

NAVIGATING COVID-19: EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLES, WORK QUALITY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN MSMEs OF DELHI-NCR

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate dynamics within “Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)” in the Delhi-NCR region during the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Through a comprehensive examination of Quality of Work Life (QWL), leadership styles, and the impact of Work from Home (WFH), the research unravels significant insights. The findings reveal a positive overall QWL perception, highlighting the adaptability of employees. The diverse representation of leadership styles, notably with the prevalence of the "Other" category, underscores the heterogeneity of leadership approaches. Importantly, a perceived positive relationship between leadership styles and QWL emphasizes the pivotal role of leadership in shaping employee experiences. However, the study unveils a nuanced landscape of WFH impact, with both positive and negative outcomes reported. The diverse perceptions of the collective experience on Organizational Performance further emphasize the complexity of these interrelationships. This research contributes valuable insights for organizational leaders, urging adaptive leadership strategies and nuanced WFH policies to align with the diverse needs of the workforce. Despite acknowledging study limitations, the findings lay the groundwork for future research and strategic considerations aimed at enhancing employee well-being and organizational resilience.

Keywords: “Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)”, Covid-19, Quality of Work Life (QWL), Leadership Styles, Work from Home (WFH)

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for organizations worldwide, and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Delhi-NCR region have been no exception. The unique and severe disruptions caused by the pandemic necessitate a thorough examination of the interplay between leadership styles, work quality, and organizational performance in these crucial economic entities. The background of the study "Navigating COVID-19: Exploring the Interplay Between Leadership Styles, Work Quality, and Organizational Performance in MSMEs of Delhi-NCR" is rooted in the need to understand how leaders in MSMEs have adapted and navigated through the complexities introduced by the pandemic.

The Delhi-NCR region, being a prominent hub for MSMEs, has faced multifaceted challenges, including workforce management, remote work transitions, supply chain disruptions, and

economic uncertainties. Against this backdrop, the study aims to unravel the dynamics of leadership styles adopted by MSMEs in response to the ongoing crisis. Different leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and potentially new adaptive approaches, play a critical role in steering organizations through unprecedented uncertainties and ensuring the well-being of their workforce (Khan, M. A., et al 2020).

The exploration of the inter-relationship between leadership styles and their impact on work quality and organizational performance is crucial for identifying effective strategies that promote resilience and sustainability in the face of ongoing challenges. Moreover, understanding how leadership styles influence the quality of work life for employees is pivotal, as it directly contributes to organizational performance (Popli, S., & Rizvi, I. A. 2015).

The study acknowledges the centrality of MSMEs in the economic landscape of Delhi-NCR and aims to provide actionable insights for leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders. By delving into the specific context of MSMEs in this region, the research seeks to contribute valuable knowledge that can inform decision-making processes, foster adaptability, and drive positive outcomes during these tumultuous times (Sharma, P., et al 2022). The findings from this study are anticipated to not only enrich the academic discourse on leadership in crisis situations but also offer practical implications for enhancing the resilience and performance of MSMEs in the Delhi-NCR region and beyond.

Literature Review

(Pathak, D., et al 2023) the link between work happiness, learning in organisational capacity, and types of leadership is examined in MSMEs within the Delhi-NCR region during the challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research involves surveying 200 managers from various IT organizations in the Delhi-NCR region. Utilizing descriptive analysis, the study highlights the significant association between the transformational leadership style and the learning capability of the organization. Moreover, it emphasizes the pivotal role of transformational leadership in enhancing the overall performance of MSMEs, particularly by contributing to employee job satisfaction and fostering growth and development.

(Abolnasser, M. S. A., et al 2023) delve into the economic challenges faced by various SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic and stress the importance of employee well-being in enhancing organizational performance. The study argues that employee happiness and job satisfaction are crucial factors contributing to increased productivity. It suggests that leadership styles, particularly the transformational approach, play a vital role in guiding organizations through crises, emphasizing the need for leaders to focus on employee welfare to achieve optimal outcomes.

(Rathi, N., et al. 2021): Rathi and team contribute insights into the leadership landscape during the pandemic, examining its impact on employee and organizational performance. The study, based on 243 responses, underscores the preference for transformational and transactional leadership styles. Findings highlight the positive impact of these leadership styles on employee and organizational performance, especially during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

Objectives

The study aims to:

- To examine how leadership style affects quality work life in organizations during WFH period in Delhi-NCR's MSME sector during the Covid-19 pandemic

Research Methodology

To quantitatively investigate the relationships between Quality of Work Life (QWL), Leadership Styles, Work from Home (WFH), and Organizational Performance in MSMEs of the Delhi-NCR region during the Covid-19 pandemic. The technique of randomly stratified sampling will be the method used to choose members from a range of MSMEs in the Delhi-NCR region. The sample size is 100 that is determined to ensure statistical reliability. A structured questionnaire will be designed with a mix of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. The survey will consist of 6 key questions aimed at understanding the perceived relationships between variables.

Data Analysis

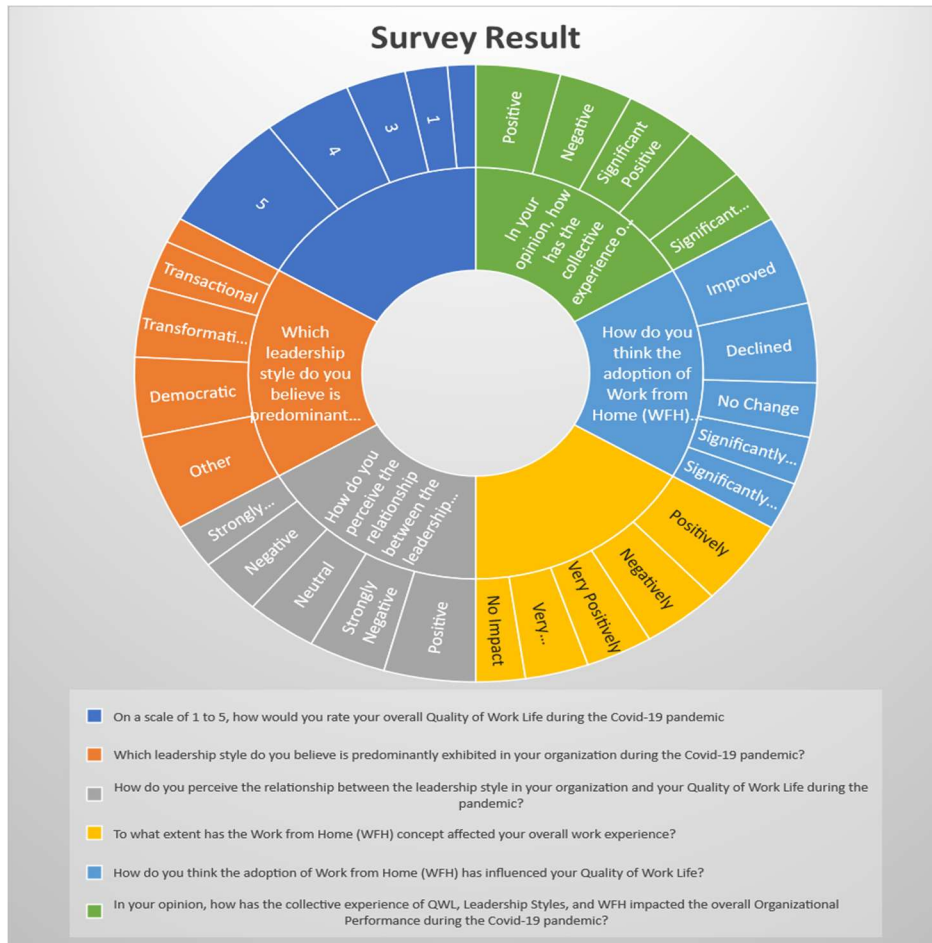


Fig 1. Surevy Results

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Responses

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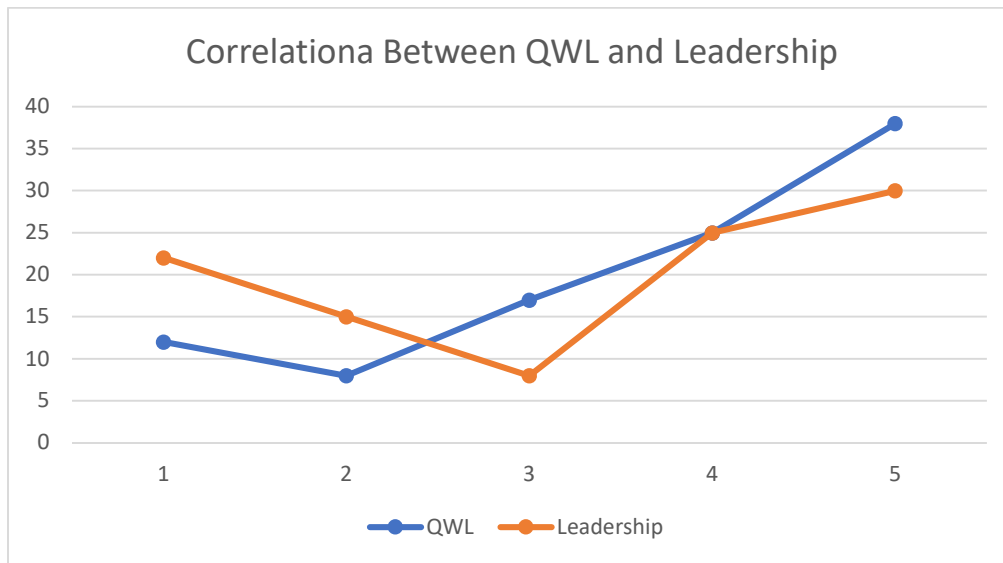
Question	Options	Frequency	Percentage
On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall Quality of Work Life during the Covid-19 pandemic	1	12	12%
	2	8	8%
	3	17	17%
	4	25	25%
	5	38	38%
Which leadership style do you believe is predominantly exhibited in your organization during the Covid-19 pandemic?	Transformational	22	22%
	Transactional	15	15%
	Autocratic	8	8%
	Democratic	25	25%
	Other	30	30%
How do you perceive the relationship between the leadership style in your organization and your Quality of Work Life during the pandemic?	Strongly Positive	14	14%
	Positive	26	26%
	Neutral	20	20%
	Negative	18	18%
	Strongly Negative	22	22%
To what extent has the Work from Home (WFH) concept affected your overall work experience?	Very Positively	19	19%
	Positively	27	27%
	No Impact	14	14%
	Negatively	22	22%
	Very Negatively	18	18%
How do you think the adoption of Work from Home (WFH) has influenced your Quality of Work Life?	Significantly Improved	15	15%
	Improved	28	28%
	No Change	17	17%
	Declined	25	25%
	Significantly Declined	15	15%
In your opinion, how has the collective	Significant Positive	20	20%
	Positive	24	24%

experience of QWL, Leadership Styles, and WFH impacted the overall Organizational Performance during the Covid-19 pandemic?	No Discernible Impact	18	18%
	Negative	21	21%
	Significant Negative	17	17%

The data represents the responses to a survey regarding the Quality of Work Life (QWL) during the Covid-19 pandemic, leadership styles, Work from Home (WFH) impact, and their collective influence on overall Organizational Performance. The data provides valuable insights into the diverse perspectives of respondents regarding their work experiences, leadership styles, WFH impact, and the collective impact on organizational performance during the challenging circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. **Quality of Work Life Rating:** The majority of respondents (38%) rated their overall Quality of Work Life during the Covid-19 pandemic as a 5, indicating a positive perception. A significant portion (25%) rated it as 4, suggesting a generally favorable outlook. A combined 29% rated it as 1 or 2, indicating a smaller proportion with less positive perceptions.
2. **Leadership Style Distribution:** The predominant leadership style perceived in organizations is "Other" (30%), followed by Democratic (25%). Transformational and Transactional styles have moderate representations at 22% and 15%, respectively. Autocratic leadership is perceived by 8% of respondents.
3. **Relationship Between Leadership Styles and QWL:** A notable portion of respondents (26%) perceives a positive relationship between the leadership style in their organization and their Quality of Work Life during the pandemic. Strongly Positive and Neutral responses represent 14% and 20%, respectively. Combined, 40% see a positive or neutral connection.
4. **WFH Impact:** A significant portion (27%) acknowledges a positive impact of the Work from Home (WFH) concept on their overall work experience. 22% perceive a negative impact, with 18% indicating a Very Negatively impact. A notable 14% state that WFH had No Impact on their work experience.
5. **Relationship Between WFH and QWL:** The majority of respondents (43%) believe that the adoption of WFH has either significantly improved or improved their Quality of Work Life. A combined 32% think there has been a decline in QWL due to WFH.
6. **Impact on Organizational Performance:** The responses regarding the collective impact of QWL, Leadership Styles, and WFH on Organizational Performance are fairly distributed. A significant portion (44%) perceives a Positive or Significant Positive impact, while 38% see Negative or Significant Negative impacts.

Correlational Analysis



	QWL	Leadership
QWL	1	
Leadership	0.693951	1

The correlation coefficient of approximately 0.694 suggests a moderately strong positive monotonic “relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL)” and Leadership. The positive correlation indicates that as one variable (QWL) tends to increase or decrease, the other variable (Leadership) also tends to increase or decrease, respectively. This implies that, in the observed data, there is a tendency for higher levels of Quality of Work Life to be associated with higher levels of perceived leadership. A correlation coefficient of 0.694 is relatively high, suggesting a notable positive association.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the intricate relationships between leadership styles, work quality, and organizational performance in “Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)” during the challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on the Delhi-NCR region. The study's conclusions provided insight into on the intricate dynamics within “Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)” in the Delhi-NCR region amidst the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Notably, the positive assessment of overall Quality of Work Life (QWL) reflects the resilience and adaptability of employees, underscoring their ability to navigate through unprecedented disruptions. The diverse representation of leadership styles, with "Other" emerging as the predominant category, suggests a varied landscape of leadership approaches in these enterprises. The perceived positive relationship between leadership styles and QWL accentuates the influential role leadership plays in shaping employee experiences. However, the mixed

responses regarding the impact of the Work from Home (WFH) concept highlight the nuanced nature of remote work adoption, with both positive and negative outcomes reported. Similarly, the diverse perceptions of the collective experience on Organizational Performance underscore the complex interplay between leadership, work quality, and overall success. These findings provide valuable insights for organizational leaders, emphasizing the importance of adaptive leadership strategies and nuanced remote work policies to align with the diverse needs of the workforce. While acknowledging the study's limitations, including reliance on self-reported data and regional specificity, it opens avenues for future research to explore these dynamics in different contexts, offering a foundation for strategic considerations aimed at enhancing employee well-being and organizational resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.

Implications and Recommendations

- The findings underscore the importance of leadership styles in influencing employees' perceptions of their work experiences and organizational performance.
- Organizations should consider adapting leadership approaches to align with employees' needs, especially during disruptive events like the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Further research and longitudinal studies are recommended to understand the dynamic nature of these relationships over time.

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