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Chapter

Positive Leadership Experiences of Software Professionals in Information Technology Organisations

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Abstract

Today's corporate culture frequently treats distrust like a virtue; however positive teams are more effective. A workplace that instils confidence, and supports collaboration and creativity attracts committed and talented employees. Positive psychology plays a pivotal role in influencing numerous conceptual leadership models of which, positive leadership is one such concept. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight and recognise the value of positive leadership at workplace, this chapter aims to provide evidences of how positive leadership and its sub-dimension's act as a link between employees and organisations positive outcomes. Judgement and stratified sampling technique was adopted to draw software professionals and to select information technology organisations (ITOs). Nine hundred and eighty three software professionals participated from around 25 IT organisations. The positive leadership measure (PLM) was administered. Results indicate that software professionals did experience positive leadership and the immediate supervisor's positive behaviour lays down the foundation for a successful organisation. The sub-dimensions significantly impacted positive outcomes. The chapter details the results, discussion, implications and suggestions.

Keywords: positive psychology, positive leadership, recognition, positive perspective, strength based approach, software professionals, information technology organisations

1. Introduction

Leadership is one among the most sought after topics spoken among corporates and academic researchers. It can be traced back to the Indian, Egyptians and Greek civilisation where philosophers such as Pluto, Socrates, and Aristotle spoke about it length. The author of epic literature Ramayana, Maharishi Valmiki defines leadership and its characteristics precisely during his conversation with Sage Narada at the beginning of Ramayana. This resonates with the theory of multiple intelligence (1983) by Howard Gardner (Harvard psychologist) to the current society or environment about leader's versatility, characteristic while they are in their pinnacle. Leadership lessons can be traced to the bhakti movement prominent during the eighth-century

in southern India, and spread towards other parts of the world. The spiritual leaders, social reformer and philosophers like Sri Ramanujacharya, a great exponent of the Sri Vaishnavism who presented the epistemic and soteriological importance of bhakti, was also known for his charismatic and virtuous behaviour, administrative acumen and managerial ability to balance inspiring followers as well as getting the task accomplished. His ability to conceive and execute the construction of the Thondanur Lake (Melukote-Karnataka-India) 1000 years back is a major irrigation source even today for both agriculture and drinking for that region. Through his virtuous behaviour and altruistic love for his devotees, he intrinsically motivated, empowered them to practice spiritual values, which lead to the ultimate goal of devotional service. Yet the understanding and significance of leadership studies begun only during the twentieth century however the social-scientific approach towards leadership studies only started during the 1930s. As the research progressed, leadership has been continuously redefined and several theories on leadership have been proposed, developed and still developing. The last quarter century has seen a positive orientation driven by cultural values towards a shared vision. As positive psychology plays an important role in the human behaviour and it is not about a feel-good concept. Leaders today have a disproportionate impact on workplace positivity and have undermined its power to improve organisational effectiveness. The fundamental characteristic that stands out among leaders are positivity, authenticity, to serve, share power and feel others wholeness. Similarly another spiritual leader Srila Prabhupada was known for his acumen for management principles and entrepreneurial skills in temple administration, revenue generation through publication besides people management influenced thousands of youth from across the world towards Krishna consciousness by applying positive psychology and affirmative behaviour via love, trust, empowerment and affection. These spiritual leaders demonstrated the components of having a vision (big picture thinking), positive attitude, and altruistic love for their followers to experience intrinsic self-value and satisfaction of life purpose. Which corporates leaders are incorporating based on spirituality and positivity to develop their virtuous behaviour, perceptions of trust, organisational support, and commitment among employees, which could have positive effects on organisational performance [1, 2]. Positive psychology has major influence on leader's behaviour at workplace and research indicates that positive approaches to empower people and building trust are a must-have leadership trait. Organisations are group of people who pursue common goals: leadership has been central to organisations because leadership has been a process by which groups create or achieve goals. Most of us right from childhood looked around those people who are achievers and automatically equated those achievers with leaders and assumed whatever the individual did to achieve the outcomes that they did constitute leadership. Part of the challenge of leadership education and leadership development in organisation is to overcome the implicit understanding that people come into the organisation based on the individuals inspired by in their past. Since last 30 years of leadership research, organisations and scholars have been looking at the subject of leadership. There are three things about leadership which we need to be understood.

- Leadership is about generating voluntary commitment on the part of the people towards group goals which means "leadership is not about achieving goals through any means i.e. one's authority or individual position but it's about "inducing individuals to voluntarily commit themselves to certain long term goals which are beneficial for the group.

- Leadership is not so much about the individual (the leaders) it's more about the relationship. What we mean here is there are three things associated to this aspect "Leader-follower-context": leadership relationship is very important

(e.g. many organisations hire star performers from competitors. They try to replicate the success of the star performer in prior organisation but that does not work (always). Often the result of the star performer is due to his unique team composition, their strengths, organisational culture (context).

• Today leadership is associated with positive psychology, positive change and positive deviance. The concept called positive leadership.

Great leaders build significant economic value, excel under pressure and align meticulously with organisational business strategy to drive better performance. They try to bring employees together around the organisational objectives, motivate them to deliver by creating value for both. Various studies indicate that organisations which are value based enhance their performance and most likely sustain their long term objectives commercially. Leaders who practice positivity follow these basics to achieve their goals.

It is about practicing positivity continuously with virtuous behaviour; demonstrate organisational values, beliefs and integrity. They have a clear vision, shared values and set goals aligned to the organisational objectives. They recognise the importance of a team and develop them to excel in their tasks.

The chapter details positive leadership, significance and importance, the execution and benefits of positive leadership, the sub dimensions of positive leadership—recognition, strength based and perspective based approach, methodology adopted, sample, tools of measurement, results, discussion, theoretical and practical implications of positive leadership and conclusion.

2. Positive leadership

Leadership is optimistic or positive, when it is virtuous leading to heliotropic effect. It's about demonstrating high degree of excellence, such as optimism, compassion, integrity, and audacity. However, virtuousness takes place when an individual exhibits fineness in his actions that are pertinent in every situation at workplace. For example, in India, the National Disaster Rescue Force (NDRF) team members take up various rescue operations in challenging circumstances (both natural and man-made disasters) by exhibiting valour to venture, acumen to handle the situations of threat, empathy to aid the individual who are trapped, and the self-effacement to acknowledge what is beyond their capability. In contrast, let us look at a corporate performance appraisal scenario, where the supervisor needs to provide adverse feedback to his team member. At the same time expected to be candid in sharing the information about the performance is not unto to the expected standards. The supervisor is expected to be sensitive to the team member's feelings/emotions and also understand why his performance is suffering and what measures needs to be taken to improve it. Every state of affair or circumstance needs a divergent set of virtues to be practiced based on the situation and also upholding the interest of the team members who too upkeep the circumstances exhibiting excellence. To maintain the higher standards of performance, it needs both the supervisor and team member to demonstrate the pertinent intrinsic worth in their actions within a given circumstances. Therefore, leader's optimism or positivity may be a comparatively unusual episode. However, literature indicates leader's positivity exists alongside the continuum. At any given circumstance during the engagement between the supervisor and team member, the supervisors may demonstrate positivity. These positive actions and reactions of both may be due to virtuousness.

Positive leadership is a proprietary leadership strategy which helps organisations and leaders (at all levels within the organisation) excel under pressure. Positive leadership is heliotropic. It involves experiencing, modelling, and purposefully enhancing positive emotions. It is built around the application of positive psychology [3], positive organisational scholarship [4] and positive change [5]. These facilitate and nurture positive deviance in order to accomplish both individual and organisational objectives with effectiveness. Positive deviance herein, refers to the 'X' factor that distinguishes positive leaders from the rest. Positivity is about leaders having disproportionate stimulus in the workplace positivity by practising affirmative behaviour. It is based on the scientific evidence and theoretically-grounded principles to endorse consequences such as virtuous behaviours, interpersonal flourishing, and revitalising association [6]. Those who embrace positive leadership are authentic and passionate individuals, who enable positively deviant performance, foster an affirmative orientation in organisation by focusing on virtuousness. That is exhibiting positive emotions which influence, inspire, and empower them by building trust and showing keen interest in their follower's progression along with organisational bottom line. They continuously engage in positivity and have clarity about what they want, why and how in achieving their objectives through building positive work environment, relationship, communication and meaning.

3. How positive leadership is different from other leadership styles

A leader's positive outlook, self-awareness, servant hood, authenticity, social exchange, virtuous behaviours and charisma to influence, form the basis of positive leadership theories that include authentic, transformation, servant, empowering, and ethical. The basic difference amid these styles is that a servant leaders focus on the followers' needs in terms of reinforcing positive climate and meaning, whereas transformational leader emphasises on positive relationships and communication towards organisational goals. Authentic leaders emphasise on positive behaviour in terms of transparent communication and ethical organisational climate whereas Ethical leaders, focus on ethical standards, beliefs and values, while empowering leaders focus on enhancing employees through sharing power. However, the common thread among these is positivity which enhances employees experiencing more trust, engagement and empowerment [7]. Traditionally, these "leadership theories have been inclined towards positivity, yet none have defined positive leadership" [8]. Further, asserting that positive leaders need to remain methodical and cohesive over time and across situations. While focusing on heliotropic effect and positive deviance [6], this chapter explores leader's affirmative behaviour focusing employee's strengths, positive perspective and recognition.

4. What positive leaders do differently?

Positive leaders play an important role in influencing the organisational performance via virtuous and affirmative behaviour due to their direct influence they have on their employees. They align the performance of their employees with all-embracing objectives of the organisation and shaping a positive workplace culture. During the transformation (2006) period of Ford Ltd., Mr. Alan Mulally, CEO talks about his leadership lessons learnt during his career and how effectively he applied positive leadership style. He advocates that "positive leadership conveys the notion that there is always a way forward". Further reinstating that positive leadership

is about strengthening the opinion that every employee is counted in. When the workforces are involved in driving the organisational objective, it is more rewarding. The leader's personality and actions have an influence on his employees and does affects the organisation. Hence it is significant to adopt a positive attitude and positive practices. When leaders communicate their vision and expectation with clarity it stimulates workplace trust and self-reliance among employees to look beyond call of duty. Positive leader's emphasis on strength based approach that builds the necessary competency for long-term goals by creating a performance work culture over a period of time. Leader's positive perspective clears the path of obstacles and challenges as opportunities to achieve their objectives. However, appreciation, recognition and positive feedback creates more engagement leading to higher productivity.

5. Create a vision that stimulates employees and stake holders

The organisational vision statement has to inspire and stimulate the employees to focus on their goals aligning to the organisational goals for development and accomplishment. Similarly leadership and vision are considered to be indistinguishable. They focus on what matters utmost and try to accomplish it along with the team by addressing the future and its realities in a transparent manner with optimism. Leaders take the opportunity to communicate the vision to its employees, so it is embraced and implemented to enhance the outcomes to achieve the bottom line. It is very important from the leadership perspective to constantly engage the employees via communicating the company vision and value statement. Example: when the leaders reinforce the organisation vision by correlating or binding it to the individual employee or teams goals. When leaders effectively share the vision statements, it narrates a story that is beneficial for both the organisation and employees and has an impact over the products and services by creating a higher value. However, if employees are uncertain about the story narrated or the story does not bring desired change, then they are not likely to embrace the vision. So leaders need to create visibility so the employees link their objectives and also share their success stories towards comprehending the organisation vision. Organisation's positive practice is always credited to the leader's vision of defining the higher purpose. Many organisations understood that focusing on customers' needs makes a difference, which in turn develops individual and organisational prosperity. Organisation with higher purpose or drive out-performed the ordinary organisations (8:1) ratio. Example: the Nike leadership talks about innovation to inspire sports champions or athlete focusing on to do everything imaginable towards enhancing human potential to perform.

6. Cultivate positive practices at workplace

Positivity breeds self-reliant, zealous and affirmative employees. Positive practices are a powerful process that can influence individuals in many ways professionally and personally. They stimulate individuals to perform better. When employee's experience positive emotions at work place, the affirmative sense is formed by associating their effort with its impact on their performance. Prof. Grant (Wharton Business School) advocates that leaders can achieve more by outsourcing inspiration through various means and practices. Example: it is vital for leaders to recruit employees based on their strengths which will enhance the organisations productivity and work culture. Organisations need employees who can work in teams and willing to challenge the problem arising at workplace with positive perspective with confidence. These factors encourage them to perform and improve their productivity and also focus on developing

their competencies than tearing them down. Periodic feedback, recognition, positive perspective helps enhances employees to achieve better output even if it's systematic assignments. Positive leaders understand the challenges at workplace and approach them with positive perspective. They look at these challenges as opportunities to perform based on the competencies and abilities of the team and self. They feel self-assured that they can overcome the challenges they encounter at workplace by reducing workplace stress levels: enhances productivity, problem solving, decision making abilities, resiliency, better interaction with teams avoiding conflicts etc. [9]. Positive workplace has various benefits in terms of motivating employees to have better engagement at workplace and being happier. Employees who are satisfied and happier surpass expectations and have a longer life cycle with the organisation. Example: Kjerulf, Alexander founding member of Woohoo Inc., stated that, "Happiness is the ultimate productivity booster" and employees who are cheerful at workplace exhibit more optimism, better leadership skills and manage their time well. They also practice positive leadership via improving competency, recognition and having optimistic perspective.

7. Being proactive and also encouraging team members to take initiative

Leaders need to explore the opportunities for employees learning and growth. Leaders have to realise and explore the potential strengths of employees together for their success. Innovation and critical feedback is necessary for the progression of the organisation. Leaders need to look at solutions rather than problems and ask the right questions to employees to help them look at different perspective. Example: the Apple way of looking at things "Is it possible for a phone to do more than make calls?" When leaders empower and provide opportunities to co-create and enable employees to feel wound up to initiate proactive behaviours and continue to face experiment with assignments without burning out. These factors build the self-confidence of the team members as they see their leader's positive perspective. Employees exhibit more engagement at workplace when there are passionate about they work and have a good work life balance. Employees who are proactive are looking at futuristic roles, assignments and projects by anticipating the requirements, challenges and likely consequences. They demonstrate their affirmative behaviour in terms of volunteering them to support their team member when their have issues in their projects. These behaviours exhibit their leadership skills.

8. Positive psychology plays a significant role in the human behaviour and it is not about a feel-good concept

Today's leaders have a lopsided influence on place of work's positivity and undermined its influence to improve organisational efficiency. The essential physiognomies that standout amid effective leaders are their positivity in testing times by being authentic to work, share power and empower followers to experience growth and advancement to strive towards assimilation of objectives. Research indicates that positive approaches to empower people and building trust are a must-have leadership trait. Their aptitude to introspect around their feelings and actions in what way it influences employees is extremely go forward and seek for feedback for improvisation. Positive leaders stimulate confidence, grow employee's strengths, positive perspective and recognise one's contribution to transform big picture thinking into certainty [10]. Based on the positive leadership theories (authentic, transformation, ethical, participative, empowering servant leadership), researchers started looking at positive psychology which has a major influence on

leader behaviour. The progress of positive leadership theories in the last two decades has lacked "the considerate, developing procedure, putting into practices states that positive leadership still remains an under investigated". The authors defined positive leadership as an individual who aligns closely with business strategy to drive higher level of performance by promoting optimism and focusing on employee's strengths, positive perspective and recognition.

- Positive leaders support their employees to by providing opportunities to perform based on strengths and constructive feedback.

- Appreciate and provide meaningful recognition for employees, that their contributions are valued towards achieving organizational objectives and also motivate them to maintain or enhance their good work.

- Connect between team members and organisational goal through positive relationship and meaningfulness and its outcomes.

- Strengthen and promote contribution goals rather than self-interest goals by building a positive work climate.

9. Positive leadership sub-dimensions

9.1 Recognition

Recognition, reward and appreciation practices by the immediate supervisors at workplace bind employees towards having an affirmative approach in their assignments helping them develop self-efficacy to endure better performance and creating positive reminiscences. Appreciation and recognition influence employees in driving better output efficiency and higher level of engagement. Research indicates that simple recognition increases (31%) productivity in information technology organisation [11], also the performance enhances by (3.1) than negative interactions [12]. When there is encouragement, there is upsurge in employee performance [13] and development leading to employees experiencing a feeling of fulfilment towards the organisation [14]. These factors do create a positive environment for employee's commitment, enthusiasm, rendezvous, achievement, retention. Reward and recognitions means a lot to the employees, it not only creates positive emotions but also enhances one's commitment by creating a psychological feeling of being an integral part of the organisation which is worth more than the reward one receives. It also provides an opportunity to be an ambassador of the organisation and to cultivate an appreciative mind-set and a more collaborative attitude.

9.2 Strength based approach

It is a way of looking at people as resourceful and is based on social work practice theory, highlighting or giving importance to developing individual's self-determination and competency. A holistic and multidisciplinary approach towards promoting individuals wellbeing. Positive leadership is about fostering employee's strengths to effectively build employees competencies or skills towards utilising them for better performance. Research indicates that there is a relationship amid strengths and engagement, which is central towards employee's affirmative experiences at workplace towards better perform. Gallup study indicates that strength-based approach and development leads to increase in sales by (10–19%): profits (14–29%),

customer engagement (3–7%) and engaged employees (9–15%). Positive leader's strengths-based approach is more effective focussing on individual's strengths to higher performance. This promotes employees to thrive by enhancing individual's strengths. Strengths-based practice by leaders empowers employees to nurture vigorous and optimistic workplace environment towards excellence.

9.3 Positive perspective

Provides a positive platform towards handling uncertainties, it's about how leaders look at challenges as opportunities and provide governance to achieve organisational objectives. They look at challenges as chance for growth and development. It includes de-catastrophizing setbacks, where leaders control perception and provide support or solution towards solving the problems encountered by the team or individuals in their tasks. From leadership point of view, understanding their one perspective and being rational about employee's view point increase their aptitude to lead and serve better. Leaders adopting positive perspective enhance positive outcomes through solution-oriented perspective [8, 15, 16]. The key constituent of resilience is about having a solution approach to problems encountered. When leaders have an optimistic perspective they look at solution than problems and have higher resilience. Due to this factors team members are not possible to flounder in frustration and dissuasion. They confront obstacles head-on, regain lost impetus, and move forward along with team in achieving their objectives. Sometime every individual comes across an uphill situation or tasks. How they handle these situations with positivity matters as set-backs are temporary, having positive perspective is key towards well-being.

10. Methodology

The study adopted judgmental and stratified sampling to identify the organisations and the employees need for administrating the questionnaire in information technology organisations (ITOs). The inclusion criteria for the employee to qualify for participating in the study was that they must have been employed in the current organisation for 18 months and have minimum experience of 36 months in ITO. About 1800 questionnaires were distributed and 983 fully completed questionnaires were compiled for analysis (54.6% response rate).

Positive leadership measure (PLM), designed by Arakawa and Greenberg [11] was adopted. It measures positive leadership and its sub-dimensions—(i) strengths-based approach (five items), (ii) positive perspective (five items) and (iii) recognition (seven items). The scale consists of twenty (20) items (17 items and (3) three open-ended qualitative questions) with Cronbach's α = 0.885 for the entire scale. Each sub dimension had one open-ended question. Two (2) items were reverse coded. This chapter only focuses on the qualitative analysis of the three sub-dimensions of positive leadership.

The data collected, aided in reporting the perception of the software professionals about their immediate supervisor's positive leadership practices they experienced. The interview was scheduled for a period of 15 min with three open-ended questions addressed to the participant. The design incorporated in framing the questions to map how they perceived their immediate supervisor's strength based approach, positive perspective approach and recognition practices at workplace. The three open-ended questions provided an opportunity for the employees to share their perception or experiences on the three sub-dimensions of positive leadership as experienced from their immediate supervisor. The researcher believes that the employee's perception of experiencing positive

leadership practices at workplace would be influenced by their immediate supervisor's positive leadership behaviour or practices exhibited at workplace. The responses provided by the sample were classified under the three sub-dimension of positive leadership relating to approaches of strength based, positive perspective and appreciation and recognition. The responses were stratified into positive and negative responses. Further the statements were content analysed to calculate and examine certain words, their meaning etc. to examine the leadership behaviours experienced by employees at workplace based on the sub-dimension of positive leadership. **Strength based responses** were further segregated into immediate supervisors develop strengths to perform better via (a) encouragement, support, guidance and similar tasks, (b) provide feedback for improvement, (c) opportunity to learn and develop via technology support, training programs and mentoring, (d) do not develop their strengths. **Positive perspective responses** were based on immediate supervisor's emotional support, towards his team members via (a) providing positive interpretation to past experiences to solve problems, (b) assign another technical resource for support and guidance, (c) participate in problem solving exercise, provide alternate views and solves problems, (d) do not support or participate when problems arise. **Appreciation and recognition responses** were grouped in to how often the immediate supervisor uses appreciation, acknowledges and encourages i.e. (a) once in a way, (b) sometimes, (c) frequently or regularly, (d) quarterly or during appraisals. These responses were calculated in percentage to understand the importance of these sub-themes and their influence on the team members towards enhancing their positive outcomes at workplace.

11. Respondent sample

Positive leadership and its sub-dimensions are explored to understand how they influence employees towards positive outcomes based on the study in ITO with a sample of 1800 software professionals.

Nine hundred and eighty three software professionals participated in this study and shared their feedback on positive leadership behaviour of their immediate supervisor. Male (60%) male and women (40%) participated in the study. They are working in the current ITOs for more than 18 months and been a software professional for more than three years.

12. Results

The results indicate that the employee's experienced positive leadership practices due to of their immediate supervisors at workplace. They exhibited affirmative behaviour at workplace which created an optimistic environment influencing employees to perform. They also supported and provided solution orientation suggestions to the challenges faced at workplace to achieve the objectives. They emphasised on developing team member's strengths towards better execution of tasks and also appreciated and rewarded their contributions towards the projects or tasks.

The employees indicated that they experiencing strength-based approach @ 76% i.e. appreciate team member's strengths, focus on their development and match competence as per tasks. The supervisors exhibited support and encouragement at workplace by developing individual strengths. That is "appreciating employees' strengths, matching talents to tasks, and focusing on strengths more than weaknesses". Around 37% expressed that their immediate supervisors provided positive

feedback and support to learn and develop for improving the competency. Around 29% expressed there was opportunity towards learning in terms of training programs, workshops and webinars. Apart from technical support and mentoring by supervisors.10% felt, they were given similar task based on their strengths to excel in their assignment. However, 30% felt there was no effort from their supervisors to develop their strengths.

The open end question asked respondent if the supervisor supported by appreciating individual competence, provided assignments as per their strengths and paid less attention towards their weakness. Encouragement of supervisors through (a) mentoring and coaching, (b) training programs, (c) provide similar task as per strength were experienced under strength based approach.

Sample positive responses were:

> R6: supervisor provides work based on my skills, which creates confidence in me to perform.
> R667: uses my strength in situations I would not have thought of. Makes me realise my potential.
> R858: she identifies the gap in my performance and encourages me to fix the gap and improve the strength.

Sample negative or neutral responses were:

> R26. does not develop our strength, just interested in getting the work done.
> R510: not really. By providing opportunities and forcing you to build your strength on your own.
> R579: we have good training support system and career development programs. Supervisors shares information and does not support much in our development.

Employees experienced appreciation and recognition @ 86.5% i.e. frequent encouragement, appreciation and rewards for team-member's accomplishments. Among the employees who share their perspectives, 64.2% say that there is some kind of appreciation and recognition at workplace. At least once in a way or sometimes they are acknowledged for their contribution. Around 13.6% say they experience frequent, regular or monthly recognition and 8.2% say once in a quarter or during their appraisal (half-yearly or annual) they are recognised. In contrast, 23.5% did not experience the support of immediate supervisors in their development, among them 13% felt there was no support or guidance and 14% felt there was lack of recognition and encouragement. The open ended question elicited experiences if employees experienced recognition and acknowledgement for their contribution by their immediate supervisors.

Sample positive responses were:

> R180: he sends out a mail to the team recognising and appreciating the accomplishment or shares it in the team meeting. It is almost instantaneous...
> R302: regularly, through mails appreciating the good work, rewards with smileys, recommend for reward and recognition.
> R525: quite often, recognises our performance. Both formally and informally.
> R976: every quarterly, appreciates during team meetings and nominates for rewards.

Sample negative or neutral responses were:

> R91: at our level, we do not expect these, as we need to be self-motivated and accountable.

R633: really every senior has to encourage and recognise for juniors and has to motivate the people to achieve the committed targets.
R866: no recognition or encouragement for any amount of hard work and accomplishment done.

Employees experienced immediate supervisor's positive perspective @ 87% i.e. de-catastrophizing stumbling block, emotive coping, solution orientation, and positive elucidation of issues. Around 61% of the employees expressed they receive good support and guidance whenever they need assistance. They support them by sharing their experience to solve the issue or they themselves do it. Around 19% says that their supervisors dive deep to understand the root cause, make them understand the issue and provide solutions. Around 7% say that their supervisors assign another resource for technical support when required. Around 13% expressed that their immediate supervisor's never demonstrated positive perspective, which indicates there was no support or guidance in their assignments even if they required completing the tasks. The open ended question asked if the immediate supervisor was very supportive, addressed their project issues and were empathetic towards them.

Sample positive responses were:

R2: take up the issue from where it could not be resolved at my end.
R266: gives a patient hearing to the issues faced, understand the issues and suggest measure to overcome the problem.
R302: corrective action by analysing the problem and helping us to understand the issue. Make us re-do the work based on his inputs. Suggests alternatives and also solves the problem.
R565: guide me on what i can do better and what is important for delivery.

Sample negative or neutral responses were:

R653: no support, it's a daily routine, so need to manage on own.
R866: fault finding/identify a scape goat in the project.

These responses of all the three dimensions of positive leadership describe the software professional's emotions or perceptions about their positive leadership experiences at the workplace. This provided an understanding about the importance of how virtuous behaviour is vital at workplace and these behaviours are the basic qualities that enhance the well-being and happiness of employees. When leaders understand and recognise the importance of practicing virtuous behaviour at workplace it will lead to positive organisational outcomes.

13. Discussion

The fundamental characteristics that stand out among positive leaders are their heliotropic effect across situations, and authenticity to serve both in the group and out-group members, share power as well empower members to experience growth and development by striving towards wholeness and integration of goals. The study significantly indicates that employees do experience affirmative and virtuous behaviour at the workplace, demonstrated by their immediate supervisor which influences them towards positive performance or outcomes. The leader's positive practices enhanced the team members rendezvous and well-being due to the positive leadership approaches. The supervisors exhibited positive deviance at

workplace via (i) respect individuals and acknowledge them as the first customer at the workplace, (ii) shape optimism, formulate positive strategy and introduce positive organisational design, (iii) engage employees and deliver better results through trust and empowerment, (iv) not only focus on hard behaviours, but unleash the softer behaviour to experience independence and autonomy in a true sense of employees. The leaders need to cultivate and manage a combination of technical, business and people management skills to manage projects and teams effectively in ITO. When they exhibit affirmative behaviour, it creates an environment trust and empowerment at work place. These factors support them to manage challenges better, and ensure holistic employee engagement, resulting thereby in enhanced stakeholder management. Importantly, they play the role of a facilitator, a coach and a mentor, an observer and supervisor. By and large, they look to develop competences that are essential for developing via providing positive perspective and recognising the accomplishments.

Positive leaders have a clear sense of resolution towards achieving the organisational objectives and to develop employee's competencies aligned with the organisational objectives. They allow employees to participate and work on the strengths or competencies to perform well. Due to which they set clear expectation and direction for team members to achieve. Among the positive leadership sub-dimensions, immediate supervisor's positive perspective had the highest traction. This could be due to leaders playing an (i) significant role in managing uncertainty of change and (ii) controlling the perceptions and implementation of strategies that reduce the stumbling blocks, and looks at the pitfalls as an opportunity for growth and development. The leaders with positive perspective demonstrate resilience in terms of developing employee's character and gravity of their capabilities by sharing their experiences and perspective in handling the challenging situation or assignments at workplace. The ability to be authentic, trust their team and analysis the issue either by providing solutions or recommending alternative measures are appreciated. They not only inspire and influence the teams but build organisational capability via team building and manage change to perform and deliver under pressure. At the same time through strength based approach enhance the performance of the team towards organisational objectives. They encourage and recognise team members which motivate them to work more cohesively, share statistical data or information and also engage with one another towards achieve the set objectives and have positive solutions towards problems encountered. Positive leaders are resilient and therefore do better in challenging situations and also reinforce preferred performance from employees. They exhibit that via recognising the employees for their contribution influences others to perform better and build a positive image of the organisational practices. These factors recognise the leader's affirmative behaviour, winning attitude and momentum and sustainability to deliver against all odds.

14. Theoretical implications and future research

The study supports the theoretical models of broaden-and-build theory, contingency theory and put forward that characteristics demonstrated by positive leadership based on the application of positive behavioural principles emerging from disciplines such as positive psychology [3] and positive organisational psychology [4] and positive change [5], where leader's positive approach and virtuous behaviour enhances empowerment, trust, engagement and flourishing. Further studies can look at the impact of trust, psychological capital directly and indirectly on employee's happiness and productivity via positive leadership. Another area to

explore is efficacy of constructive feedback through leaders and supervisor-team member relationship [17] can be investigated empirically to state whether positive leadership adds to the literature with reference to the relationship at workplace. The motivational theories that explore delegation of responsibilities call for more trust in workplace can be furthered investigated to understand how they lead to positive outcomes and enhance the team member's competencies to perform more effectively [18]. The study also aids forthcoming researchers to investigate other possible positive leadership variables among employees in the IT organisations. Longitudinal empirical studies to support a robust association among positive leadership variable using new empirical models, such as authentic leadership, servant leadership, ethical and transformational leadership can be explored. Study positive leadership behaviour only among women employees to understand 'gender-balanced and inclusive leadership' to attract, retain and develop talented women workforce for leadership roles in the IT Organisations.

15. Practical implication

Organisational leaders directly impact both organisation and its people. So it's important for leaders to practice positive deviant performance, so employees can accept change and work towards the set objectives. The research indicates that application of positive leadership does create a difference in terms of out-put efficiency, employee-satisfaction, and well-being at workplace [6]. When organisations practice and encourage virtuous behaviour, positive emotions and self-determination at workplace, it leads to flourishing environment.
The following practiced must be encouraged at workplace for better outcomes

- Creating positive climate through 'positive' communication, relationship and meaning towards optimistic social exchanges for better performances

- Develop authentic relationships, virtues, and acknowledging contribution of every individuals

- Promote empowerment, teamwork and collaboration having positive perspectives

- Strengthen employees' competencies to perform, and achieve mastery in their domain through mentoring and coaching

- Practice frequent recognition and appreciation to engage better towards well-being

16. Limitations

The present investigation contributes to positive leadership and its behavioural consequences of software professionals the study included only software professionals restricting its generalizability. The self-report technique brings about the respondents' emotional state, attitudes, and views and opinions at one point in time and hence it suffers from common method bias. Though the researcher used a globally proven scale, to measure the relationship and employee experience on the constructs. It was not treated to find out if it was culture free and culture fair.

17. Conclusion

Positive leaders do not merely create positive emotions at workplace but enhance organisational performance. This study increases the understanding of positive leadership and its sub-dimensions, vis a vis how it influences employees and positive outcomes in organisations. What differentiates positive leaders from the rest is the positive deviance and the approach adopted strategies for "extraordinary performance by creating positive climate, building relationship, communication and meaning" [6]. They explore for opportunities to capitalise in employees who work with them towards increasing the positive emotions of both. "Positive Psychology" is not about feel-good activity or false synchronisation. Leaders have a disproportionate influence on workplace positivity. So it's important to be positive and to spread optimism in their workplace. As negative temperaments need to be bottled-up, due to their "infectious" nature as leader's positive approach creates an aura towards positive outcomes. Employees acquire through positivity by placing their stumbling block and botches in circumstance as chances to build "resilience" and practice modus operandi for cultivating one's positivity. Positive leadership brings "positivity" a business concept than can get-up-and-go after engagement and output-efficiency. They build a positive workforce, align employees 'character, role and accountability as per their strength and strengthen positivity by frequent recognition for their hard contributions. As organisational leaders, engage employees for their optimism, cultural fit and reasoning for better performance. Skills, experience and knowledge are secondary. Positive leader's increases positive emotions within their organisation and team spirit. They choose this style for improving morale and performance by enhancing job satisfaction and higher level of engagement. Further, it provides inputs to design employee growth, development and retention strategies in Indian ITOs. Positive organisational leaders influence and mentorship would reduce internal competition for mutual benefit (i.e. both for the employee & the employer), while enhancing the spirit of support, collaboration and teamwork, which would go a long way in creating a holistic and positive work environment.

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