealing with company property	Topic 7: Prohibition of discrimination	Topic 8: Protection of data privacy	Topic 9: Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection	Topic 10: Protection of free and fair competition	Topic 11: Interpersonal integrity	Topic 12: Other topics
Bayer AG	9	0	30	10	12	7	4	6	5	18	3	2
Pfizer Inc.	7	4	17	3	6	3	8	6	0	6	8	6
Σ	16	4	47	13	18	10	12	12	5	24	11	8

Source: own representation

Table 8: Relationships of obligation

Relationships of obligation	Obligation of employees	Obligation to employees	Obligation of external stakeholders	Obligation to external stakeholders	Σ
Bayer AG	18	12	5	35	70
Pfizer Inc.	12	11	8	72	103
Σ	30	23	13	107	

Source: own representation

The top five thematic priorities of Bayer AG in descending order are (1) "Compliance with law" (49 codes); (2) "Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection" (29 codes); (3) "Protection of free and fair competition" (27 codes); (4) "Code compliance" (20 codes); and (5) "Avoidance of conflicts of interest" (19 codes). However, sorting the topics according to the forcefulness with which they are treated (Table 9), the ranking is (1) "Compliance with law" (30 codes); (2). "Protection of free and fair competition" (18 codes); (3) "Avoidance of conflicts of interest" (12 codes); (4) "Prohibition of corruption" (10 codes); and (5) "Code compliance" (9 codes).

The comparison discloses that "Compliance with law" is by far the topic that Bayer AG not only mentions the most often (49 codes), but also pursues the most emphatically (30 codes). Of the 30 codes concerning forcefulness, 21 are rules, five are persuasions, and four are negative sanctions. All four coded sanctions within Bayer AG's code of conduct concern at least the topic "Compliance with law." The range of these sanctions, from fines, to termination of employment, to imprisonment, confirms how important it is for Bayer AG that their employees comply with legal requirements.

The strong reliance on legal obligations also is reflected in other topics. This includes "Protection of free and fair competition" (18 codes concerning forcefulness) and "Avoidance of conflicts of interest" (12 codes concerning forcefulness). "Protection of free and fair competition" is influenced by a strong link to legal compliance at the EU and national levels. At the EU level, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (AEUV) provides mandatory competition rules for all member states. In addition,

the EU regulation is supplemented at the national level in Germany by the Act against Restraints of Competition (GWB). If necessary, the EU competition law can influence and override the German GWB definitions. The mandatory nature of competition law provides an understandable reason why Bayer AG pursues this issue with such urgency.

The topic "Avoidance of conflicts of interest" has many points of reference. External content drivers are the recommendations of the German Corporate Governance Code (DCGK) and the NYSE template (Holder-Webb & Cohen, 2012). In addition, a company has a major self-interest in ensuring that the interests of the code addressees and the interests of the company do not diverge. This is to avert financial or reputational damage as well as legal liability (Weber & Wasieleski, 2013). There is a fine line between conflicts of interests and corruption. When an individual puts their own interests ahead of the company's interests, they also are more likely to accept unfair advantages. Therefore, it is not surprising that the topic "Prohibition of corruption" has 10 codes according to forcefulness (all rules), with a total of only 16 assigned codes.

Although "Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection" is the second most frequently mentioned topic, only five of the 29 codes can be assigned to the forcefulness criterion, and even those codes refer to compliance with legal environmental protection requirements. The following excerpt from the code of conduct underscores this: "We further observe all laws ... regarding the generation, use, storage and disposal of waste, emissions, hazardous chemicals and other materials." (Bayer, 2021, p. 8). In fact, the majority of codes are

Table 9: Forcefulness, Bayer AG

Forcefulness, Bayer AG	Rules	Persuasions	Negative sanctions	Σ
Topic 1, "Compliance with the code"	3	5	1	9
Topic 2, "Individual responsibility"	0	0	0	0
Topic 3, "Compliance with law"	21	5	4	30
Topic 4, "Prohibition of corruption"	10	0	0	10
Topic 5, "Avoidance of conflicts of interest"	11	1	0	12
Topic 6, "Dealing with company property"	7	0	0	7
Topic 7, "Prohibition of discrimination"	3	1	0	4
Topic 8, "Protection of data privacy"	4	2	0	6
Topic 9, "Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection"	4	1	0	5
Topic 10, "Protection of free and fair competition"	13	2	3	18
Topic 11, "Interpersonality and integrity"	0	3	0	3
Topic 12, "Other topics"	2	0	0	2
Σ	78	20	8	

Source: own representation

weak norms. Another excerpt from the code illustrates the lack of cohesiveness that accompanies it (Bayer, 2021: 8):

Our actions, operating practices and products should not damage the environment in which we operate. To uphold this commitment, we work hard to reduce the environmental impact of our products and operations, use natural resources responsibly, improve our resource and energy efficiency, and develop new technologies, optimized processes and innovative products that serve to protect or even benefit the environment, nature and the climate.

Although this statement suggests a wide range of responsibilities, it is not binding for the individual addressee, and offers no measurable criteria. Therefore, the implementation remains vague. Bayer AG's code of conduct, it seems, is committed only to what the law prescribes in terms of "Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection."

Bayer AG's code of conduct has little relation to the topic "Interpersonality and integrity," with only nine thematic mentions. A special feature of this topic is its forcefulness. Integrity can arise only from

an intrinsic motivation (Paine, 1994). Persuasion is important here, especially in the form of persuasive arguments that convince the addressee of the meaningfulness of acting with integrity. Extrinsic motivational factors such as rules and especially negative sanctions harbor the risk of contrary behavior. Hence, with three coded persuasions, no coded rule, and no coded negative sanction, Bayer AG shows a first right but modest approach to promote integrity-based behavior.

With regard to the relationships of obligation, there is a slight preponderance of obligations of employees (18 codes) versus obligations to employees (12 codes). Whereas there are only five single codes regarding the obligation of external stakeholders (two codes on business partners, two codes on third parties, and one code on suppliers³), there are 35 codes concerning obligations to external stakeholders, which are distributed widely among 18 different external stakeholders. The composition of obligations to customers (5 codes); whistleblowers, au-

³ Both Bayer AG and Pfizer Inc. have published an extra code for suppliers. Therefore, less reference to suppliers within the (main) code of conduct is to be expected.

thorities, and the environment (3 codes each); and business partners, shareholders, people in general, patients, and society (2 codes each), highlights that Bayer AG’s code of conduct generally demonstrates responsibility to a huge variety of external stakeholders. However, compared with the high number of coded obligations to external stakeholders within Pfizer Inc.’s code of conduct, Bayer AG’s code of conduct seems to lack depth.

Pfizer Inc. shows the opposite picture to Bayer AG with regard to its norms. With 38 coded rules, Pfizer Inc. places the least value on unconditional guidelines for action. Instead, the MNC relies on principles (65 codes), i.e., explicit guidelines for action, which always gives the code addressee some scope for decision-making in the implementation.

The top five thematic priorities of Pfizer Inc. are, in descending order, (1) “Compliance with law” (36 codes); (2) “Interpersonality and integrity” (33 codes); (3) “Prohibition of discrimination” and “Protection of data privacy” (23 codes each); (4) “Prohibition of corruption” and “Code compliance” (15 codes each); and (5) “Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection” (13 codes). Sorted according to the forcefulness with which each topic is treated

(Table 10), the ranking is (1) “Compliance with law” (17 codes); (2) “Prohibition of discrimination” and “Interpersonality and integrity” (8 codes each); (3) “Code compliance” (7 codes); (4) “Avoidance of conflicts of interest,” “Protection of data privacy,” and “Protection of free and fair competition” (6 codes each); and (5) “Individual responsibility” (4 codes).

Due to the small number of coded rules, Pfizer Inc.’s number of codes concerning forcefulness is much lower than that of Bayer AG’s code of conduct. In contrast, and similar to Bayer AG, “Compliance with law” is the topic that Pfizer Inc. not only mentions the most often, but also pursues the most emphatically. This shows that, for both corporations, governmental regulations are the major content drivers, regardless of the context. The major differences appear in the second row of Tables 9 and 10. Whereas “Interpersonality and Integrity” is given little consideration by Bayer AG, (33 codes), it has a similar status as “Compliance with law” (36 codes) at Pfizer Inc. Moreover, it is accompanied by the highest number of topic-specific coded persuasions (seven codes). “Prohibition of discrimination” has slightly fewer mentions, but is coded with the same forcefulness (26 codes, eight codes concerning forcefulness).

Table 10: Forcefulness, Pfizer Inc.

Forcefulness, Pfizer Inc.	Rules	Persuasions	Negative sanctions	Σ
Topic 1, “Compliance with the code”	1	5	1	7
Topic 2, “Individual responsibility”	3	1	0	4
Topic 3, “Compliance with law”	13	4	0	17
Topic 4, “Prohibition of corruption”	2	1	0	3
Topic 5, “Avoidance of conflicts of interest”	2	4	0	6
Topic 6, “Dealing with company property”	1	2	0	3
Topic 7, “Prohibition of discrimination”	6	2	0	8
Topic 8, “Protection of data privacy”	3	3	0	6
Topic 9, “Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection”	0	0	0	0
Topic 10, “Protection of free and fair competition”	5	1	0	6
Topic 11, “Interpersonality and integrity”	1	7	0	8
Topic 12, “Other topics”	6	0	0	6
Σ	43	30	1	

Source: own representation.

Both “Interpersonality and Integrity” and “Prohibition of discrimination” (with one exception concerning the vague reference “applicable law”) are detached from legal requirements and reflect content that refers to essentially explicit CSR. The remaining codes concerning forcefulness are distributed relatively evenly across the other topics.

A notable exception is the comparatively small number of explicit mentions of “Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection” (13 codes for Pfizer Inc, compared with 29 codes for Bayer AG), as well as the complete lack of any codes concerning its forcefulness. This is surprising, because Pfizer Inc. has committed itself to the UN Global Compact, for example, which contains a number of principles for environmental protection. In addition, the “Fridays for Future Movement,” launched in 2018, has led to companies increasingly referring to environmental issues in their CSR practices. In the case of “Sustainability, safety, and environmental protection,” informal institutions seem to have a minor impact on Pfizer Inc.’s codes’ content. Numerous US climate and environmental regulations were abolished or relaxed under the Trump presidency (Bomberg, 2021). This may be a hint that the composition of codes of conduct is highly sensitive to the current zeitgeist (Chua & Rahman, 2011), and primarily is geared toward complying with formal obligations (Adelstein & Clegg, 2016).

Concerning relations of obligation, “Obligations of employees” (12 codes) and “Obligations to employees” (11 codes) are almost the same, which is a good indication that Pfizer Inc. does hold its employees accountable, but also supports them in their actions. The ratio of the “Obligations of stakeholders” (8 codes) to the “Obligations to external stakeholders” (72 codes) is remarkable. Pfizer Inc. attaches the greatest importance to the protection of patients (17 codes), customers (8 codes), people in general (7 codes), doctors (4 codes), and even entire communities (7 codes). Together with, e.g., business partners (4 codes), suppliers (4 codes), whistleblowers (3 codes), and competitors (3 codes), Pfizer Inc. expresses a holistic picture of its responsibility to a variety of external stakeholders, mostly with reference to the topic that seems to be one of the most important topics when discussing pharmaceutical industries: the health of people.

The findings of the content analysis reveal strong content similarities between Bayer AG’s and Pfizer Inc.’s codes of conduct, especially with regard to topics addressed therein. This confirms an explicitization of codes from MNCs in the implicit EU context. MNCs from the EU context, it seems, use codes of conduct from the US context as templates to revise and update their own codes. Although corporations in both national contexts increasingly are subject to new and similar regulations by the wider business system, they still refer explicitly to those regulations within their code of conduct, regardless of whether they are formal (e.g., international legal obligations) or informal (e.g., the UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles). This explains why the scope and harmonization of international codes is increasing steadily.

With 49 codes (Bayer AG) and 36 codes (Pfizer Inc.) concerning “Compliance with law,” the primary concern of both codes of conduct is to assure compliance by employees against any breach of legal obligations or other corporate interests. At the core, both codes of conduct are instruments of organizational risk management than rather /vehicles for achieving more-sustainable organizational practice (Adelstein & Clegg, 2016).

Beyond that, the distribution of the topics and the linking of these to forcefulness shows some differences. Whereas Bayer AG adheres closely to applicable law and similar topics (“Prohibition of corruption,” “Avoidance of conflicts of interest,” and “Protection of free and fair competition”), voluntarily initiated CSR practices play a subordinate role. In comparison, Pfizer Inc. predominantly uses explicit CSR. This applies to the high priority of the topic “Interpersonality and integrity” (33 codes, with eight codes concerning forcefulness) and the large number of obligations to various external stakeholders (more than twice as many codes as Bayer AG). Pfizer Inc.’s code of conduct makes it clear that the character of US codes is characterized more strongly by explicit CSR than is the character of EU codes.

Referring to recent definitions of codes of conduct cited in Section 2, the codes’ content of both contexts reveal an imbalance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors, because the avoidance of legal consequences is weighted significantly higher than the promotion of ethical business practices (Erwin, 2011; Treviño et al., 2014).

5 LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main limitation of this study is its small sample. Due to the high scope of the qualitative content analysis, only one code of conduct from each context (US and EU) was examined. Future research should expand the sample, both cross-sectionally (companies from other industrial sectors) and in depth (other pharmaceutical companies). In addition, the EU context in this study was represented only by one German MNC. Additional research with codes from other member states is necessary to strengthen the validity of the results in relation to the entire European Union.

Another limitation inherent in most qualitative studies is the fact that the results of a qualitative content analysis can never be completely free of the coder's subjective perception, although the guidelines for coding corporate ethical codes (Trautnitz & Pelters, forthcoming) are designed to be as intersubjective as possible. To increase the objectivity of the coding results, each code of conduct was coded twice with a time gap of 1 month. Any differences in the coding results were checked manually and assigned definitively according to the coding guidelines.

Although it is possible to differentiate between a large number of external stakeholders within the content analysis, statements regarding internal stakeholders—other than top management—can be made only across all employees. The desired universal validity of a code of conduct usually prevents the naming or obligation of individual employees, functional and/or cross-functional teams, or different departments. To better capture the effects of a code of conduct against the background of the understanding of MNCs as multilevel social systems, an additional empirical study within the corporation is necessary in which different clusters can be taken into account (Hedberg et al., 1976; Kesler & Kates, 2015). According to the literature, the code implementation is affected strongly by the behavior of supervisors and the top management (Kaptein, 2008). These positions have an inherent role-model function that the employees use as a guide. Moreover, they are gatekeepers in providing information and other resources to implement the standards of behavior. Linking the code analysis with an employee survey would offer the opportunity to better account for the influence of those individual positions in the company.

Within an employee survey, the distinction between departments is particularly interesting. MNCs in particular often have their own compliance departments, which are responsible for the content of the codes of conduct. As a result, employees in the compliance department usually are more familiar with the code than are employees in other departments. Restricting the query about the perceived implementation and effectiveness of the code of conduct to this rather biased group of employees could falsify the result. To ensure the company-wide validity of the code, employees of other departments should be included in the investigation.

Concerning practical implications, the multi-level analysis criteria presented in this study gives companies a blueprint to assess and revise their own code of conduct.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find empirical evidence of the hybridization of CSR in an international context by examining codes of conduct of MNCs from the US and the European Union. For this purpose, it was first determined which institutional pressures (Scott, 1995) are exerted on the codes of conduct of international MNCs, and how those pressures stimulate a content convergence between the codes of MNCs in the US and the EU contexts. The comparison of codes of conduct of the German Dax 30 companies over time revealed that an explicitization of CSR practices has taken place with regard to the spread and scope of codes of conduct within the EU context (Sharbatoghlie et al., 2013). To determine to what extent the content of a code in the EU context resembles the content of a code in the US context, a qualitative content analysis of the code of an MNC from each context was carried out. The findings reveal a strong content alignment and show that US codes—including content suggestions coming from SOX or NYSE—function as templates for comparable corporations in the EU context. The EU code is characterized by a strong focus on legal requirements, which is a prime example of explicitization. Hence, the assumed explicitization of codes of conduct in an implicit context is proved with regard to spread, scope, and content. The US code of conduct shares the strong adherence to law, but includes more con-

tent that goes beyond the mere expectations of various stakeholders, and thus corresponds to the true nature of explicit CSR. In terms of implicitization, both US and EU corporations increasingly are subject to similar regulations by formal and informal regulations of the wider business system, which are referred to in the codes, regardless of the national context (e.g., the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles).

This paper makes an important contribution to current CSR research by providing empirical evidence for hybrid trends of codes of conduct within the US and EU contexts, while showing how hybridization transformed the configuration of codes

over the years. This study shows that, for codes of conduct, the strict assignment of CSR practices to either explicit CSR (US) or implicit CSR (EU) does not apply anymore. The ongoing and ubiquitous isomorphic adaptation processes with regard to the composition of codes of conduct have led MNCs to inherit elements of explicit and implicit CSR. Despite the increasing convergence of code content, the comparison of current codes of conduct shows that although the EU context is keen to explicitly communicate expectations that have to be met anyway, it currently lacks the courage to practice more-genuine explicit CSR. Future studies will determine to what extent this omission is addressed.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Ta študija predstavlja empirične dokaze o hibridizaciji vsebine kodeksov ravnanja v ZDA in EU. Povezuje konceptualne okvire neo-institucionalne teorije in hibridizacije korporativne družbene odgovornosti (angl. corporate social responsibility; CSR) s trenutnimi raziskavami o kodeksih ravnanja. Umeščena znotraj mednarodnega konteksta kodeksov ravnanja iz ZDA in EU, študija uporablja kvalitativno analizo vsebine, in sicer z uporabo programske opreme MAXQDA. Raziskovalni subjekti so kodeksi ravnanja dveh multinacionalk (angl. multinational companies; (MNCs) iz farmacevtske industrije: Bayer AG (EU) in Pfizer (ZDA). Ugotovitve kažejo, da eksplicitacija v kontekstu EU vodi do močne usklajenosti vsebine med kodeksi ravnanja multinacionalk iz ZDA in EU. Vsebina obeh kontekstov je namenjena predvsem izpolnjevanju zakonskih zahtev. Vseeno pa se kodeksi v ZDA še vedno večinoma osredotočajo na eksplicitno CSR in kažejo obveznosti do zunanjih deležnikov. Po avtorjevem vedenju je to prva študija, ki je s pregledom vsebine kodeksov ravnanja, našla empirične dokaze o hibridizaciji CSR. Prihodnje raziskave bi morale razširiti vzorec, tako presečno, kot znotraj farmacevtske industrije, da bi še bolj povečale prenosljivost rezultatov.

REFERENCES

- Adelstein, J., & Clegg, S. (2016). Code of Ethics: A Stratified Vehicle for Compliance. *Journal of Business Ethics, 138*, 53-66.
- Aguilera, R. V., & Jackson, G. (2003). The Cross-National Diversity of Corporate Governance: Dimensions and Determinants. *Academy of Management Review, 28*, 447-465.
- Ali, W., Frynas, J. G., & Mahmood, Z. (2017). Determinants of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Disclosure in Developed and Developing Countries: A Literature Review. *Corp. Soc. Responsib. Environ. Mgmt., 24*, 273-294.
- Amaeshi, K., Adegbite, E., & Rajwani, T. (2016). Corporate Social Responsibility in Challenging and Non-enabling Institutional Contexts: Do Institutional Voids matter? *Journal of Business Ethics, 134* (1), 135-153.
- Babri, M., Davidson, B., & Helin, S. (2021). An Updated Inquiry into the Study of Corporate Codes of Ethics: 2005–2016. *Journal of Business Ethics, 168*, 71–108.
- Barth, R., & Wolff, F. (Eds.). (2009). *Corporate social responsibility in Europe: Rhetoric and realities*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bayer AG (2021). *Bayer AG Annual Report*. <https://www.bayer.com/sites/default/files/2022-03/-Bayer-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>. Retrieved 30 August 2022.

- Bayer AG (2019). *Corporate Compliance Policy*. <https://www.bayer.com/sites/default/files/bayer-corporate-compliance-policy-en.pdf>. Retrieved 13 June 2022.
- Bomberg, E. (2021). The environmental legacy of President Trump. *Policy Studies*, 42 (5-6), 628-645.
- Bondy, K., Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2004). The Adoption of Voluntary Codes of Conduct in MNCs: A Three-Country Comparative Study. *Business and Society Review*, 109, 449-477.
- Brammer, S., Jackson, G., & Matten, D. (2012). Corporate Social Responsibility and Institutional Theory: New Perspectives on Private Governance. *Socio-Economic Review*, 10, 3-28.
- Brown, J. A., Clark, C., & Buono, A.F. (2018). The United Nations Global Compact: Engaging Implicit and Explicit CSR for Global Governance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 147 (4), 721-734.
- Carson, S.G., Hagen, Ø., & Sethi, S. P. (2015). From Implicit to Explicit CSR in a Scandinavian Context: The Cases of HÅG and Hydro. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 127 (1), 17-31.
- Chua, F., & Rahman, A. (2011). Institutional Pressures and Ethical Reckoning by Business Corporations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98, 307-329.
- Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex (2022). *Regierungskommission. Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex*. Retrieved 17 July 2022.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 150-151.
- Doś, A., & Pattarin, F. (2021). Drivers of CSR anchoring in transition economies: Evidence from Poland. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 30, 507-521.
- Erwin, P. M. (2011). Corporate codes of conduct: The effects of code content and quality on ethical performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99 (4), 535-548.
- Fifka, M. S. (2013). Corporate Responsibility Reporting and its Determinants in Comparative Perspective – a Review of the Empirical Literature and a Meta-analysis. *Bus. Strat. Env.*, 22, 1-35.
- Forster, M., Loughran, T., & McDonald, B. (2009). Commonality in codes of ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90, 129-139.
- Hahn, R., & Kühnen, M. (2013). Determinants of Sustainability Reporting: A Review of Results, Trends, Theory, and Opportunities in an Expanding Field of Research. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 59, 5-21.
- Hall, P. A. and Soskice, D. (2001). *An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism*. In Hall, P. A. and Soskice, D. (eds) *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1-68.
- Hedberg, B. L. T., Nystrom, P. C., & Starbuck, W. H. (1976). Camping on Seesaws: Prescriptions for a Self-Designing Organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21 (1), 41-65.
- Holder-Webb, L., & Cohen, J. (2012). The cut and paste society: Isomorphism in codes of ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 107 (4), 485-509.
- Kaptein, M. (2008). Developing and Testing a Measure for the Ethical Culture of Organizations: The Corporate Ethical Virtues Model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 923-947.
- Kaptein, M. (2015). The Effectiveness of Ethics Programs: The Role of Scope, Composition, and Sequence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132, 415-431.
- Kaptein, M. (2011). Toward Effective Codes: Testing the Relationship with Unethical Behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99 (2), 233-251.
- Kaptein, M., & Schwartz, M. S. (2008). The Effectiveness of Business Codes: A Critical Examination of Existing Studies and the Development of an Integrated Research Model. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 77 (2), 111-127.
- Kesler, G., & Kates, A. (2015). *Bridging organization design and performance: Five ways to activate a global operation model*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kleinfeld, A., & Müller-Störr, C. (2010). *Die Rolle von interner Kommunikation unter interaktiver Schulung für ein effektives Compliance-Management*. In Wieland, Josef et al. (Hrsg.), *Handbuch Compliance-Management*, Berlin, 395-414.
- Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2008). "Implicit" and "Explicit" CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 33 (2), 404-424.
- Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2020). Reflections on the 2018 Decade Award: The Meaning and Dynamics of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 45 (1), 7-28.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1 (2), 105-114.
- McKendall, M., DeMarr, B., & Jones-Rikkens, C. (2002). Ethical Compliance Programs and Corporate Illegality: Testing the Assumptions of the Corporate Sentencing Guidelines. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 37, 367-383.
- Miska, C., Szócs, I., & Schiffinger, M. (2018). Culture's effects on corporate sustainability practices: A multi-domain and multi-level view. *Journal of World Business*, 53, (2), 263-279.
- Moon, J., Murphy, L., & Gond, J.-P. (2017). *Historical Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility*. In A. Rasche, M. Morsing, J. Moon (Eds.), *Corporate Social Responsibility: Strategy, Communication, Governance*, 31-62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) (2009). *Sec. 303A.10 Listed Company Manual. Code of Business Conduct and Ethics*. Retrieved 31 August 2022.
- Paine, L. S. (1994). Managing for Organizational Integrity. *Harvard Business Review*, 72 (2), 106-117.
- Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2008). *Globalization and Corporate Social Responsibility*. In Crane, A., McWilliams, A. and Matten, D. (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 413–431.
- Pelters, E. (2021). Corporate Digital Responsibility—Understanding and Applying. In T. Herberger and J. Dötsch (Eds.), *Digitalization, Digital Transformation and Sustainability in the Global Economy. Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics*, 71-84.
- Pfizer Inc. (2020). *Blue Book: Pfizer's Code of Conduct. Breakthroughs that change patients' lives*. Retrieved 17 June 2022.
- Pfizer Inc. (2021). *Form 10-K Annual Report*. https://s28.q4cdn.com/781576035/files/doc_financials/2021/ar/PFE-2021-Form-10K-FINAL.pdf. Retrieved 30 August 2022.
- Porter, M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). Strategy and society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84 (12), 78-88.
- Scott, W. R. (2008) *Institutions and Organisations*. Ideas and Interests, 3rd edn, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE.
- Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE.
- Sharbatoghlie, A., Mosleh, M., & Shokatian, T. (2013). Exploring trends in the codes of ethics of the Fortune 100 and Global 100 corporations. *Journal of Management Development*, 32 (7), 675-689.
- Singh, J. B. (2011). Determinants of the effectiveness of corporate codes of ethics: An empirical study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 101, 385-395.
- Smith, J., Haniffa, R., & Fairbrass, J. (2011). A Conceptual Framework for Investigating “Capture” in Corporate Sustainability Reporting Assurance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 99 (3), 425-439.
- Talaulicar, T. (2006). *Unternehmenskodizes: Typen und Normierungsstrategien zur Implementierung einer Unternehmensethik*, Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, Wiesbaden.
- Trautnitz, G., & Pelters, E. (forthcoming). *Richtlinien zur Codierung unternehmensethischer Kodizes 2.0* (working title).
- Treviño, L. K., Den Nieuwenboer, N. A., & Kish-Gephart, J. J. (2014). Unethical behavior in organizations. *Annual review of psychology*, 65, 635-640.
- Weber, J., & Wasieleski, D. M. (2013). Corporate Ethics and Compliance Programs: A Report, Analysis and Critique. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 112, 609-626.
- Wheldon, P., & Webley, S. (2013). *Corporate ethics policies & programmes: 2013 UK & continental Europe survey*. London: Institute of Business Ethics.
- Yan, M. (2020). Government and regulation in promoting corporate social responsibility – The case of China (October 1, 2019). Queen Mary School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper No. 321/2019. *Columbia Journal of Asian Law*, 33 (2), 264-294.



HIGHLIGHTING APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP STYLE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: THE NEED FOR A BROADER RESEARCH APPROACH TO THE CONTEXT-RELATED USE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

Gabriella Cserhádi

Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia, Hungary
cserhati.gabriella@gtk.uni-pannon.hu

Abstract

A project manager's leadership style has a considerable impact on project success. However, there is no one best appropriate leadership behavior. The characteristics of the project and the organizational context determine which leadership style could be appropriate in different situations. To provide a clear picture of the complexity of contextual features, leadership style, and its relation to project success, there is a need for a systematic review of leadership style-related papers focusing on project management. This paper has two aims: to provide a content analysis of previous papers to determine which leadership style approaches were studied in project management; and to provide a detailed content analysis of previous findings of project management studies in terms of matching project characteristics and organizational features with the appropriate leadership style of the project manager. The findings of this paper give a comprehensive analysis of previous results, and also highlight the weaknesses in terms of neglected aspects of conceptualization and deficiencies. Our results indicate the lack of comprehensive context-related studies of project manager's leadership. Thus, there is a need for research examining project characteristics and contextual features in detail to identify the appropriate project managers' leadership style by means of deductive reasoning.

Keywords: project manager, leadership style, project characteristics, contextual features, content analysis

1 INTRODUCTION

Successful implementation of projects is essential in implementing corporate strategic objectives. However, projects are temporary forms of organizing, and they differ from permanent organizational arrangements and processes in several ways. Because of the inherent characteristics of projects as temporary organizations (e.g., novelty, uniqueness, uncertainty, complexity, and low standardization), further to the project manager's skills and competencies, the leadership style has a considerable impact on project success. Several studies (Prabhakar, 2005; Müller & Turner, 2007; Yang, Wu, & Huang, 2013; Tabassi et al., 2016; Bhatti, Kiyani, Dust, & Zakariya, 2021) analyzed the relationship between the project manager's leadership style and project performance. Most of these studies reinforce that an appropriate leadership style facilitates successful

project completion in general (Prabhakar, 2005; Müller, & Turner, 2007; Yang, Wu, & Huang, 2013; Tabassi et al., 2016). However, there is no one best appropriate leadership behavior. Instead, the appropriate leadership style should be fitted to the characteristics of the project and of the organizational context. Bearing this in mind, researchers (Müller & Turner, 2010; Raziq, Borini, Malik, Ahmad, & Shabaz, 2018; Kabore, Sane, & Abo, 2021; Nauman, Musawir, Munir, & Rasheed, 2022) also analyzed the relationship between leadership style and project success in a more specific manner.

Previous studies utilized various leadership style approaches, applying often overlapping frameworks, and analyzed numerous different attributes pertaining to project characteristics and contextual features. Nevertheless, the conceptualizations of the analyzed attributes exhibited substantial differences. To provide a comprehensive basis for under-

standing a project manager's leadership style, the contextual elements associated with it, and the consequences in terms of project performance, a systematic review of the relevant literature focusing on leadership style approaches in project management is imperative. This paper has two aims: to provide a content analysis of these published papers to determine leadership style approaches considered in project management studies; and to conduct an associated content analysis to highlight previously published results regarding the relationships between project characteristics and organizational features, and the appropriate leadership style.

Our findings provide a systematic overview of previously published papers, presenting not only the studies of different leadership style approaches, but also the considered characteristics and environmental aspects of the project. In this way, our findings support human resource professionals in understanding the interdependencies between contextual features and different leadership styles. This understanding can help them find the most appropriate project manager for a specific project. Additionally, the results of the study can assist project managers in adapting their leadership style to the required leadership behavior based on the specific project characteristics and context.

Furthermore, based on the results, we can establish further studies and highlight the basics of a framework that might contribute to identifying the best-suited project management leadership style in a context-related manner. This framework is constructed using a deductive approach. In the proposed framework, the deductive approach is based on the relationships between inherent project characteristics and features of different leadership styles (along with the underlying personal characteristics), and on the relationships between contextual features and different leadership styles.

The proposed framework has significant practical management implications, because it facilitates matching project managers' leadership styles with the unique characteristics and contextual features of a given project. It has the potential to support project managers and personnel departments in comprehending these interdependencies in order to facilitate the appropriate selection and develop-

ment of project managers. Further research based on this framework could assist human resource departments and project management offices in recruiting and selecting project managers who can exhibit a leadership style customized to the specific attributes of a project and its environment. Consequently, the framework's utilization might advance project success.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

As far as the leadership style of a project manager having a considerable impact on the success of a project, there is a need to provide a short overview of understanding the project success, and the underlying concepts of projects and project management.

2.1 Understanding the Concept of Projects, Project Management, and Project Success

In for-profit and non-profit organizations projects, are common operations. Organizations fulfil the requirements of different clients or realize their development, innovation, or other future plans via projects. However, the implementation of projects differs from standard operational processes in many ways. Because of their novelty, complexity, uniqueness, and time and cost constraints, these tasks are characterized by high uncertainty, require more flexibility, and allow low standardization (Koster, 2010). A project is not only a complex and "temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result" (Project Management Institute, 2021, p. 4), but also a temporary organization (Lundin & Söderlund, 1995) and a strategic building block (Cleland, 1994). According to Görög (2016) this broader concept of a project includes a one-time, unique, and complex sequence of activities, characterized by a definite outcome and by time and cost constraints, by means of which corporate strategic objectives can be realized, and which is carried out by a temporary project organization.

This multifaceted concept of a project requires a broader approach to project management itself. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) published by the Project Management Institute (2021) emphasizes the management of project activ-

ities and the guiding of project work; however, it fails to mention the role of project management in realizing strategic objectives. Project management based on the comprehensive approach includes the management of implementation processes, temporary organizations, and “the achievement of beneficial changes implied in the organizational strategic objectives” (Görög, 2016, p. 1662). This broader approach to the concept of project management implies a very complex project manager role. The project manager is responsible for planning the project activities; realizing the plans; delivering the desired outcome; leading, motivating, and facilitating the team members; managing project stakeholders; and so on. Consequently, based on this comprehensive approach, the project manager has a considerable effect on the successful implementation of a project (Cleland, 1994; Turner, 2009), including the long-term success of an organization.

The phenomena of project success evolved considerably in line with the conceptual development of projects and project management. In recent decades, researchers analyzed various aspects of project success, including how projects are implemented; how their outcomes are evaluated; and how the environment, or organizational context in which they are executed, can be characterized. (Papke-Shields, Beise, & Quan, 2010). Based on these studies the so-called input-output-oriented view of project success has been formulated (Blaskovics, 2014). The concept of input concentrates on facts and circumstances that contribute to the successful implementation of the project (Lim & Mohamed, 1999). In other words, these factors are the success factors “that must be given special and continual attention to bring about high performance” (Boynton & Zmud, 1984, p. 17). The concept of output focuses on the evaluation of project outcome by using different base values and requirements. These requirements are the success criteria, based on which the success of a project can be evaluated.

The classical and most common used success criteria is the “project triangle” (time, cost, and quality), because the fulfilment of these requirements can be assessed objectively (Judgev & Müller, 2005). Due to the broader approach to project and project management, during the last 20 years several studies comprehensively evaluated project suc-

cess by broadening the range of success criteria (Atkinson, 1999; Baccarini, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2004). Görög (2013) developed a hierarchical model for the evaluation of a project’s success which encompasses three types of criteria in line with the broader concept of projects and project management: the traditional project triangle (time, cost, and quality), which measures the efficiency of project implementation; client satisfaction, which measures the effectiveness of the completed project outcome, and the benefit to the achievement of underlying strategic objectives; and the stakeholder satisfaction, which includes the satisfaction of both internal and external stakeholders.

Parallel to the evolution of success criteria, researchers attempted to identify the critical success factors of project implementation, focusing on the broader approach to projects and project management. Whereas earlier studies concentrated on determining factors that influence the realization of project objectives in terms of schedule, cost, and performance (Baker, Murphy, & Fisher, 1988; Pinto & Slevin, 1988), later publications attempted to classify these factors and develop a consistent model of success factors (Cooke-Davies, 2002; Leung, Ng, & Cheung, 2004), or identified the most popular success factors by analyzing previous publications (Fortune, & White, 2006). In addition to the identification of success factors, more studies focused on determining the relationships between success criteria and success factors based on empirical surveys (Papke-Shields et al., 2010; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011, Cserháti & Szabó, 2014). According to the results of these studies, relationship- and human-oriented success factors (e.g., communication, project leadership, human resource management, cooperation with stakeholders, and cohesion of the project team) advanced, and played a crucial role in client and stakeholder satisfaction. However, the role of task- and process-oriented success factors should not be neglected, because these factors have a considerable impact on the fulfilment of the project triangle (Doloi, Iyer, & Sawhney, 2011).

As the broader approach to project success advanced, more studies analyzed the impact of a project manager’s leadership style or leadership competencies on project success, and several of these studies reinforced the role of appropriate

leadership behavior in achieving project success. Based on interviews and an empirical survey with project managers, Müller and Turner (2007) determined that the leadership style of a project manager influences project success. Gruden and Stare (2018) reinforced the role of leadership competencies in project performance. According to Yang et al. (2013) and Bhatti et al. (2021), project managers' leadership style improves teamwork, trust in leaders, knowledge sharing, and project performance, and thereby facilitates stakeholder satisfaction. However, the effectiveness of leadership behavior depends highly on the characteristics of the project and its environmental or organizational context. Thus, there is not only one suitable leadership behavior, because it is influenced by the aforementioned factors. Based on this notion, several researchers (Agarwal, Dixit, Nikolova, Jain, & Sankaran, 2021; Blaskovics, 2014; Kabore et al., 2021; Müller & Turner, 2010; Raziq et al., 2018) have considered factors that relate to the required leadership style of project managers. They studied factors such as project type, complexity, duration, uncertainty, type of contract, team size, goal clarity, project importance, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing. These studies promoted research on the impact of leadership styles on project success in a relatively specific contextual manner, because they analyzed a certain part of project characteristics and contextual features. However, they did not determine the most important factors to be taken into consideration during the specification of the required leadership style of project managers.

Both project characteristics and contextual features are essential aspects to consider when determining the appropriate leadership style for a project manager. However, there are no well-established models in the project management literature for classifying these aspects. Crawford, Hobbs, and Turner (2006) developed a state-of-the-art classification system that includes different project attributes, such as application area, complexity, strategic importance, contract type, life-cycle stage, and culture. Görög (2013) differentiated two inherent project characteristics: uncertainties, and interdependences. Despite these efforts, there is no broadly accepted approach among authors, and further research is needed in this respect.

2.2 Understanding the Concept of Leadership, Leadership Theories, and Leadership Styles

To develop an elaborate study of project managers' leadership styles, we first define the phenomena of leadership, leadership theory, and leadership style, which are related but distinct concepts. Blake and Mouton (1985, p. 9) considered leadership to be "the process of achieving organization purpose through the efforts of people, results in some people attaining authority to set direction and coordinate effort; that is, to exercise the responsibility for the activities of others." The basis of leadership is the influence upon other individuals to act "to perform tasks or to solve problems in order to attain the goals of the organization" (Andersen, 2013, p. 5). On the other hand, leadership theories are frameworks that attempt to determine how leadership works and what makes an effective leader. These theories provide a systematic way of understanding the complexities of leadership, and offer insight into how leaders can enhance their effectiveness (Yukl, 2013). Finally, leadership style refers to the approach that a leader uses to guide and influence the team or organization. According to Northouse (2001), leadership styles are the specific ways in which a leader interacts with their followers and achieves their goals.

Within this influencing process, authors have emphasized the need for a dynamic relationship between leader and followers, which correlates highly with the characteristics of leaders and followers, and to "the context in which the influencing process occurs" (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003, p. 5). There is an agreement among academics that the concept of leadership style is understood in many different ways. In other words, researchers differentiate a confusingly high number of the leadership styles.

Based on Northouse (2001) and Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), Table 1 summarizes the most important milestones of leadership theories.

Early studies (Stogdill, 1948, 1974) focused on personality traits of leaders that can influence or explain the behavior of leaders and followers. Researchers of trait theory focused on the analysis of physical factors, knowledge, and abilities, as well as on personality features of leaders, and identified the

Table 1: Milestones of leadership theories

Trait theory	Focuses on identifying the characteristics and traits of effective leaders. Leaders are innate leaders.(Stogdill, 1948, 1974)
Behavioral theory	Focuses on the behaviors, actions, and skills of leaders. Leaders can be developed.(Lewin et al, 1939; Bales, 1950; McGregor, 1960; Blake & Mouton, 1964)
Situational theory	Focuses on a leaders adaptation to their environment. Leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to situational factors.(Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977)
New leadership	Focusing on one aspect of leadership is not sufficient. Focuses on the interactions between leaders, followers, the situation, and the context as a whole system.(Bass & Avolio, 1994; Goleman, 1995)

Source: authors' compilation based on Northouse (2001) and Buchanan and Huczynski (2004).

specific traits of effective leaders. However, characteristics defined as crucial traits by one researcher were not confirmed by others (Hughes, 2005). Conflicting results of trait theory inspired researchers to study leaders' behavior and its organizational effects. This leadership approach assumes that a leader's behavior influences followers' work, and, through the followers' effectiveness, the performance of the whole organization.

Based on behavioral characteristics and the relationship of leaders and followers, researchers described typical behavioral styles of leaders. Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) identified the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles based on observation of a group of children. The autocratic leader tends to direct and control subordinates, and centralizes authority. The democratic leader facilitates followers' participation and delegates authority to them. The laissez-faire leader is a passive character and does not take part in the actions of the group, which results in unproductive work and disengaged co-workers. Other studies (Bales, 1950; McGregor, 1960) identified two fundamental styles of leader behavior. The employee-centered leader focuses on the individual needs and opinions of followers, cohesion and commitment of the team, and delegation of authority. The job-centered leader concentrates on goals and performance, specifies the tasks, and controls the implementation. Based on these two main leadership behaviors, Blake and Mouton (1964) developed the managerial grid, in which the two dimensions (concern for people, and concern for production) do not exclude each other. They considered the concern for people and the concern for production to

be equally essential for effective leaders. Based on these two dimensions, they compiled a grid in which five categories of leadership behavior can be differentiated. The behavioral studies identified the main leadership styles and their effectiveness and determined the importance of human orientation. However, it became increasingly clear that the study and prediction of effective leadership are more complex. There is not only one right way of leading; a leader should adapt to the internal and external features of the situation.

Accordingly, contingency theories took into consideration the characteristics of the environment and tried to predict in which situations each kind of leadership behavior can be effective. Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory proposed that leadership behavior is influenced by the leader-member relationship, the degree of task structure, and the power derived from the leader's position. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) emphasized the role of subordinates. Depending on their maturity and motivation, task- or human-oriented leadership behavior can be sufficient.

After the aforementioned traditional leadership theories, the so-called new leadership theories came to the fore, which focus on the interactions between leaders and followers, the situation, and its context as a whole system. These theories emphasize the leader's role in the well-being of followers, and the moral and social responsibility of leaders. Several different leadership approaches emerged in recent decades. Batistič, Černe, and Vogel (2017) grouped these theories in larger clusters by applying bibliometric analysis. They identified seven clusters of

leadership theories in publications of the 2000s: transformational leadership; emotions and emotional intelligence; authentic leadership; shared leadership; ethical leadership; organizational justice; and complexity, context, and leadership.

There are many different theories of leadership (such as authentic leadership, ethical leadership, empowering leadership, etc.), in which emphasis is mostly on a narrower aspect of a leader's behavior or personality traits, or on the development of a leader's personality. Although there is a substantial relationship between leaders' personality and the adopted leadership style, studies, & & found no or only weak correlations between the leaders' personality and their performance as a leader (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). During the last 20 years, most theories were based on the human orientation of leaders; however, goal or task orientation also appeared in some concepts (e.g., transactional theory, and path-goal theory). There are various leadership style approaches, and several internal and external factors are interrelated with the appropriateness of using these leadership styles. When studying project managers' leadership style, we need to consider how the different leadership styles of project managers match the characteristics of projects, project team members, and different contextual factors.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this paper we applied content analysis of previous studies discussing different leadership style approaches in project management. We conducted a systematic review of leadership style-related papers in project management to determine the presence of leadership style approaches in project management studies. We also conducted a detailed content analysis of selected papers to collect and systematize previous results regarding the correspondence of project characteristics and project context with the appropriate leadership style of the project manager.

For the analysis we selected leadership style-related papers in project management journals from the Web of Science database. During the selection process we applied the following criteria:

- Keywords: project & leadership style
- Fields: all fields
- Document type: article
- Publication title: *International Journal of Project Management*, *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, *Project Management Journal*
- Publication year: 2002–2021

Our selection process resulted in 32 relevant papers. Most of the papers (19) were after 2017, half of them (16) were published in the *International Journal of Project Management*, and five of the articles were written by Ralf Müller and his co-authors.

A detailed content analysis of the selected papers was carried out. We collected information about the applied leadership style approaches as well as the details and results of published research, where the association of project characteristics and contextual features with the appropriate leadership style of project manager were studied.

4 FINDINGS

In the 32 relevant papers, we analyzed the applied leadership style approaches as well as their findings regarding the relationships between project characteristics and contextual features, and leadership styles. Most studies applied leadership style approaches based on the transformational and transactional (15) leadership theory, the competency theory (6) and the shared or balanced leadership approach (6) to study the leadership styles of project managers. Four papers analyzed task- and human-oriented behavior, and two articles analyzed the emotional intelligence (EI) of project managers. In some cases, the situational (1), empowering (1), ethical (1), and authentic (1) leadership approaches were considered. Comparing these results with the clusters of leadership approaches identified by Batistič et al. (2017) shows that in project management papers, more or less the same leadership theories came to the fore. Furthermore, in project management studies, the competency theory was considered widely; this theory involves the emotional (EQ), intellectual (IQ), and managerial (MQ) competencies of leaders, and distinguishes three different leadership styles: the goal oriented, involving, and engaging styles (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005).

As mentioned previously, to identify the effective leadership style of project managers, we need to take into consideration the characteristics of the project and of the organization itself. The required behavior of a project leader should be matched with the type or complexity of the project, the degree of uncertainty, or the strategic importance of the project. We thoroughly analyzed which of these factors had been studied previously, and the results that were determined.

Most of the analyzed papers (9) studied the leadership style with respect to a certain project type or industry sector. Based on the results, the transformational leadership style is appropriate for international development projects (Kabore et al., 2021), sustainable product development (SNPD) projects (Wang & Yang, 2021), and IT and software (SW) development projects (Nauman et al., 2022), although research shows inconsistent results in the case of construction projects. Based on the responses from 345 managers in the construction industry, Maqbool, Sudong, Manzoor, and Rashid (2017) found that the transformational leadership of project managers ensures higher project success. Tabassi et al. (2016) reported that the transformational leadership style has an insignificant effect on the success of sustainable construction projects. Furthermore, some papers reinforced the positive relationship between the project manager's emotional intelligence and project success in the case of integrated project delivery situations (Zhang, Cao, & Wang, 2018), sustainable product development projects (Wang, & Yang, 2021), and construction projects (Maqbool et al., 2017). One paper reinforced the positive connection between ethical leadership and project success in IT and SW development projects (Bhatti et al., 2021). Another paper found the dominance of a democratic leadership style in Scandinavian projects compared with Australian and Canadian projects, but it did not find significant differences within the industry sector (Drouin, Müller, Sankaran, & Vaagaasar, 2018).

In terms of complexity, published articles do not provide consistent results. Müller and Turner (2010) concluded that high-complexity projects require high managerial, intellectual, and emotional competencies, whereas Podgorska and Pichlak (2019) reported the importance of only managerial competencies. However, the authors of both papers applied the same leadership style approach (competency theory) and a simplified categorization of complexity (low, medium,

and high complexity). Princes and Said (2022) analyzed the complexity in terms of technology and organization, and reported that the situational leadership style facilitates financial sustainability. Other studies (Raziq et al., 2018; Lai, Hsu, & Li, 2018) investigated the uncertainty and goal clarity of projects. Based on their results, a relation-oriented leadership style enables goal clarity, and a transformational leadership style is more effective in projects with high uncertainty.

Considering the characteristics of project teams and methods, a distributed leadership style is appropriate for agile teams (Agarwal et al., 2021), whereas in highly virtual teams a relation-oriented leadership behavior may be effective (Nauman et al., 2022). Table 2 summarizes the findings of previously published papers regarding the relations between various project characteristics and leadership styles of project managers. Because of the lack of a unified and recognized categorization of project characteristics in the literature, I relied on terms applied by authors. The first part of Table 2 presents the findings in terms of different project types. The second part of Table 2 summarizes previous results in terms of certain project characteristics, such as project complexity, uncertainty, and other attributes.

By analyzing the contextual features of projects, Podgorska and Pichlak (2019) studied the competencies required of leaders in terms of the strategic importance of the project. They found that in renewal projects, the IQ of a project manager has an important role, whereas in repositioning and mandatory projects, EQ competencies are essential. Müller and Turner (2010) differentiated the significance of competencies depending on contract type and determined the importance of IQ and MQ competencies in fixed-price projects compared with other contract types (remeasurement, and alliance). Agarwal et al. (2021) suggested the application of a distributed leadership style in flexible, collaborative organizations with advanced knowledge-sharing practices, based on the analysis of eight project-based organizations. Chaudry, Raziq, Saeed, Sajjad, and Borini (2019) studied the correlation between organizational structure and leadership styles, and found the people-oriented style to be appropriate for a matrix structure. Table 3 presents the findings of previously published papers and highlights the suggested leadership style versus certain contextual features, which should be taken into consideration in the selection of leadership style.

Table 2: Project type and project characteristics analyzed in previous studies

	Study	Industry environment considered	Findings
Literature considering project types	Kabore et al., 2021 (N = 111 IDPs coordinator)	International development projects	Transformational leadership has a direct positive influence on the success of IDPs.
	Zhang et al., 2018 (N = 365 PMs and members)	Integrated project delivery	Leadership styles link the relationship between project leaders' EI and collaboration satisfaction. These projects require leaders with high levels of EI to improve collaboration satisfaction.
	Wang & Yang, 2021 (N = 6 case studies)	Sustainable product development (SNPD) projects	Emotional stability, openness to experience, and transformational leadership style of PM play an important role in SNPD projects' success.
	Drouin et al., 2018 (N = 6 case studies)	Industry sector and specific countries	In Canadian and Australian projects, a combination of autocratic and democratic leadership styles, In Scandinavian projects, democratic leadership style has been observed. There is no significant difference in terms of industry sector.
	Nauman et al., 2022 (N = 370 PMs)	IT and SW development sector	Transformational leadership has a significant and positive effect on project success. This effect can be enhanced through a team-building and empowerment climate.
	Bhatti et al., 2021 (N = 175 project team members)	IT and SW development sector	Ethical leadership is positively related to a leader's trust and knowledge sharing, and the leader's trust and knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and project success.
	Chaudhry et al., 2019 (N = 208 PMs)	SW development sector	Project managers in the software industry mainly adopt three management styles: people-oriented, task-oriented, and organization-oriented. Younger and less-experienced PMs adopt mainly task-oriented leadership style.
	Maqbool et al., 2017 (N = 345 managers)	Construction sector	Project managers with high emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behavior ensure higher success in projects than do their counterparts.
	Tabassi et al., 2016 (N = 70 PMs)	Sustainable construction sector	Project managers in sustainable building projects have high qualities of transformational leadership, these qualities have an insignificant impact on the success criteria. The intellectual competence of project managers seems to be the most significant factor in sustainable project achievement.
	Literature considering project complexity	Study	Aspects of complexity considered
Müller & Turner, 2010 (N = 400 PMs)		Low, medium, and high	Projects with high complexity require intellectual (IQ), managerial (MQ), and emotional (EQ) competencies. Projects with medium complexity require mainly managerial and some emotional competencies.
Podgorska & Pichlak, 2019 (N = 102 PMs)		Low, medium, and high	In projects with high complexity, managerial competencies matter the most; in projects with medium complexity, conscientiousness (EQ) matters the most; and in projects with low complexity, communication (MQ) matters the most.
Princes & Said, 2022 (N = 91 PMs)		Complexity of technology and organization	In complex projects, trust in leader and situational leadership can lead to financial sustainability.
Larsson et al., 2015 (N = 162 PMs)		Number of stakeholders	Integrator leadership style (focus on interpersonal relationships) has a positive effect on project performance.

	Study	Uncertainty aspects considered	Findings
Literature considering uncertainty	Raziq et al., 2018 (N = 248; PBO workers)	Goal clarity	Goal clarity is positively associated with project success. For goal clarity, a relational leadership style (such as the transformational style) seems appropriate.
	Lai et al., 2018 (N = 151 IS professionals)	Change of process, change of technological framework, total project uncertainty	Uncertainty influences the relationship between regulatory focus (affected by leadership style) and project performance. In the case of high uncertainty, a promotion-oriented team (transformational leadership) is more effective.
	Study	Aspects considered	Findings
Literature considering other characteristics	Kabore et al., 2021 (N = 111 IDPs coordinator)	Team size	Project team size has no moderating effects on the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.
	Agarwal et al., 2021 (N = 8 PBOs)	PM approaches: traditional or agile	Agile methods reinforce distributed leadership.
	Nauman et al., 2010 (N = 117 PMs)	Degree of virtuality in work of project team	Task-oriented behavior is equally important for both less- and more-virtual projects whereas, relationship-oriented behavior is highly significant for more-virtual than for less-virtual projects.

Table 3: Contextual features analyzed in previous studies

Contextual feature	Study	Aspects of the contextual feature considered	Findings
Strategic importance	Podgorska & Pichlak, 2019 (N = 102 PMs)	Renewal, repositioning, mandatory	In renewal projects project manager's IQ plays the main role, in repositioning projects motivation (EQ), while in mandatory projects conscientiousness (EQ) is essential.
Contract type	Müller & Turner, 2010 (N = 400 PMs)	Fixed price, remeasurement, alliance	For fixed price projects all competencies, except intuitiveness (EQ) is necessary. In fixed price projects IQ and MQ competencies have more importance, than in other type of contracts.
Knowledge sharing	Agarwal et al., 2021 (N = 8 PBOs)	Communities of practice, mentoring	Distributed leadership is enabled in organizations with advanced knowledge sharing.
Organizational culture	Agarwal et al., 2021 (N = 8 PBOs)	Control and stability, flexibility, and delegation	Distributed leadership is enabled in flexible, collaborative organizations.
Organizational structure	Chaudhry et al., 2019 (N = 208 PMs)	Functional, project, matrix	People-oriented management style is most likely to be adopted by project managers working in organizations with a matrix structure than a projectized structure.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Project managers' leadership style is a critical success factor. However, there is no single leadership style that is suitable for all kinds of projects. Inherent project characteristics and contextual features of a project are en rapport with the appropriateness of the leadership style. Previous studies did not consider these factors in detail, which inhibits formulating correct and well-established conclusions. In terms of project type, prior studies focused mainly on the industry sector, and did not differentiate the types of projects per industry. Due to the indistinctive research of diverse projects within an industry sector, survey results exhibited inconsistent findings. The correlation between complexity and the project manager's leadership style was considered by more researchers, who defined complexity differently but not in a comprehensive manner. Instead of adopting a broader approach, most of these studies analyzed only a one-on-one aspect of complexity. However, complexity of a project is a multifaceted concept, which correlates with many different factors (uncertainty, goal clarity, novelty, professionalism of project team members, attitude of stakeholders, etc.). Complexity also is a substantial characteristic of a project, and therefore has a considerable effect on the implementation process and success of a project. Despite its importance, there is a lack of consensus on the definition and conceptualization of complexity (Cristóbal, 2017). Further studies are needed to determine the relationship between project complexity and a project manager's leadership style. Only a few authors studied the interdependencies of a project team's characteristics, project management methods, organizational context, and the appropriate leadership style. The qualities of the project team, the importance of the project, the organizational structure and culture, and further contextual features correspond to the possibilities and margins, and thereby fundamentally the appropriate leadership style of a project manager.

This study offers a critical analysis of the current literature on leadership style approaches in project management. It highlights the inadequacies in previous research, and suggests future possibilities for exploring project characteristics and contextual fea-

tures that correlate with leadership styles. The literature on this topic utilized various approaches to leadership styles, and analyzed multiple aspects of project characteristics and contextual features. However, inadequacies in the categorization and conceptualization of the analyzed characteristics impeded the formulation of definitive conclusions based on previous findings. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for a well-established conceptual framework for the most essential project characteristics, particularly complexity. Furthermore, despite the investigation of a few contextual features in prior studies, it is imperative to consider the appropriate leadership style of a project manager in relation to the characteristics of organizational structure, culture, project team members, and other relevant factors.

Based on these summarized findings, there is a need for research investigating project characteristics and contextual features in detail to underpin the appropriate project managers' leadership style, by means of deductive reasoning. To accomplish a well-established deductive reasoning process, first there is a need to highlight project characteristics, contextual features, and the features of the fundamental leadership styles, which provide the basis for further empirical studies. Such studies need to have two aims: to highlight the relationships between the inherent project characteristics and the features of the fundamental leadership styles; and to highlight the relationships between the contextual features and the features of the fundamental leadership styles. Based on these relationships, true premises might be formulated, by means of which valid conclusions may be formulated regarding the appropriate use of the fundamental leadership styles.

This study is limited in its scope, because it is mainly theoretical and does not provide empirical evidence to support its claims. Although it provides mainly theoretical contributions, the proposed comprehensive research could have significant implications for practitioners. The expected outcomes have the potential to match project managers' leadership styles with the unique features of a project and its environment. In this way, a well-established framework could be developed for the selection of project managers, replacing the current trial-and-error process. The proposed framework would enable project

managers and human resource departments to better understand the interdependencies between leadership styles and the characteristics of a project and the project context. Moreover, the proposed research could have significant implications for practitioners by facilitating the selection and development

of project managers with customized leadership styles that match the unique features of a project and its environment. Overall, the proposed research presents a valuable contribution to the project management field and has the potential to enhance the success of project implementation.

EXTENDED SUMMARY/IZVLEČEK

Projektni manager s svojim vodstvenim slogom bistveno vpliva na uspeh projekta. Vendar za leto ne obstaja en sam najbolj primeren stil vodenja. Lastnosti projekta in organizacijski kontekst določajo, kateri vodstveni slog bi lahko bil primeren v različnih situacijah. Da bi zagotovili jasno sliko kompleksnosti kontekstualnih značilnosti, stila vodenja in njegovega odnosa do uspeha projekta, je potrebna sistematična raziskava člankov o vodstvenem stilu, ki se osredotočajo na upravljanje projektov. Namen tega članka je dvojen: zagotoviti analizo vsebine prejšnjih člankov in s tem ugotoviti, kateri pristopi k vodstvenemu slogu so bili raziskani v projektne managementu; in zagotoviti podrobno analizo prejšnjih ugotovitev študij managementa projektov v smislu ujemanja lastnosti projekta in organizacijskih značilnosti z ustreznim vodstvenim slogom vodje projekta. Ugotovitve tega članka ponujajo celovito analizo preteklih rezultatov in hkrati poudarjajo slabosti v smislu zanemarnjenih vidikov konceptualizacije in pomanjkljivosti. Rezultati kažejo na pomanjkanje celovitih študij povezanih s kontekstom vodenja projektne vodij. Zato je potrebna raziskava, ki bi podrobno preučila lastnosti projekta in kontekstualne značilnosti ter bi z deduktivnim sklepanjem določila ustrezen vodstveni slog vodje projekta.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, U.A., Dixit, V., Nikolova, N., Jain, K. & Sankaran, S. (2021). A psychological contract perspective of vertical and distributed leadership in project-based organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 39, 249-258.
- Andersen, J.A. (2013). Leadership research: where irrelevance prevails. *Dynamic Relationships Management Journal*, 2(2), 3-14.
- Antonakis, J., Avolio, B.J., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor full-range leadership theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 261-295.
- Atkinson, R. (1999). Project management: cost, time and quality, two best guesses and a phenomenon, it's time to accept other success criteria. *International Journal of Project Management*, 17, 337-342.
- Baccarini, D. (1999). The logical framework methods for defining project success. *Project Management Journal*, 30, 25-32.
- Baker, B.N., Murphy, D.C. & Fisher, D. (1988). Factors Affecting Project Success, in Cleland, D.I., King, W.R. (Eds.), *Project Management Handbook*. NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 902-919.
- Bales, R.F. (1950). *Interaction process analysis: a method for the study of small groups*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Batistič, S., Černe, M., & Vogel, B. (2017). Just how multi-level is leadership research? A document co-citation analysis 1980–2013 on leadership constructs and outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 28(1), 86–103.
- Bhatti, S.H., Kiyani, S.K., Dust, S.B. & Zakariya, R. (2021). The impact of ethical leadership on project success: the mediating role of trust and knowledge sharing. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 14(4), 982-998.
- Blake, R. & Mouton, J. (1964). *The Managerial Grid: The Key to Leadership Excellence*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

- Blake, R. & Mouton, J. (1985). How to achieve integration on the human side of the merger, *Organizational Dynamics*, 13(3), 41-56.
- Blaskovics, B. (2014). Impact of leadership styles on project success – the case of a multinational company. *Dynamic Relationships Management Journal*, 3(2), 21-36.
- Boynton, A.C. & Zmud, R.W. (1984). An assessment of Critical Success Factors. *Sloan Management Review*, 26, 17-27.
- Buchanan, D. & Huczynski, A. (2004). *Organizational Behaviour, An Introductory Text*. Harlow Essex: Prentice Hall, Financial Times, Pearson Education Limited.
- Chaudhry, M.S., Raziq, M.M., Saeed, A., Sajjad, A. & Borini, F.M. (2019). Management styles in a project environment: evidence from software industry in Oman. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 40(5), 600-611.
- Cleland, D.I. (1994). *Project Management & Strategic Design and Implementation (2nd ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cooke-Davies, T. (2002). The “real” success factors on projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 20, 185-190.
- Cooke-Davies, T. (2004). Consistently Doing the Right Projects and Doing Them Right – What Metrics Do You Need? *The Measured*, 4, 44-52.
- Crawford, L., Hobbs, B., & Turner, J. R. (2006). Aligning Capability with Strategy: Categorizing Projects to do the Right Projects and to do Them Right. *Project Management Journal*, 37(2), 38-50.
- Crsitóbal, J.R. (2017). Complexity in Project Management. *Procedia Computer Science*, 121, 762-766.
- Cserhádi, G. & Szabó, L. (2014). The relationship between success criteria and success factors in organisational event projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 32, 613-624.
- Doloi, H., Iyer, K.C. & Sawhney, A. (2011). Structural equation model for assessing impacts of contractor’s performance on project success. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29, 687-695.
- Drouin, N., Müller, R., Sankaran S. & Vaagaasar, A.L. (2018). Balancing vertical and horizontal leadership in projects. Empirical studies from Australia, Canada, Norway and Sweden. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 11(4), 986-1006.
- Dulewicz, V. & Higgs, M. (2003). Leadership at the top: The need for emotional intelligence in organizations. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 11, 193-210.
- Dulewicz, V. & Higgs, M.J. (2005). Assessing leadership dimensions, styles and organizational context. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 20(2), 105–123.
- Fiedler, F. (1967). *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fortune, J. & White, D. (2006). Framing of project critical success factors by a systems model. *International Journal of Project Management*, 24, 53-65.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Görög, M. (2013). *A Strategic-Oriented Implementation of Projects*. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.
- Görög, M. (2016). A broader approach to organisational project management maturity assessment. *International Journal of Project Management*, 34(8), 1658-1669.
- Gruden, N., & Stare, A. (2018). The Influence of Behavioral Competencies on Project Performance. *Project Management Journal*, 49(3), 98-109.
- Hersey, P. & Blanchard, K. (1977). *Management of Organizational Behaviour: Utilizing Human Resource*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hughes, T., (2005). *Identification of Leadership Style of Enrolment Management professionals in Post-Secondary Institutions in the Southern United States*, PhD dissertation, Texas Tech. University
- Judgev, K. & Müller, R. (2005). A Retrospective Look at Our Evolving Understanding of Project Success. *Project Management Journal*, 36(4), 19-31.
- Kabore, S.E., Sane, S. & Abo, P. (2021). Transformational leadership and success of international development projects (ID projects): moderating role of the project team size. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 42(4), 517-530.
- Koster, K. (2010). *International Project Management*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Lai, C-Y., Hsu, J.S-C. & Li, Y. (2018). Leadership, regulatory focus and information systems development project team performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36, 566-582.
- Larsson, J., Eriksson, P.E., Olofsson, T. & Simonsson, P. (2015). Leadership in Civil Engineering: Effects of Project Managers’ Leadership Styles on Project Performance. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 31(6), 1-11.
- Leung, M.Y., Ng, S.T. & Cheung, S.O. (2004). Measuring construction project participant satisfaction. *Construction Management and Economics*, 22, 319-331.
- Lewin, K., Lippitt, R. & White, R.K. (1939). Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created “Social Climates”. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 271-299.
- Lim, C.S. & Mohamed, M.Z. (1999). Criteria of project success: an exploratory re-examination. *International Journal of Project Management*, 17, 243-248.

- Lundin, R.A. & Söderlund, J. (1995). A theory of the temporary organization. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 11(4), 437-455.
- Maqbool, R., Sudong, Y., Manzoor, N., & Rashid, Y. (2017). The Impact of Emotional Intelligence, Project Managers' Competencies, and Transformational Leadership on Project Success: An Empirical Perspective. *Project Management Journal*, 48(3), 58-75.
- McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Müller, R. & Turner, J.R. (2007). Matching the project manager's leadership style to project type. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 21-32.
- Müller, R. & Turner, J.R. (2010). Leadership competency profiles of successful project managers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28, 437-448.
- Nauman, S., Khan, A.M., Ehsaan, N. (2010). Patterns of empowerment and leadership style in project environment. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28, 638-649.
- Nauman, S., Musawir, A.U., Munir, H. & Rasheed, I. (2022). Enhancing the impact of transformational leadership and team-building on project success: the moderating role of empowerment climate. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 15(2), 423-447.
- Northouse, P.G. (2001). *Leadership. Theory and Practice (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Papke-Shields, K.E., Beise, C. & Quan, J. (2010). Do project managers practice what they preach, and does it matter to project success? *International Journal of Project Management*, 28, 650-662.
- Pinto, J. & Slevin, D. (1988). Project success: definitions and measurement techniques. *Project Management Journal*, 19, 67-71.
- Podgórska, M. & Pichlak, M. (2019). Analysis of project managers' leadership competencies Project success relation: what are the competencies of polish project leaders? *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 12(4), 869-887.
- Prabhakar, G. (2005). Switch Leadership in Projects. An Empirical Study Reflecting the Importance of Transformational Leadership on Project Success across Twenty-Eight Nations. *Project Management Journal*. 36(4), 53-60.
- Princes, E. & Said, A. (2022). The impacts of project complexity, trust in leader, performance readiness and situational leadership on financial sustainability. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 15(4), 619-644.
- Project Management Institute (2021). *A guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*. Newtown Square, Pennsylvania: PMI Publications.
- Raziq, M.M., Borini, F.M., Malik, O.F, Ahmad, M. & Shabaz, M. (2018). Leadership styles, goal clarity, and project success. Evidence from project-based organizations in Pakistan. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 39(2), 309-323.
- Stogdill, R. (1948). Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature. *Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35-71.
- Stogdill, R. (1974). *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Tabassi, A.A., Roufechaei, K.M., Ramli, M., Bakar, A.H.A., Ismail R. & Pakir, A.H.K. (2016). Leadership competences of sustainable construction project managers. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 124, 339-349.
- Turner, J.R. (2009). *Handbook of project-based management: Leading strategic changes in organizations*. New York: McGraw-Hill Professional.
- Wang, Y. & Yang, J. (2021). Role of supplier involvement and project leader in SNPD: a conceptual model and exploratory case study. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 14(4), 960-981.
- Yang, L-R., Huang, C-F. & Wu, K-S. (2011). The association among project manager's leadership style, teamwork and project success. *International Journal of Project Management*, 29, 258-267.
- Yang, L-R., Wu, K-S. & Huang, C-F. (2013). Validation of a Model Measuring the Effect of a Project Manager's Leadership Style on Project Performance. *KSCE Journal of Civil Engineering*, 17(2), 217-280.
- Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in Organizations (8th ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Zhang, L, Cao, T. & Wang, Y. (2018). The mediation role of leadership styles in integrated project collaboration: An emotional intelligence perspective. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36, 317-330.

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

All articles submitted to the Dynamic Relationships Management Journal are double-blind reviewed. The manuscript should be submitted via e-mail to the editor (matej.cerne@ef.uni-lj.si). Send two files: one that contains author contact information along with the text, references, tables, figures, and exhibits; and one where author contact information will be deleted. Authors should keep an exact, extra copy of the manuscript for future reference.

Manuscripts are reviewed with the understanding that they are original, not under consideration by any other publisher, have not been previously published in whole or in part, have not been previously accepted for publication, and will not be submitted elsewhere until a decision is reached regarding their publication in the Dynamic Relationships Management Journal.

Manuscripts must be written in English. Authors are responsible for the quality of written English and proof reading of the text is required.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced (including references) in 12 point font, with pages numbered consecutively throughout the entire paper. (The title page is page one.) Text alignment should be justified. Margins should be one inch (2.5 cm) at the top, bottom and sides of the page. Manuscripts inclusive of all text, references, tables, figures, appendices etc. should be no longer than 30 pages and should not exceed 60.000 characters including spaces. Authors should provide a summary, which will be published in Slovene (for foreign authors, translation will be provided by editors).

Manuscripts that report quantitative analyses of data should typically include descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, the results of statistical tests and so forth. If these items are not included in the manuscript, they should be reported in a separate technical appendix. Authors of manuscripts that report data dependent results also must make available, upon request, exact information regarding their procedures and stimuli (excluding data).

If we receive files that do not conform to the above requirements, we will inform the author(s) and we will not begin the review process until we receive the corrected files.

The author(s) submitting the manuscript for review should clearly indicate to the editor the relation of the manuscript under review to any other manuscripts currently under review, in press or recently published by the authors. The editor may ask the authors to submit copies of such related papers to the Editorial Board.

2. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. First page: Name of author(s) and title; author(s) footnote, including present positions, complete address, telephone number, fax number, email address, and any acknowledgment of financial or technical assistance.
2. Second page: Title of paper (without author's name) and an abstract of no more than 250 words substantively summarizing the article. Also include up to six keywords that describe your paper for indexing and for web searches in your manuscript.

3. Next: Text alignment justified with major headings and subheadings flush with the left margin. The introduction should state clearly the objective of the paper as well as the motivation and the context of the research. The literature review should be limited to the articles, books and other items that have a direct bearing on the topic being addressed. In empirical papers, details of the empirical section tests should not be included in the paper itself. The conclusion should summarize key findings and state their importance to the field. Footnotes should be kept to an absolute minimum and must be placed at the foot of the page to which they refer. They should not be used for citing references.
4. Then: Tables, numbered consecutively, each on a separate page. If tables appear in an appendix, they should be numbered separately and consecutively, as in Table A-1, A-2, and so on.
5. Next: Figures, numbered consecutively, each placed on a separate page. If tables appear in an appendix, they should be numbered separately, as in Figure A-1, A-2, etc.
6. After conclusion: Longer summary (1-2 pp, depending on length of article) in Slovenian language (for foreign authors, translation will be provided by editors).
7. Last: References, typed in alphabetical order by author's last name and in APA style.

3. TABLES

1. The table number and title should be centered and placed above the table.
2. Source(s) should also be provided and centered below the table: i.e. Mabey & Gooderham, The impact of management development on perceptions of organizational performance in European firms, 2005: 136.
3. Designate units (e.g., %, \$) in column headings.
4. Align all decimals.
5. Refer to tables in the text by number only. Do not refer to tables by "above," "below," and "preceding."
6. If possible, combine closely related tables.
7. Clearly indicate positions of tables within the text on the page where they are introduced: e.g. Table 1 about here.
8. Measures of statistical significance should be reported within the table.

4. FIGURES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND CAMERA-READY ARTWORK

1. For graphs, label both vertical and horizontal axes. The ordinate label should be centered above the ordinate axis; the abscissa label should be placed beneath the abscissa.
2. Place all calibration tics inside the axis lines, with the values outside the axis lines.
3. The figure number and title should be typed on separate lines, centered and placed above the figure.
4. When appropriate, source(s) should also be provided and centered below the figure (see example under the Tables section).
5. Clearly indicate positions of figures within the text on the page where they are introduced.

6. Once a manuscript has been accepted for publication, complex tables and all figures must be submitted both electronically and as camera-ready (hard) copy. Do not embed figures in the Word file; instead, submit them separately in the program in which they were created (i.e., PDF, PowerPoint, Excel).
7. Lettering should be large enough to be read easily with 50% reduction.
8. Any art not done on a computer graphics program should be professionally drafted in India ink.
9. Do not submit photographs or camera-ready art until your manuscript has been accepted. If the photograph or artwork is completed, submit copies.

5. MATHEMATICAL NOTATION

1. Mathematical notation must be clear and understandable. Since not all journal readers are mathematically proficient, the authors should ensure that the text (i.e., words) also conveys the meaning expressed by the mathematical notation. We recommend that extensive mathematical notation (e.g., proofs) should be provided in a separate technical appendix.
2. Equations should be centered on the page. Equations should be numbered; type the number in parentheses flush with the left margin. If equations are too wide to fit in a single column, indicate appropriate breaks.

Unusual symbols and Greek letters should be identified by a note.

6. REFERENCE CITATIONS WITHIN THE TEXT

Cite all references at the appropriate point in the text by the surname of the author(s), year of publication, and pagination where necessary. Pagination (without 'p.' or 'pp.')

to give the source of a quotation or to indicate a passage of special relevance, follows the year of publication and is preceded by a colon, i.e. Parsons (1974: 238). Page numbers should be given full out, i.e. 212-230 not 212-30. When providing quotes, these should be in italics. In general, references to published works must be cited in text according to the guidelines for APA style (for more information see the DRMJ website).

7. REFERENCE LIST STYLE

1. **Single Author:** Last name first, followed by author initials.
Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 7-10.
2. **Two Authors:** List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of "and."
Wegener, D. T., & Petty, R. E. (1994). Mood management across affective states: The hedonic contingency hypothesis. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 66, 1034-1048.
3. **Three to Six Authors:** List by last names and initials; commas separate author names, while the last author name is preceded again by ampersand.
Kernis, M. H., Cornell, D. P., Sun, C. R., Berry, A., & Harlow, T. (1993). There's more to self-esteem than whether it is high or low: The importance of stability of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1190-1204.

4. Organization as Author

American Psychological Association. (2003).

5. Unknown Author

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.).(1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

6. Two or More Works by the Same Author: Use the author's name for all entries and list the entries by the year (earliest comes first).

Berndt, T. J. (1981).

Berndt, T. J. (1999).

References that have the same first author and different second and/or third authors are arranged alphabetically by the last name of the second author, or the last name of the third if the first and second authors are the same.

For other examples, see the DRMJ website.