

Paternal Leadership on Employee Retention during COVID-19

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The leadership style that is most appropriate for the given circumstance will determine whether or not a leader is successful. It means what great leaders should do while working with a diverse workforce. They should be emotionally intelligent in order to understand their team members and modify their leadership style in order to achieve the best out of them. Employee engagement in the workplace is crucial for firms, but different factors can keep employees motivated. Work engagement activities, particularly those supported by the human resource department, have typically been observed as the primary factors that motivate employees. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a number of adjustments.

Keywords: employee retention ; financial objectives ; paternal leadership ; pandemic

1. Introduction

One of the most significant and successful solutions to the opportunities and concerns brought by the global context is leadership ([Dagiene et al. 2022](#)). The economic structure, independent public institutions, political stability, long-term constructive welfare programs for the public, entrepreneurial initiative support mechanisms, technical education, continuous research and development, and government support are key reasons for choosing a leadership style while commencing business initiatives in any country ([Fatimah and Syahrani 2022](#)).

[Islam et al. \(2020\)](#) identified that paternal leadership has the capacity to motivate, inspire, and demand high performance from others based on the deeply held core values of firms. The six leadership subscales listed below are generally equivalent to the attributes or styles of paternal leadership: visionary, inspirational, self-sacrificing, honest, decisive, and performance-oriented ([Islam et al. 2022](#)). In contrast to transactional leadership, this set of leadership practices is most strongly associated with paternal leadership theory. Paternal leaders' charismas are different from transactional leaders' charismas in several ways ([Ahmad et al. 2021](#)).

Paternal leadership requires compassion and kindness in addition to being helpful and sensitive ([Chaudhary et al. 2021](#)). It has two subscales for leadership: humility and humanitarian orientation ([Islam et al. 2019](#)). In particular, the moral or ethical school of leadership theory informs paternal leadership. Although it has been argued for thousands of years, leadership ethics only became a distinct academic field of applied ethics in the 1990s ([Maqsoom et al. 2022](#)). Most of the study that has already been under taken on paternalistic leadership has focused more on its benefits, including increased team cohesion, job happiness, organizational commitment, and success in both roles and outside of them. The negative aspects of paternalistic leadership, however, have managed to remain hidden ([Stein 2022](#)). The paternalistic leadership found in Turkish culture as well as any potential drawbacks, including perceived job discrimination and nepotism has been highlighted ([Boothe and Watson 2022](#)). Because it is believed that the authoritarian nature of paternalistic leadership will induce the leader to discriminate against his followers, this study focuses on the connection between paternalistic leadership and employee discrimination and nepotism ([Xu et al. 2022](#)). Those who do not comply with the leader's authority and requests will be handled differently because of the leader's ultimate control and authority over his subordinates and the expectation of unquestioning adherence from them ([Boothe and Watson 2022](#)). Employee disobedience may merely cause the boss to treat the subordinates differently. Second, nepotism—the practice of doing extra favors for family members—is common in family-owned businesses ([Lok et al. 2022](#)). That makes sense in part because families work to ensure company continuity among generations in order to ensure the expansion of their inheritance. Paternalistic leadership styles are also quite prevalent in family-owned businesses ([Michael-Tsabari et al. 2022](#)). The leader, who is typically a family member, maintains total control over all decisions and has little regard for anyone else. This association suggests that nepotism and paternalistic leadership are related ([Colovic 2022](#)).

A considerable proportion of research has been undertaken by social exchange theorists in support of the idea that an organization's commitment to its employees may be measured (Elmes 2022). The level of dedication that employees exhibit to the company, in turn, will directly depend on the organization. Consider the connection between the employer and employee as one of a fair transaction (Ndidi et al. 2022), with the way in which an employer treats employees having a direct impact on their performance, attitude, and commitment to the organization (Nishii and Leroy 2022). This is a valuable framework for analyzing commitment behaviors (Wang et al. 2022).

Employee attitudes and behaviors, including performance, mirror their expectations and impressions of the organization's treatment of them (Ćwikła et al. 2022). Human resource practices are shown to be significantly correlated with employee perceptions and attitudes in their multilevel model relating to human resource practices and employee reactions (Basu 2022). Employee attitudes, and more specifically, employee commitments, were linked to the interaction of human resource practices and perceptions, according to expert studies (Zaid and Jaaron forthcoming). High-involvement work practices may improve employee retention, according to researchers. However, the majority of analyses of commitment and retention come from the perspective of the employer; as a result, new and improved initiatives are consistently presented (Aybas et al. 2022). Investments in high-involvement work practices may thus promote a pleasant work climate that may result in decreased turnover (Mulugeta 2022). These programs are intended to have a favorable influence on employee retention and commitment. Organizations have prioritized reducing unneeded and undesirable employee turnover by implementing HR procedures and regulations (Mondejar and Asio 2022).

Any organization's HR function is incredibly important for employee retention. Workplace policy and procedure improvements, internal promotion opportunities, employee training, and bonus payments are a few examples of strategies for retaining employees (Almaw 2022). During a restructuring, the HR department is in charge of conducting, recommending, and putting into practice employee retention measures (Yussif 2022). Work is crucial to a person's quality of life and is closely tied to it. Extending the concept of work beyond the limitations of the office, overall life happiness has been linked to job satisfaction (Yussif 2022). As a result, employment is more than just a means of subsistence for people; it also helps them discover "purpose, stability, and a feeling of community and identity" (Neumüller 2022). Furthermore, firms must quickly adapt to a dynamic environment and allow their employees to thrive in the workplace if they are to maintain competition and success (Akkaya et al. 2022). Many studies have shown how important both work-related and non-work-related help, such as family and social support, is in making people more committed to and good at their jobs (Piehl 2022).

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the world is currently experiencing an unparalleled crisis. In the middle of the spring semester of 2020 (Xiong et al. 2021), faculty members in educational organizations—particularly higher education institutions—abandoned face-to-face instruction and quickly transitioned to online learning (McLean and Warren 2022). Teachers had to balance the demands of their students with their own personal safety, maintain connections, and ensure quality while, for some, concurrently caring for loved ones and keeping an eye on their own children's development in their online education. One of the many key uncertain and immediate challenges brought on by the pandemic that has impacted educational institutions, students, programs, instructors, staff, and those who lead these organizations is the shift to digital learning. Higher education institutions' leadership structures swiftly changed, with senior executives originally charged with making quick decisions while prioritizing the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff.

Any institutional crisis is defined by its triggering events, but the reputation and status of an institution are frequently more influenced by societal construction and opinions about how they are handled. Because the faculty is regarded as the foundation of the education sector, the study is focused on educational institutions, particularly the faculties of private sector educational institutions. The faculty efforts are primarily on an intellectual level, concentrating on the future of the country. A faculty would need to help students understand the importance of cultivating curiosity, imagination, resilience, and self-control; they would also need to help students understand the importance of respecting and appreciating the ideas, perspectives, and values of others; dealing with rejection and failure; and moving forward in the face of adversity.

In the critical pandemic period, the educational institution's faculty members put these previously indicated skills into practice. When they noticed for themselves the shifting demands and priorities of educational authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak, they too rapidly changed from being traditional teachers to e-instructors. This marked a turning moment where the world began to discern between actual leadership and coated leadership after the so-called leadership was exposed to the financial community. A pivotal moment that will be reflected in how many firms handle this crisis will be remembered for decades. Some educational institutions talk about having a social mission and set of values or about how much they appreciate their staff and other stakeholders, yet some firms continue to make money even when they have not lost a penny and do not anticipate doing so in the future. According to research, individuals only genuinely think that

their company has a mission and guiding principles when they witness management choosing to place those principles higher than immediate financial success. The researcher is aware that executives were under pressure from investors and bankers to save money and lessen the likelihood of a loss, but neither the investors nor the bankers were willing to go hungry. It is important not only because it is the right thing to do as a business but also because it will cut down on the costs of rehiring staff, the difficulty of finding dedicated faculty members, and the loss of goodwill when the institute returns to normal operations.

2. Linking Personality Traits of Paternal Leader with Work Engagement Activities

Paternalism is typically understood to be a leadership approach that blends authoritarianism and fatherly generosity. Personalized regard and care are displayed by paternalistic leaders, who also exercise control and centralize decision-making. Paternalistic leaders satisfy the “dual criteria” of harmony and compliance so that the coexistence of benevolence and authority comes from the father figure, who is authoritative, demanding, and disciplinarian, as well as nurturing, loving, and dependable. In the workplace, leaders are a crucial component of the immediate social network on which followers rely to make decisions. This could help to explain why strong leaders are renowned for exciting their teams, intimately understanding their needs, and inspiring them to work hard toward a common objective. Superior communication abilities enable a leader to persuade followers to support them and stick with the group. On the other side, a leader can demonstrate their influence by using their vast knowledge. Subordinates admire leaders when they demonstrate their competence because they can see that they are knowledgeable about what they are doing, which encourages them to work for the company for an extended period of time ([Chen et al. 2014](#); [Nazir et al. 2020](#)).

3. The Influencing Trait and Work Engagement

Focusing on both of these domains of influence and work involvement is crucial. Influential communicators pay attention to both their body language and the words they employ. The leader needs to start speaking in an expressive manner and adopt a firmer tone. An effective leader does not mumble or appear uncertain, which helps their team members comprehend the long-term goals and the reason they should stick with the company. Along with strengthening their ability to influence others through communication, leaders may also strengthen their capacity to influence others through knowledge while aligning them with the organization’s destiny ([Liu et al. 2020](#)). Hence, the following hypothesis is postulated.

4. The Empowerment Trait and Work Engagement

Gaining the most from subordinates through well-chosen and planned work engagement activities is the goal of paternalistic leadership ([Gong et al. 2020](#)). Similar to how a parent would want their children to succeed through those work engagement activities that help them succeed in the assigned task, the leader wants them to flourish and grow. Through their matching engagement activities, employees’ empowerment is achieved. People are engaged in accordance with their potential and capacity according to the vision and qualities of a parental leader. The micromanagement of work engagement activities must be carefully balanced with total autonomy ([Rafiq et al. 2021](#)). While work engagement activities do not provide employees with significant authority in terms of making decisions and establishing processes, the leader’s role also does not include undermining or challenging the employees’ actions.

5. The Compassionate Trait and Work Engagement

A leader must have empathy for their followers in order to inspire loyalty. If a leader does not have empathy and compassion by understanding people and allocating the work according to their interests and potential, they will not be able to relate to what their subordinates are going through. Paternalistic leadership is about making employees feel comfortable and valued through well-managed work engagement activities.

According to scientific studies, compassion is something that can be learned ([De Stasio et al. 2019](#)). The Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin–Madison showed that active compassion meditation encouraged higher altruistic behavior in the participants.

6. The Decisive Trait and Work Engagement

Decision-making is concentrated in the hands of the leader under paternalistic leadership. The capacity to make wise judgments through carefully planned engagement activities not only calls for knowledge and skill but also for

decisiveness. It may seem simple to be able to act quickly and accept the consequences, but any leader will tell you that it is not that simple. The proverb “With great power comes tremendous responsibility” sums up the challenges of being a leader perfectly. Even though a leader may believe they are ready to make those tough decisions, indecision can readily set in when faced with two bad or two good options ([Christian et al. 2011](#)).

| 7. The Organized Trait and Work Engagement

A paternalistic leader also needs to be well-organized. Given that the decisions, processes, and objectives demand the leaders' full attention, it's critical that he or she be able to manage the many threads through thoughtfully created work engagement activities. Maintaining control over the business of the corporation by paying attention to work engagement activities will aid in building trust with the subordinates ([Handa and Gulati 2014](#)).

8. The Influencing Trait and Employee Retention

It is crucial for a leader to have influence over others. Leadership has advantages for both people and businesses, and in particular, paternal leadership has both direct and indirect effects on staff retention. A paternal leader boosts employees' productivity by attaining corporate objectives and putting in place a compensation plan to keep them on board. Paternalism lowers the likelihood of staff turnover and boosts retention ([Sheridan 1992](#)).

| 8. The Empowering Trait and Employee Retention

Focus on a few key elements in your work engagement activities if you want to improve your ability to empower others. Create a space where people can express themselves honestly and receive feedback. Encourage subordinates to seek self-improvement by offering rewards ([Varekamp et al. 2006](#)). By improving checks and balances and exploiting potential failures as learning opportunities, risks and failure can be reduced. Share information with your subordinates rather than keeping it all to yourself.

| 9. The Compassionate Trait and Employee Retention

In order to be better able to understand the feelings of their employees and build more trust with them, leaders can incorporate compassion meditation into their daily routines. Meditation on compassion is not difficult to accomplish ([Potter 1969](#)).

| 10. The Decisive Trait and Employee Retention

Paternalistic leadership places the majority of the decision-making in the hands of the leader. Although it is not simple, the path to greater decisiveness demands perseverance. Leaders must have specific objectives for everything they do. Leaders can make wise decisions if they are aware of what they really want to accomplish ([Potter 1969](#)).

| 11. The Organized Trait and Employee Retention

A paternalistic leader also needs to have strong organizational skills. Instead of focusing on the big picture, which is obviously important, attempt to divide duties, objectives, and processes into more manageable chunks. One of the leadership philosophies that demand a lot from leaders is paternalistic leadership. A leader who can implement this management style effectively must exhibit traits such as influence, the capacity to encourage others, compassion, decisiveness, and strong organizational abilities ([Cloutier et al. 2015](#); [Potter 1969](#)).

| 12. Relationship among Paternal Leader Traits, Virtual Human Resource Practices and Work Engagement Activities

HR should take the lead in the creation, assessment, and evaluation of proactive workplace policies and practices that assist in recruitment and retaining individuals with the skills and competencies required for growth and sustainability in order to build a culture of engagement. The HRM system is a crucial organizational factor that managers and staff use to communicate the organization's values, objectives, and policies. Examples of HR practices that clearly demonstrate how high performance is defined and the rewards that are associated with meeting pertinent goals or targets include thorough training programs, performance-based reward systems, and promotion criteria. The relationships between line management and employees should also include HRM ([Wood et al. 2020](#)). This is corroborated by data that show a positive relationship between HR systems with consistent HR practices and organizational success. Paternal leader studies highlight the significance of the role supervisors play in influencing workers' work attitudes and performance, and

HR should take the lead in the creation, measurement, and evaluation of proactive workplace policies. Low-quality exchange relationships are characterized by strictly contractual exchanges and one-way, downward influence, whereas high-quality exchange relationships feature respect and mutual influence between supervisors and employees ([Wilton 2022](#)).

13. Relationship between Work Engagement Activities and Employee Retention

HR should take the lead in the design, assessment, and evaluation of proactive workplace policies and practices in order to promote a culture of participation. The desire of employees to leave their jobs was negatively impacted by work engagement, according to the most recent expert studies. This finding revealed why people who are very involved in their work are less likely to leave the company, increasing their retention rate inside the company. Employees who are highly engaged display high levels of vigor, enthusiasm, pride in their work, involvement, and focus while performing their duties. Additionally, they would be more content and enthusiastic about their work, which might encourage them to keep working ([Al-Hajri 2020](#)).

14. Relationship among Paternal Leader Traits, Work Engagement Activities and Employee Retention

There is plenty of work on staff retention that focuses on how crucial it is for all kinds of businesses. Employee retention through compensation plans is cheaper than the expense of losing workers. Leadership benefits both employees and companies equally, and in particular, a paternal leader has a direct and indirect impact on retaining employees. A paternal leader boosts employees' productivity by attaining the company's goals and putting in place a compensation plan to keep them on board. Paternal leadership lowers turnover intention and improves staff retention ([Lee et al. 2019](#)).

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