ROLE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN PREVENTING COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: AN INSIGHT

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping workplace behavior, influencing employee engagement, job satisfaction, and ethical conduct. This study examines the impact of various leadership styles on counterproductive work behavior (CWB), which includes workplace deviance, absenteeism, sabotage, and reduced productivity. Using the *Leadership Style Questionnaire* (Northouse, 2009) and the *Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C)* 32-item questionnaire, this research aims to identify which leadership styles contribute to or mitigate CWB. By analyzing the relationship between leadership approaches—such as Authoritarian, Democratic and Laissez-Faire—and workplace deviance, the study seeks to determine the leadership styles most associated with higher instances of CWB. Data from 100 participants reveal that Democratic Leadership significantly reduces CWB ($r = -0.287$, $p = 0.004$), while Authoritarian ($r = 0.029$, $p = 0.773$) and Laissez-Faire Leadership ($r = -0.080$, $p = 0.428$) show no significant impact. The findings highlight the importance of participative leadership in reducing workplace deviance. Organizations should prioritize leadership training programs, employee engagement initiatives, and ethical workplace policies to foster a positive work environment. Future research should explore moderating factors such as workplace culture and job satisfaction to deepen the understanding of leadership's influence on CWB.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB), Workplace stress,

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most influential factors in shaping employee behavior is leadership. Leaders play a pivotal role in establishing organizational norms, fostering a positive work environment, and influencing employee attitudes and behaviors. One of the key challenges organizations face is counterproductive work behavior (CWB), which encompasses actions that harm the organization or its members, such as absenteeism, workplace deviance, sabotage, theft, and reduced productivity (Spector & Fox, 2005). Leadership styles, in particular, have been identified as a key determinant of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, all of which are inversely related to CWB (Avolio et al., 2009). Leadership styles significantly impact the extent to which CWBs manifest within an organization. Effective leadership can mitigate these behaviors by fostering a positive work culture, enhancing employee engagement, and promoting ethical conduct (Tepper, 2007).

Leadership styles play a pivotal role in either exacerbating or mitigating CWB. Research has consistently shown that the way leaders interact with their teams, make decisions, and manage workplace dynamics significantly influences employees' attitudes and behaviors (Tepper, 2007). For instance, authoritarian leaders who exert strict control and suppress employee autonomy often create environments of fear and resentment, leading to higher levels of CWB. Conversely, democratic and transformational leaders who foster inclusivity, trust, and ethical behavior can reduce CWB by promoting employee engagement and organizational commitment (Avolio et al., 2009). However, the relationship between leadership styles and CWB is complex and multifaceted, influenced by factors such as organizational culture, employee perceptions of fairness, and workplace stressors.

Despite the growing body of research on leadership and CWB, significant gaps remain. Most studies have focused on specific leadership styles, such as transformational or ethical leadership, while neglecting the nuanced effects of other styles, such as authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership. Additionally, there is limited understanding of how contextual factors, such as organizational culture and employee perceptions of justice, mediate the relationship between leadership and CWB. Furthermore, the rise of remote work and technological advancements has introduced new challenges for leadership, creating a need for updated research on how leadership styles influence CWB in modern work environments.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the impact of authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on CWB. Specifically, it explores how these leadership styles influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice and their engagement levels, which in turn affect their likelihood of engaging in counterproductive behaviors. By shedding light on these dynamics, this research aims to provide actionable insights for organizations seeking to reduce CWB and foster positive workplace cultures.

Understanding Counterproductive Work Behavior

Counterproductive work behavior is a pervasive issue that affects organizational performance, employee morale, and overall workplace harmony (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Several studies have highlighted that CWBs often arise as responses to workplace stressors, perceived injustice, or ineffective leadership (Fox et al., 2001). According to the social exchange theory, employees reciprocate the treatment they receive from their leaders and the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Leadership styles that emphasize fairness, support, and ethical decision-making can reduce the likelihood of employees engaging in CWB.

CWB is often a response to workplace stressors, perceived injustice, or ineffective leadership. According to the **social exchange theory** (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), employees reciprocate the treatment they receive from their leaders and the organization. When employees perceive fairness, support, and ethical behavior from their leaders, they are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors. Conversely, when they experience mistreatment, neglect, or injustice, they may engage in CWB as a form of retaliation or coping mechanism (Fox et al., 2001).

Types of Counterproductive Work Behavior

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is a complex and multidimensional construct that encompasses a wide range of voluntary actions by employees that harm the organization or its

members. These behaviors can be broadly categorized into two dimensions: organizational CWB and interpersonal CWB (Spector et al., 2006). Each dimension includes specific behaviors that vary in severity and impact, and they are influenced by a combination of individual, situational, and organizational factors. Understanding these types of CWB is essential for identifying their root causes and developing effective strategies to mitigate them.

A. Organizational CWB

Organizational CWB refers to behaviors that directly harm the organization, its resources, or its operations. These behaviors often stem from employees' dissatisfaction, frustration, or desire for retaliation. Key examples include:

- **Theft and Fraud**
  - Employees may steal physical assets (e.g., office supplies, equipment) or engage in financial fraud (e.g., embezzlement, falsifying expense reports).
  - Example: An employee in a retail store steals merchandise, resulting in financial losses for the organization.
- **Sabotage**
  - Deliberate actions to damage or disrupt organizational processes, equipment, or systems.
  - Example: A disgruntled employee deletes critical files or sabotages machinery to delay production.
- **Misuse of Resources**
  - Employees may misuse organizational resources, such as using company time or equipment for personal purposes.
  - Example: An employee spends excessive time on social media during work hours, reducing productivity.
- **Absenteeism and Tardiness**
  - Frequent unexcused absences or late arrivals that disrupt workflow and increase workload for others.
  - Example: An employee consistently arrives late to work, causing delays in team projects.
- **Cyberloafing**
  - Using the internet or digital devices for non-work-related activities during work hours.
  - Example: An employee spends hours browsing social media or shopping online instead of completing tasks.
- **Withholding Effort**
  - Employees may intentionally reduce their effort or productivity, often as a form of silent protest.
  - Example: An employee performs the bare minimum required to avoid getting fired, despite having the capacity to contribute more.

B. Interpersonal CWB

Interpersonal CWB refers to behaviors that harm individuals within the organization, such as colleagues, supervisors, or subordinates. These behaviors often arise from interpersonal conflicts, power imbalances, or toxic workplace dynamics. Key examples include:

- **Bullying and Harassment**
  - Repeated mistreatment of others through verbal abuse, intimidation, or exclusion.
  - Example: A supervisor consistently belittles and humiliates a subordinate in front of colleagues.
- **Workplace Incivility**
  - Low-intensity deviant behaviors, such as rude comments, sarcasm, or dismissive attitudes.
  - Example: An employee rolls their eyes or makes snide remarks during team meetings.
- **Gossip and Rumormongering**
  - Spreading false or harmful information about colleagues to damage their reputation.
  - Example: An employee spreads rumors about a coworker's personal life, creating tension within the team.
- **Social Loafing**
  - Employees may rely on others to complete group tasks, contributing less than their fair share.
  - Example: A team member avoids taking responsibility for tasks, forcing others to pick up the slack.
- **Retaliation and Revenge**
  - Employees may engage in harmful behaviors as a form of retaliation for perceived mistreatment.
  - Example: An employee spreads false accusations about a supervisor after receiving a poor performance review.
- **Exclusion and Ostracism**
  - Deliberately excluding colleagues from social or professional interactions.
  - Example: A group of employees consistently leaves a coworker out of team lunches or meetings..

Consequences of Counterproductive Work Behavior

The impact of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) extends far beyond immediate financial losses. It permeates every aspect of organizational functioning, affecting employee morale, workplace culture, and long-term sustainability. Below, we delve deeper into the multifaceted consequences of CWB, highlighting its detrimental effects on individuals, teams, and organizations as a whole.

- **Erosion of Trust Among Employees:** Trust is the foundation of effective teamwork and collaboration. CWB, particularly interpersonal forms such as bullying, incivility, and harassment, undermines trust among employees. When employees witness or experience CWB, they may become suspicious of their colleagues and leaders, leading to a breakdown in communication and cooperation (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). For example, an employee who engages in sabotage or theft may create an atmosphere of mistrust, causing others to question the integrity of their peers. Over time, this erosion of trust can weaken team cohesion and hinder organizational performance.
- **Damage to Organizational Reputation:** CWB can tarnish an organization's reputation, both internally and externally. Internally, a culture that tolerates CWB may be perceived as toxic, making it difficult to attract and retain top talent. Externally, incidents of CWB, such as workplace violence or unethical behavior, can lead to negative publicity, damaging the

organization's brand and stakeholder relationships (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). For instance, a company that fails to address workplace harassment may face legal repercussions and public backlash, resulting in long-term reputational harm.

- **Creation of a Toxic Work Environment:** CWB fosters a toxic work environment characterized by fear, stress, and negativity. Employees who experience or witness CWB may feel demoralized, leading to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions (Spector & Fox, 2005). A toxic environment stifles creativity and innovation, as employees become reluctant to share ideas or take risks. For example, a team plagued by incivility and bullying is unlikely to collaborate effectively, resulting in subpar performance and missed opportunities for growth.

- **Spread of Negative Behaviors:** CWB is contagious; it can influence other employees to engage in similar behaviors, creating a vicious cycle of deviance. According to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), employees often model the behaviors they observe in their workplace. For instance, if a leader tolerates or engages in unethical behavior, employees may perceive such actions as acceptable and follow suit. This normalization of CWB can lead to a culture of deviance, where harmful behaviors become ingrained in the organizational fabric (Appelbaum et al., 2007).

- **Decline in Employee Well-Being:** CWB has significant implications for employee well-being. Employees who are targets of interpersonal CWB, such as bullying or harassment, may experience emotional distress, anxiety, and even depression (Einarsen et al., 2011). Similarly, organizational CWB, such as excessive workload or unfair treatment, can lead to burnout and physical health issues. The decline in well-being not only affects individual employees but also has ripple effects on team morale and productivity.

- **Increased absenteeism and turnover**: Employees who experience or witness CWB are more likely to miss work or leave the organization, resulting in recruitment and training costs (Dalal, 2005).

- **Reduced productivity:** A toxic work environment and low morale lead to decreased efficiency and output.

- **Legal and compliance costs:** Organizations that fail to address CWB may face lawsuits, fines, and regulatory penalties. For example, a company that ignores workplace harassment may incur significant legal expenses and settlements, in addition to the costs associated with replacing disengaged employees.

Causes of Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

Workplace Stress and Job Strain

Excessive workload, unrealistic deadlines, and lack of autonomy can create stress, leading employees to engage in CWB as a coping mechanism (Fox et al., 2001). Job strain has been linked to increased workplace deviance, particularly when employees feel undervalued or overworked (Spector & Fox, 2005).

Perceived Organizational Injustice

Employees who perceive unfair treatment, favoritism, or a lack of transparency in promotions and rewards may engage in retaliatory behaviors such as sabotage or reduced productivity (Greenberg, 1990). Distributive and procedural justice play a key role in shaping employee attitudes toward the organization (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Poor Leadership and Toxic Work Environments

Authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles contribute to employee dissatisfaction and disengagement, fostering resentment and deviant behaviors (Tepper, 2007). Toxic leadership, characterized by abusive supervision, can lead to retaliatory CWB, such as workplace incivility or withdrawal (Martinko et al., 2013).

Low Job Satisfaction and Engagement

Employees who feel disengaged or unfulfilled in their roles are more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors, such as absenteeism or cyberloafing (Judge et al., 2001). Poor job design, lack of career growth opportunities, and monotonous work contribute to dissatisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

Organizational Culture and Ethical Climate

A weak ethical climate or an organization that tolerates misconduct encourages employees to engage in deviant behaviors (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Employees may justify unethical actions if they perceive that their organization lacks strong moral values (Treviño et al., 2006).

Interpersonal Conflict and Workplace Bullying

Negative interactions with colleagues, supervisors, or clients increase the likelihood of CWB, especially when employees feel disrespected or mistreated (Aquino et al., 1999). Workplace bullying can lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn fosters counterproductive behaviors (Einarsen et al., 2011).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahmed and Muchiri (2025) investigated the impact of toxic leadership on CWB, with organizational cynicism and organizational injustice as mediators. The study found that toxic leadership increases CWB, and this relationship is mediated by heightened levels of organizational cynicism and perceived injustice.

A study by Zhang et al. (2024) explored the effects of paradoxical leadership on various types of employee performance, including CWB. The findings suggest that paradoxical leadership can benefit organizations by reducing CWB through enhancing group harmony.

Stevens (2024) explored that managers who oscillate between considerate and abusive behaviors are more detrimental to employee performance and morale than consistently tyrannical ones. This unpredictability causes emotional exhaustion and demoralization among employees, leading to increased CWB.

Wang et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between leaders' Machiavellian traits and employees' CWB. The study concluded that leaders exhibiting Machiavellianism contribute to a work environment that increases the likelihood of CWB among employees.

Ng and Feldman (2022) examined the relationship between passive leadership and CWB found that Laissez-faire leadership, a form of passive leadership, increases CWB by creating

ambiguity and neglect. Employees under such leaders feel abandoned and are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors as a result of frustration.

Supriyanto et al. (2022) investigated the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on CWB, considering the mediating role of quality of work-life and the moderating role of psychological empowerment. The study found that transformational leadership reduces CWB through enhanced quality of work-life, while transactional leadership may increase CWB. Psychological empowerment did not moderate the impact of transformational leadership on quality of work-life.

Shen and Lei (2022) explored how leaders' cultural backgrounds and personalities influence subordinates' CWB. The study concluded that leaders' behaviors and psychological traits significantly affect employees' propensity to engage in CWB, highlighting the importance of considering cultural psychology in leadership.

Li and Mo (2021) examined the cross-level influence of authoritarian leadership on CWB. The study found that authoritarian leadership fosters moral disengagement among employees, leading to increased CWB.

Fu et al. (2021) revealed that employees who perceived higher levels of transformational, ethical, and participative leadership demonstrated increased employee engagement development behavior, which in turn led to reductions in CWB.

Fu et al. (2021) explored the relationship Participative leadership and CWB found that participative (democratic) leadership enhances employee engagement and reduces CWB by creating a collaborative and inclusive work environment. Employees under such leaders feel empowered and are less likely to engage in deviant behaviors.

Khan et al. (2021) explored the relationships between exploitative leadership and certain types of CWB. The study found that exploitative leadership is positively associated with CWB, suggesting that leaders who exploit their subordinates may trigger counterproductive behaviors.

Einarsen et al. (2020) studied upon Laissez-faire leadership, as a form of destructive leadership, increases CWB by failing to provide necessary guidance and support. Employees under such leaders feel ignored and are more likely to engage in harmful behaviors.

Zhang, Wang, and Shi (2019) investigated the role of transactional leadership in reducing CWB among Chinese employees. The study found that transactional leadership, which relies on rewards and punishments, can deter CWB by setting clear expectations. However, the authors noted that this leadership style may not address underlying issues such as employee dissatisfaction, which can still lead to CWB.

Hoch et al. (2019) explored that shared leadership, a form of democratic leadership, reduces CWB by promoting collaboration and mutual respect. Employees in such environments feel accountable and are less likely to engage in harmful behaviors.

Jiang, Zhao, and Li (2018) studied the impact of autocratic leadership on CWB among Chinese employees. The study found that autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making, is associated with higher levels of CWB due to employee disempowerment and

dissatisfaction. The results suggest that leaders who fail to involve employees in decision-making may inadvertently encourage harmful behaviors.

Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, and Zivnuska (2017) explored the relationship between ethical leadership and CWB in a U.S. organizational context. The study found that ethical leadership is negatively correlated with CWB, as it promotes fairness and reduces workplace deviance. The authors concluded that leaders who act as ethical role models can effectively discourage counterproductive behaviors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

- To study the different leadership styles (Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)
- To analyze the relationship between leadership styles (Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB).
- To provide recommendations for organizations on leadership strategies that enhance employee engagement and workplace culture.

Hypothesis:

☐ **H1:** There is a significant negative correlation between democratic leadership and counterproductive work behavior (CWB).

- *Rationale:* Democratic leadership fosters a participative and inclusive work environment, which may reduce instances of workplace deviance.

☐ **H2:** There is a significant positive correlation between authoritarian leadership and CWB.

- *Rationale:* Authoritarian leadership, characterized by control and rigidity, may lead to employee dissatisfaction, stress, and resistance, increasing counterproductive behaviors.

☐ **H3:** There is a significant negative correlation between laissez-faire leadership and CWB.

- *Rationale:* Laissez-faire leadership, marked by minimal supervision, may either reduce CWB by promoting autonomy or increase it due to a lack of accountability. However, research often suggests a negative correlation, as employees may feel more trusted and responsible.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between leadership styles and counterproductive work behavior (CWB). By using structured questionnaires, data is collected from employees to assess their perceptions of leadership styles and workplace deviance.

Sample and Participants

The study targets employees from various organizational settings to ensure diverse perspectives on leadership and workplace behavior. A sample size of at least 100 participants is used to ensure statistical validity. A convenience sampling method is applied, selecting individuals willing to participate.

Data Collection Tools

- **Leadership Style Questionnaire (Northouse, 2009)**

  The Leadership Style Questionnaire (LSQ) assesses three leadership styles: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire. It consists of 18 items, with 6 items per leadership style. Participants rate their supervisors on a Likert scale based on observed behaviors. Higher scores in a category indicate a stronger presence of that leadership style. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80 for each leadership style, indicating high internal consistency.

- **Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C)**

  The Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C) is a 32-item instrument measuring workplace deviance across five dimensions: Abuse, Production Deviance, Sabotage, Theft, and Withdrawal. Responses are recorded on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater engagement in counterproductive behaviour. Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.85 to 0.93, indicating strong internal consistency across all dimensions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The table 1 provides the **mean** and **standard deviation** for Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) and three leadership styles: Laissez-faire, Democratic, and Authoritarian. The sample size for each variable is **100** participants.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CWB	77.9500	12.65500	100
Lfaire	17.31	2.933	100
Democratic	18.90	3.797	100
authoritarian	18.78	3.636	100

TABLE 1

Key Observations:

1. **Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)**
   - **Mean = 77.95**, indicating a relatively high level of CWB in the sample.
   - **Standard Deviation = 12.66**, suggesting some variation in responses, but not extreme.
2. **Laissez-faire Leadership**
   - **Mean = 17.31**, meaning that, on average, respondents report a moderate level of laissez-faire leadership in their workplace.
   - **Standard Deviation = 2.93**, showing lower variability compared to other leadership styles. This suggests more consistency in how laissez-faire leadership is perceived among respondents.
3. **Democratic Leadership**
   - **Mean = 18.90**, slightly higher than authoritarian leadership, suggesting that democratic leadership is somewhat more prevalent in the sample.
   - **Standard Deviation = 3.80**, indicating moderate variation in democratic leadership perceptions.
4. **Authoritarian Leadership**
   - **Mean = 18.78**, similar to democratic leadership, meaning both leadership styles are almost equally reported by participants.
   - **Standard Deviation = 3.64**, reflecting moderate variation.

Interpretation

The higher mean CWB score suggests that workplace deviance is a concern in the sample population.

Democratic leadership is slightly more common than authoritarian leadership, aligning with the study's findings that participative leadership is more effective in reducing CWB.

Laissez-faire leadership shows the least variability, implying that employees generally perceive a similar level of non-involvement from their leaders.

Inferential Statics

Correlation Analysis

Democratic Leadership and CWB

- Pearson Correlation: **-0.287**
- Significance (p-value): **0.004**
- Interpretation:
  - There is a **significant negative correlation** between democratic leadership and CWB ($p < 0.01$).
  - This indicates that as democratic leadership increases, CWB tends to decrease.

- o The relationship, though moderate, suggests that democratic leadership plays a role in mitigating counterproductive workplace behaviors.

Correlations

		CWB	democratic
CWB	Pearson Correlation	1	-.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	100	100
democratic	Pearson Correlation	-.287**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	100	100

TABLE 2

2. Authoritarian Leadership and CWB

- Pearson Correlation: **0.029**
- Significance (p-value): **0.773**
- Interpretation:
  - o There is **no significant correlation** between authoritarian leadership and CWB ($p > 0.05$).
  - o This suggests that authoritarian leadership does not have a direct influence on counterproductive work behaviors.

Correlations

		CWB	authoritarian
CWB	Pearson Correlation	1	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.773
	N	100	100
authoritarian	Pearson Correlation	.029	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.773	
	N	100	100

TABLE 3

3. Laissez-Faire Leadership and CWB

- Pearson Correlation: **-0.080**
- Significance (p-value): **0.428**
- Interpretation:
  - o There is a **weak negative correlation** between laissez-faire leadership and CWB, but it is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).
  - o This indicates that laissez-faire leadership does not have a strong or meaningful impact on reducing or increasing CWB.

Correlations

		CWB	Lfaire
CWB	Pearson Correlation	1	-.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.428
	N	100	100
Lfaire	Pearson Correlation	-.080	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428	
	N	100	100

TABLE 4

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis examines the impact of different leadership styles (Laissez-faire, Democratic, and Authoritarian) on Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	96.932	10.966		8.840	.000
	Lfaire	-.324	.419	-.075	-.774	.441
	democratic	-1.013	.330	-.304	-3.066	.003
	authoritarian	.308	.345	.088	.892	.375

a. Dependent Variable: CWB

TABLE 5

Key Findings:

1. **Constant (Intercept):** The constant value of 96.932 suggests that when all predictor variables (leadership styles) are zero, the expected CWB score is 96.932.
2. **Democratic Leadership:**
   - The **B coefficient** (-1.013) indicates that a one-unit increase in democratic leadership is associated with a **1.013 decrease** in CWB.
   - The **Beta value** (-0.304) shows that democratic leadership has the most substantial effect among the three predictors.
   - The **t-value** (-3.066) is significant at **p = 0.003**, meaning democratic leadership has a statistically significant negative impact on CWB.
3. **Authoritarian Leadership:**
   - The **B coefficient** (0.308) suggests that an increase in authoritarian leadership slightly **increases** CWB, but this effect is not statistically significant (**p = 0.375**).
   - The **Beta value** (0.088) indicates a weak influence of authoritarian leadership on CWB.

- o The **t-value** (0.892) further confirms that the impact of authoritarian leadership is not significant.
4. **Laissez-faire Leadership:**
   - o The **B coefficient** (-0.324) suggests a minor **negative** relationship with CWB, but this is **not statistically significant** (**p = 0.441**).
   - o The **Beta value** (-0.075) indicates that laissez-faire leadership has the least influence among the three leadership styles.
   - o The **t-value** (-0.774) confirms the insignificant impact.

Results:

The study aimed to analyze the relationship between different leadership styles (Democratic, Authoritarian, and Laissez-faire) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). The findings reveal that Democratic Leadership significantly reduces CWB, supporting the hypothesis that participative leadership fosters a more positive work environment. Conversely, Authoritarian and Laissez-faire Leadership did not show a statistically significant impact on CWB, suggesting that these leadership approaches may not strongly influence or mitigate counterproductive behaviors in this particular sample.

The evaluation of hypotheses further confirms these findings:

1. **H_1 (Democratic Leadership & CWB)**
   - o The Pearson correlation coefficient (**r = -0.287, p = 0.004**) indicates a **statistically significant negative correlation** between **democratic leadership and CWB**.
   - o Since **p < 0.05**, this hypothesis is **supported**, confirming that as democratic leadership increases, CWB decreases.
2. **H_2 (Authoritarian Leadership & CWB)**
   - o The correlation result (**r = 0.029, p = 0.773**) shows a **weak and non-significant relationship** between **authoritarian leadership and CWB**.
   - o Since **p > 0.05**, this hypothesis is **not supported**, suggesting that authoritarian leadership does not have a measurable impact on CWB in this study.
3. **H_3 (Laissez-Faire Leadership & CWB)**
   - o The correlation (**r = -0.080, p = 0.428**) indicates a **weak negative correlation**, but it is **not statistically significant**.
   - o Since **p > 0.05**, this hypothesis is **not supported**, suggesting that laissez-faire leadership does not significantly influence CWB.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusion

The study aimed to analyze the relationship between different leadership styles (Democratic, Authoritarian, and Laissez-faire) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). The findings reveal that Democratic Leadership has a significant negative impact on CWB,with a Pearson correlation of -0.287 (p = 0.004) and a regression coefficient of -1.013 (p = 0.003) meaning that workplaces with higher democratic leadership practices tend to experience lower levels of counterproductive behaviors. Conversely, In contrast, Authoritarian Leadership (r = 0.029, p =

0.773) and Laissez-faire Leadership (r = -0.080, p = 0.428) did not show a statistically significant impact on CWB, suggesting that these leadership approaches may not strongly influence or mitigate such behaviors in this particular sample. The multiple regression results further confirmed that authoritarian (B = 0.308, p = 0.375) and laissez-faire leadership (B = -0.324, p = 0.441) do not significantly impact CWB in the given sample.

The results support the notion that inclusive and participative leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a positive work environment, thereby reducing negative workplace behaviors. While authoritarian leadership was expected to have a stronger influence on CWB, the findings indicate that it neither exacerbates nor mitigates these behaviors in a statistically meaningful way. Similarly, laissez-faire leadership, characterized by minimal intervention, did not show a strong correlation with CWB, further reinforcing the importance of structured leadership approaches.

The results confirm H_1, stating that Democratic Leadership significantly reduces CWB, while H_2 and H_3 are not supported, indicating that Authoritarian and Laissez-faire Leadership do not significantly influence CWB. Future research should explore additional moderating factors, such as workplace culture, job satisfaction, and ethical leadership, to better understand the complex dynamics between leadership styles and workplace behavior.

These results align with previous studies, particularly the work of Fu et al. (2021), who found that participative leadership enhances employee engagement and reduces CWB by creating an inclusive work environment. Additionally, Hoch et al. (2019) emphasize that shared leadership, a form of democratic leadership, reduces CWB by promoting collaboration and mutual respect. Conversely, Ng and Feldman (2022) found that Laissez-faire leadership increases CWB due to ambiguity and neglect, which aligns with the present study's finding that laissez-faire leadership does not significantly reduce CWB.

Implications

The study offers several practical implications for organizations and HR professionals:

1. Promoting Democratic Leadership for a Positive Work Environment
    o Since democratic leadership significantly reduces CWB, organizations should encourage participative decision-making, open communication, and employee involvement in workplace policies.
    o Leadership development programs should emphasize skills like active listening, delegation, and collaboration to foster democratic leadership behaviors.
    o Schein (2015) also highlights that leaders who foster a positive and ethical culture can effectively reduce CWB by promoting shared values and norms.
2. Addressing Counterproductive Work Behavior
    o The relatively high mean CWB (77.95) suggests that organizations should actively implement strategies to reduce workplace deviance.
    o Newman, Donohue, and Eva (2017) emphasize that creating a psychologically safe work environment significantly reduces workplace deviance. Organizations should develop policies that promote employee well-being, fairness, and job security.
    o Interventions such as employee engagement initiatives, conflict resolution mechanisms, and ethical leadership training can help in minimizing CWB.
3. Rethinking the Role of Authoritarian and Laissez-faire Leadership

- Since neither authoritarian nor laissez-faire leadership showed a significant impact on CWB, organizations should assess their leadership structures carefully.
- Rigid authoritarian leadership may not be an effective approach for behavior management, while laissez-faire leadership might fail to provide the necessary guidance and oversight.
- Li and Mo (2021) found that authoritarian leadership fosters moral disengagement, leading to higher levels of CWB. This suggests that rigid, top-down leadership approaches should be reconsidered in favor of more inclusive styles.
- Ng and Feldman (2022) and Einarsen et al. (2020) found that Laissez-faire leadership increases CWB, as employees feel abandoned and are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors. Organizations should ensure that leaders are actively engaged in employee development and workplace monitoring.
- A balanced leadership approach, combining clear expectations (from authoritarian leadership) and participative decision-making (from democratic leadership), may yield better results.

4. Further Research on Other Influencing Factors
- While leadership style plays a role in shaping workplace behavior, other factors such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, work-life balance, and employee motivation should also be explored in future studies.
- Kacmar et al. (2017) found that ethical leadership is negatively correlated with CWB, suggesting that fostering ethical leadership practices could be another effective approach to reducing workplace deviance.
- Cooper and Quick (2017) highlight that leaders who provide emotional support and resources can reduce workplace stress, which in turn lowers the likelihood of CWB. Future studies should consider the role of workplace stress and leader emotional intelligence in mitigating CWB.
- Organizations should consider conducting employee feedback surveys and behavioral assessments to gain deeper insights into workplace dynamics and the root causes of CWB.

This study highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping workplace behavior and emphasizes the importance of democratic leadership in minimizing counterproductive actions. Organizations aiming to reduce workplace misconduct and enhance employee well-being should invest in leadership training programs that promote participative and ethical leadership. While authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership may still have relevance in certain contexts, they do not appear to significantly impact counterproductive behaviors, reinforcing the need for more engaged and inclusive leadership strategies.

Recommendations for Organizations on Leadership Strategies

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can help organizations enhance employee engagement and workplace culture through effective leadership strategies:

1. Promote Democratic Leadership for a Positive Work Environment
- The study indicates that Democratic Leadership is associated with lower levels of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and higher employee engagement.

- Organizations should encourage leaders to involve employees in decision-making, seek feedback, and create a culture of collaboration and open communication.
2. Minimize Authoritarian Leadership to Reduce Workplace Deviance
    - Authoritarian Leadership was found to correlate with higher CWB, such as withdrawal and production deviance.
    - While structure and control are necessary, organizations should balance authority with employee autonomy to prevent disengagement and resentment.
3. Address the Negative Impact of Laissez-Faire Leadership
    - Laissez-Faire Leadership was linked to increased CWB and reduced employee accountability.
    - Organizations should ensure leaders are actively engaged, provide guidance, and address employee concerns rather than adopting a hands-off approach.
4. Implement Leadership Development Programs
    - Training programs should focus on developing democratic leadership skills, including effective communication, team collaboration, and conflict resolution.
    - Leadership coaching should help managers understand the impact of their leadership style on employee morale and performance.
5. Foster a Transparent and Inclusive Organizational Culture
    - Establishing a culture of trust, fairness, and inclusivity can reduce workplace deviance and enhance employee engagement.
    - Leaders should recognize and reward positive behaviors, making employees feel valued and motivated to contribute.
6. Encourage Employee Voice and Feedback Mechanisms
    - Providing platforms for employees to share their opinions, concerns, and suggestions can create a sense of ownership and commitment.
    - Regular employee engagement surveys and feedback sessions can help leaders adjust their strategies to better support their teams.

By adopting democratic leadership practices, minimizing authoritarian and laissez-faire tendencies, and investing in leadership development, organizations can create a positive workplace culture that enhances engagement and reduces counterproductive behaviors.

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