

All in the Mind: The Leadership Factor 2022



Table of Contents

| |
|--|
| 1. Foreword.....01 |
| 2. About Gi Group Holding.....03 |
| 3. Executive Summary.....04 |
| 4. Leaders' Responsibility Towards Employee Mental Health: Exploring the Link.....09 |
| 5. Impact of Leadership Factors And Aspects on Employee Mental Health.....15 |
| 6. Leadership Traits Influencing Employee Wellness.....19 |
| 7. Organizational Support for Leaders in Ensuring Employee Mental Health.....23 |
| 8. Leaders' Role in Managing Workplace Factors.....26 |
| 9. How a Leader's Own Mental Health Affects Employee Mental Health?.....30 |
| 10. The Pandemic After-effect.....35 |
| 11. Key takeaways.....38 |
| 12. Annexure.....40 |



Foreword

At Gi Group Holding, we are committed to contributing to the evolution of the Labour Market and changing people's lives for the better. Work has the power to generate immense personal and social value. However an ecosystem for Sustainable Work and inclusive working conditions for all is critical for ensuring that all sections of society have equal and unrestricted access to work. This ecosystem must focus on employee well-being as well.

Over the last few years, mental health issues have emerged as one of the leading causes of health burden across the world, and India is no exception. This growing challenge is further exacerbated by a lack of information, awareness, and understanding of the subject. Our research initiatives on mental health across corporate India therefore aim to encourage a much-needed discourse on this subject. Our 2021 report on the state of mental health in corporate India shed light on a substantial disconnect between employer and employee perceptions related to the causes and influences of mental health. Therefore, in the current edition of the report, we chose to pick up this thread and explore the impact leaders have on employee mental health.

Should organizations hold leaders accountable for employee mental well-being? Are they sufficiently equipping leaders with the knowledge and support mechanisms related to mental wellness? How much control do leaders have over workplace factors affecting employee mental wellness? Which leadership traits foster better mental health and which traits do not? Should leaders be considered mental health role models? These are some of the questions we delve into in our research.

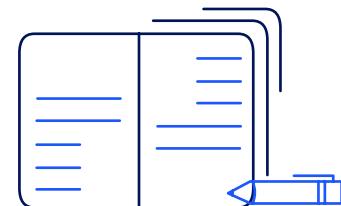


Corporate leaders wield enormous influence over the people working in their organizations. Mental health awareness, coupled with appropriate resources, can transform corporate leaders into caring and nurturing visionaries people would love to work with. In a world increasingly subjected to cataclysmic events, this attribute is a key differentiator that sets both leaders and organizations apart.

While our approach is steadfastly data-oriented, we mesh data and expert opinion to achieve a blend of insights that is truly insightful and actionable. Leader and employee perceptions, captured via a large-scale survey, accompanied by expertise from mental health experts and corporate leaders, help us tell a story of the times we now live in. Committed to corporate ethics, the Gi Group believes in forging new pathways for better lives and livelihoods for the nation's people.

The analytical insights and expert opinions we pack together in the report can serve as a guiding light for corporate policymaking. They can help lay the building blocks of mental health knowledge and awareness for corporate India. Your thoughts on this subject and the many data points that this report carries are invaluable to us in advancing our efforts in advocating healthier workplaces.

**Sonal Arora,
Country Manager,
Gi Group Holding, India**



About Gi Group Holding

About us:

We are among the world's leading companies providing services for the evolution of the Labour Market, by creating sustainable social and economic value, building an enjoyable work environment and changing people's lives.

We Are
More than Work.

We take the concept of work further. With our ecosystem of HR Solutions and Staffing at its core, we foster a more sustainable and enjoyable Labour Market, while making a positive, life-changing impact on our Employees, Labour Market, Companies and Society..



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Mental health is an important part of the influence leaders have over employees. Employees have begun to hold leaders responsible to a great extent for their mental wellness.

- Slightly more than three in four employees surveyed (77%) hold their leaders responsible –greatly to nearly entirely –for ensuring employee mental wellbeing.
- More than two out of five leaders (43%) concur with the employee opinion and believe that they are greatly to entirely responsible for employee mental wellbeing.

Both employees and leaders recognize the strong linkage between workplace psychological safety and mental wellness, and both agree on the top factors of this linkage at play.

- An overwhelming majority of employees (93%) and leaders (73%) consider workplace psychological safety to have a significant to very significant effect on employee mental wellness.
- Taking accountability (70% of the employees and 54% of the leaders), delegating work effectively (65% employees and 55% leaders), and assuming responsibility (61% employees and 52% leaders) are believed to be the top 3 factors leaders can build on to ensure psychological safety at the workplace.

Leaders delineate the varying effects of leadership factors, and the impact of leadership aspects, on employee mental health.

- A leader's personality and behavior exerts the biggest influence on employee mental health, as per 61% of the leaders surveyed, while 27% believe that this factor is indeed a root cause of the nature of employee mental health. 62% of the leaders surveyed believe that transparency, on part of a leader, catalyzes employee mental wellbeing.
- Both leaders and employees rank personality and behavior, and emotional maturity, as leadership aspects that impact employee mental health the most.

Executive Summary



Leaders are broadly in agreement with employees on leadership traits that positively or negatively impact employee mental health.

- Employees believe that leadership traits of being communicative (81%), confident (69%), and demanding (67%) impact employee mental health positively. Leaders rate confident (90%), decisive (90%), and supportive (83%) as the traits with positive impact*.
- Being rigid (61%), anxious (57%), and aggressive (51%) are leadership traits that impact mental health negatively, employees believe. On the other hand, leaders rate the traits of being rigid (73%), anxious (67%), and impatient (67%) as having a negative impact***.

Employees barely distinguish male and female leaders on a range of personality traits, while gender stereotyping them, to varying degrees, in case of a few other traits.

- Both male and female leaders appear to be rated nearly equally, by employees, on the traits of being Anxious (73%), Empathetic (76%), Decisive (75%), Confident (75%), and Honest and Righteous (74%)**.
- Employees seem to rate male leaders higher than female leaders on the traits of being aggressive (53% versus 29%) and authoritative (42% versus 38%). Female leaders, on the other hand, are rated higher than male leaders on the traits of being approachable (51% versus 21%) and supportive (46% versus 27%)*.

Employees strongly feel leaders need to undergo attitude training while, on the other hand, few leaders get adequate mental health related policy support from their organizations.

- Employees expect leaders to be trained on attitude, empathy & interpersonal skills (rating the importance of such training 4.2 on a scale of 5). And 28% of the leaders surveyed have undergone training, carried out by their organizations, to ensure employee mental health.
- Less than one in seven leaders (13%) receive adequate support related to mental health policy from their organizations.

*top box ratings (4 and 5 on a scale of 5) **middle box ratings (2, 3 and 4 on a scale of 5) ***bottom box ratings (1 and 2 on a scale of 5) accorded to these traits

Executive Summary



What workplace factors impacting employee mental health can leaders control, and to what extent? Employees and leaders agree on some factors and disagree on some others.

- Workload & schedule is a workplace factor that requires planning & optimizing by the leadership, leaders (73%) & employees (65%) agree. And, 77% of the employees and 60% of the leaders believe that employee burnout needs to be prevented.
- Workplace stress is a factor which 73% employees think leaders must act to reduce but only 28% of the leaders agree with.

A bigger proportion of leaders, than employees, puts the onus on leaders to be role models of mental wellbeing.

- Nearly two in three leaders surveyed (64%) believe that leaders must be role models for mental wellbeing, while a significantly lower proportion of employees (36%) believe so.

Covid-19 after-effects herald optimism for more empathetic leadership, although a section of employees experience the contrary.

- One in four leaders (25%) say the pandemic made them rethink interpersonal behavior and change leadership styles so they can moderate the stress levels in their organizations, and nearly half of all employees concur – 32% seeing an incremental change and 16% seeing a substantial change in their leaders' attitude and behavior for the better.
- On the contrary, 33% of the employees say their leaders' attitude and behavior towards them has deteriorated, post-pandemic, and 19% believe there was no change.



Executive Summary

Conclusions

- More leaders need to acknowledge their responsibility in employee mental health, to align with employee expectations.
- Psychological safety is a great place to begin this conversation, since a good majority of both employees and leaders are aware of its significance and agree on the impact of psychological safety factors on employee mental health.
- Organizations need to take the policy initiative to recognize and formalize mental health care. Most leaders are hamstrung without the presence of formal policy support.
- Employee and leader sensibilities seem to match as leadership traits are broadly differentiated as good and bad, by both, in terms of their potential to impact employee mental health.
- Leaders' own mental health impacting employee mental health is a concern that finds common ground between employee and leader perceptions.
- While both leaders and employees mostly agree on the leader's role in controlling workplace factors, small mismatches in the areas of workplace stress and job insecurity need attention from leaders.
- The after-effects of Covid-19 – in terms of leader-employee relationships – paints an overall optimistic picture of leader behavior. However, the concerns of a significant proportion of employees needs to be taken into cognizance.

“
A leader has the power over team members and employees. And, their awareness or their ignorance affects employee mental health.

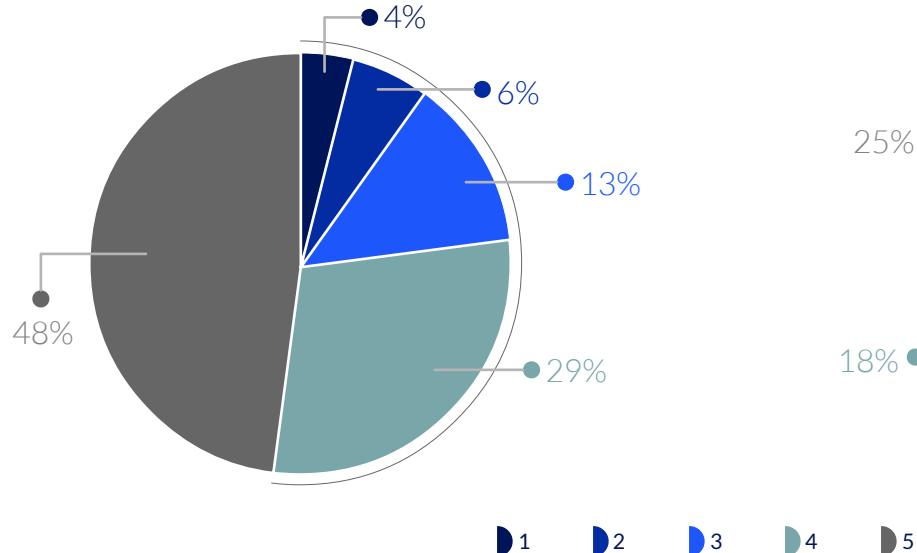
“
Dr. Rashmi Prakash



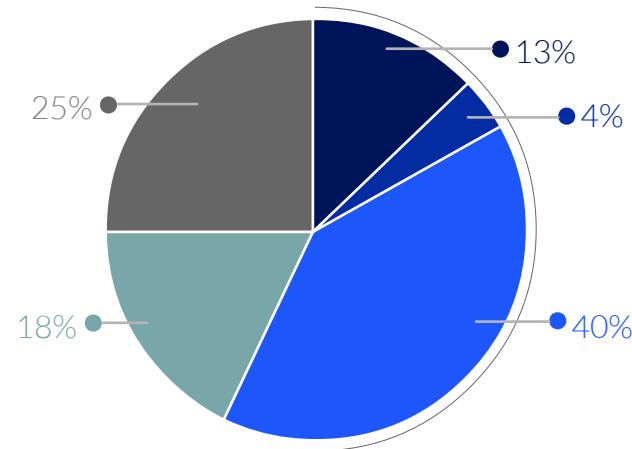
Leaders' Responsibility Towards Employee Mental Health: Exploring the Link

Are Leaders Responsible For Employee Mental Wellness?

Employee perception: Extent to which leaders are responsible for employee mental wellness



Leader perception: Extent to which leaders are responsible for employee mental wellness



What the experts have to say:

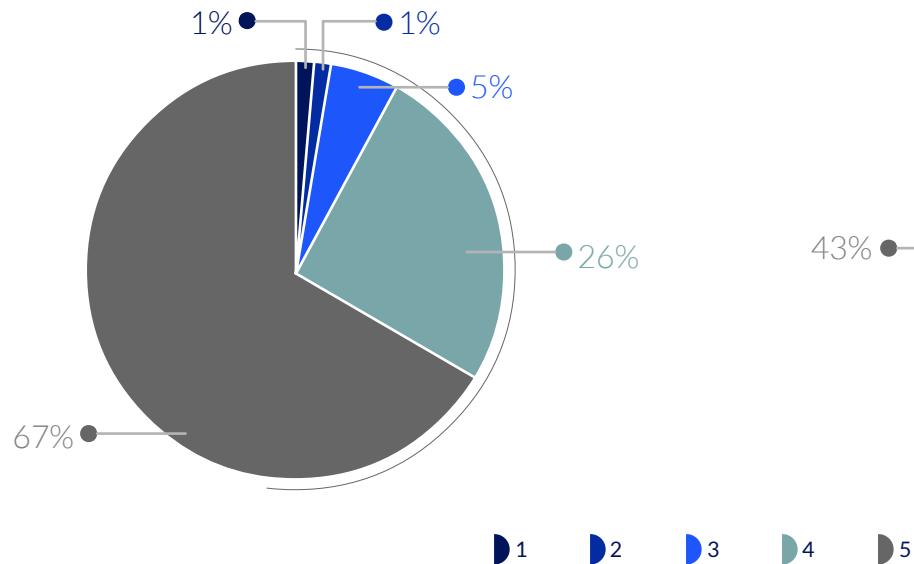
- Leadership is a lot about dependency & reliability.
- Teams look up to leaders to give them guidance, understand them and work towards the common goals.
- Being a leader, understanding mental health is very important



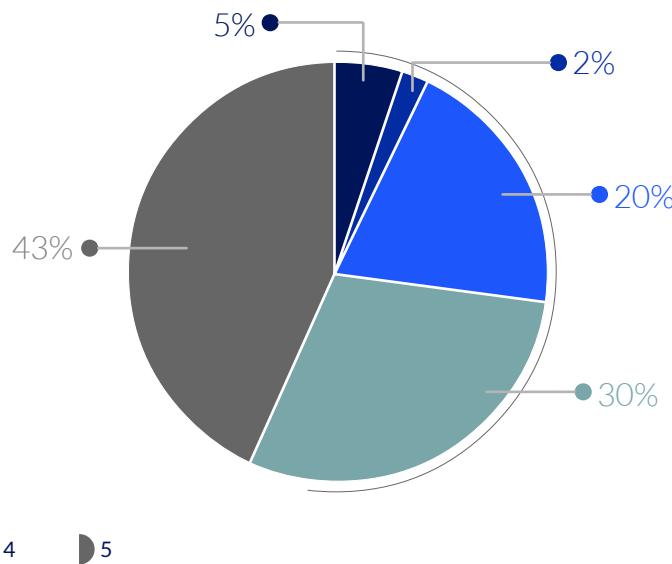
Employees attach high significance to a leader's responsibility of promoting employee mental health. More than three in four employees surveyed (77%) place the onus of fostering and promoting employee mental health on leaders. 43% of all leaders surveyed share this opinion as well.

Psychological Safety and Employee Mental Health

Employee Opinion: Impact of psychological safety on employees mental health

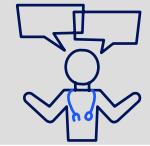


Leader Opinion: Impact of psychological safety on employees mental health



What the experts have to say:

- If a person is really stressed & depressed, they need a lot of support from people around.
- It needs to be a psychologically safe place for them to open up and talk.

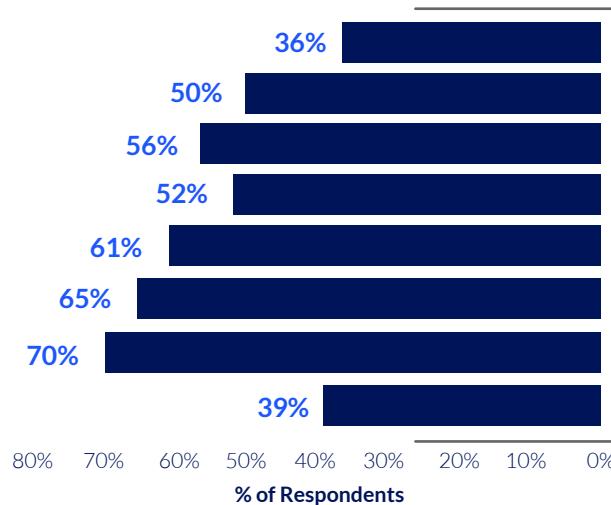


Workplace psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for sharing their ideas, questions, and concerns, or making mistakes. Psychological safety plays a major role in ensuring employee mental health, according to both employees and leaders. An overwhelming proportion of employees (93%) believe that psychological safety impacts employee mental health (to a high or even great extent), a perception shared by a majority of leaders (73%) as well.

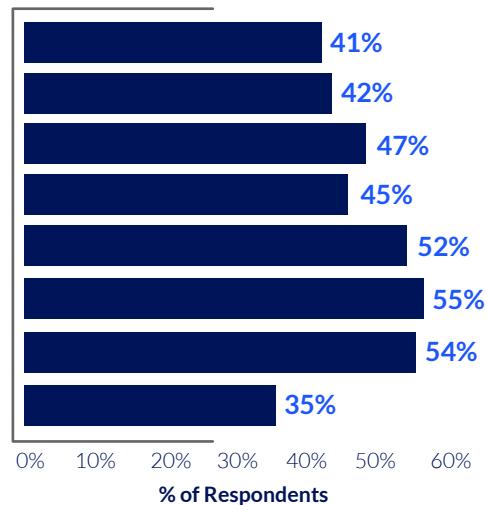
Sources : 1) What is psychological safety and why is it important?, Nov 2019, Bewell Stanford

Factors of Psychological Safety for Leaders to Build on

Employee perspective: Impact of psychological safety factors for ensuring employees mental health



Leader perspective: Impact of psychological safety factors for ensuring employees mental health

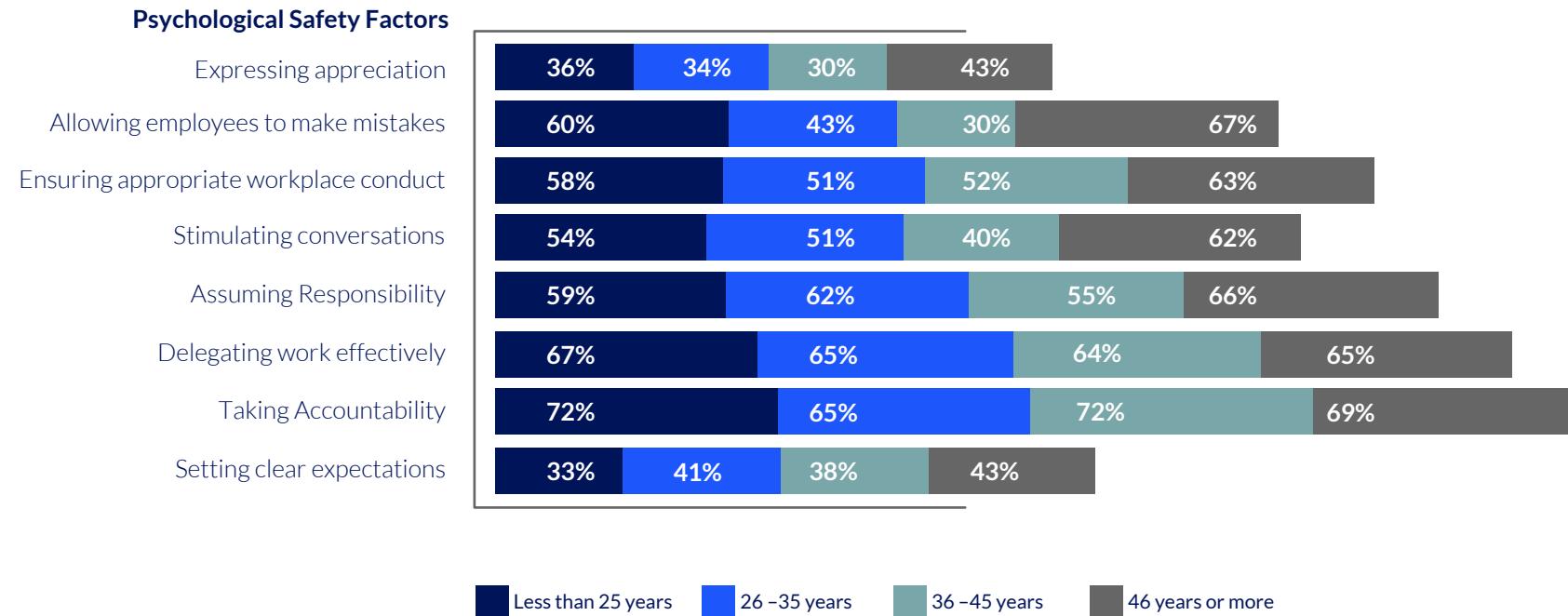


Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

The top workplace psychological safety factors leaders need to build on are – taking accountability (70% employees and 54% leaders), delegating work effectively (65% employees and 55% leaders), and assuming responsibility (61% employees and 52% leaders). Further, three in four employees (74%) believe that psychological safety has a high to a great impact on their mental health.

Factors of Psychological Safety

Employee perception by Age category

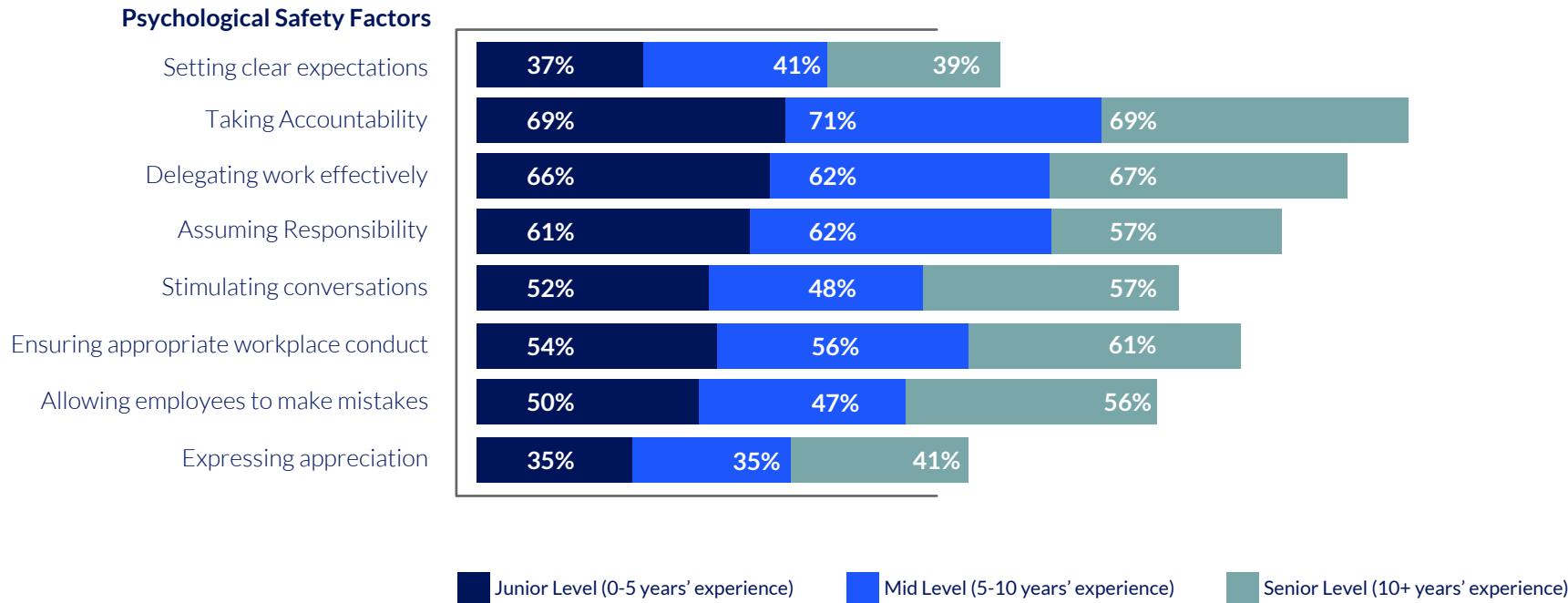


Employees aged either less than 25 years (60%) or over 46 years (67%) share a common perception that employees must be allowed to make mistakes. Interestingly, this opinion is not as strongly shared by employees who fall between these two age groups (30% - 43%). The two age groups also believe that leaders must take accountability (72%; 69%). Those below 25 years cite taking accountability (72%) and delegating work effectively (67%) to be among their top factors contributing to psychological safety.

Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

Factors of Psychological Safety

Employee perception by Seniority Level



Employees at all hierarchical levels consider taking accountability (69% - 71%) and delegating work effectively (62% - 67%) as the top two psychological safety factors leaders can build on to ensure employees' mental health. Significantly, a) 61% of Senior-level employees consider ensuring appropriate workplace conduct as the other top factor and, b) junior and mid-level employees cite assuming responsibility as the other top factor (62% apiece).

Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

Open and honest communication is an important skill of a leader regardless of what situation they are undergoing – either at a personal level or professional level.

Mr. Rahul Mullick

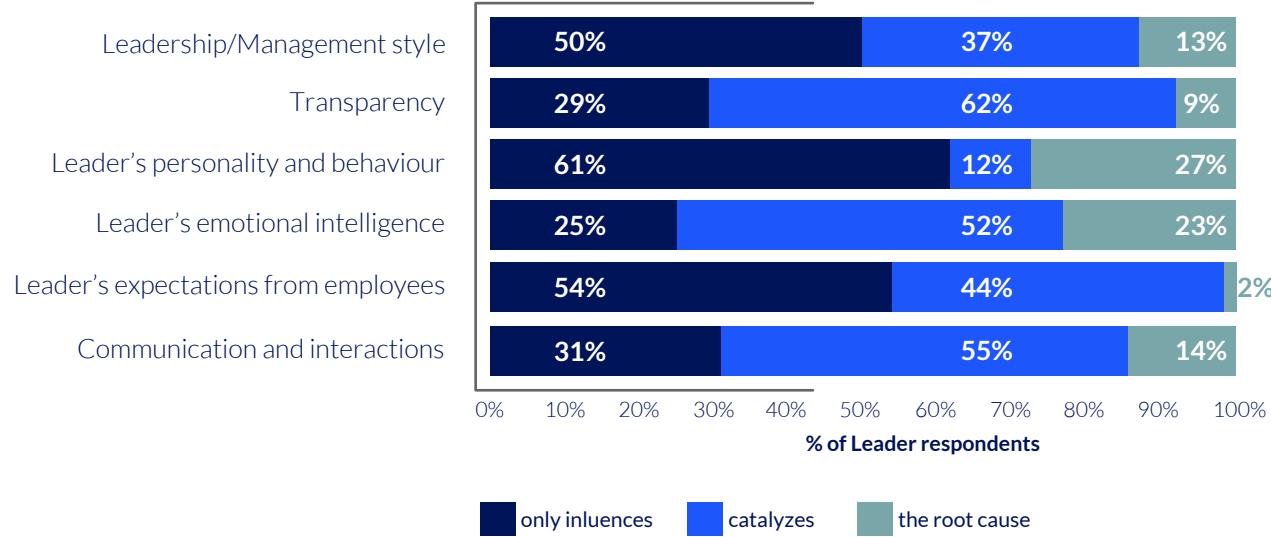


Impact of Leadership Factors And Aspects on Employee Mental Health

Impact of Leadership Factors: Influencers | Catalysts | Root causes

Leaders' rating: Leadership factors & their effect on employee mental health

Leadership factors



What the experts have to say:

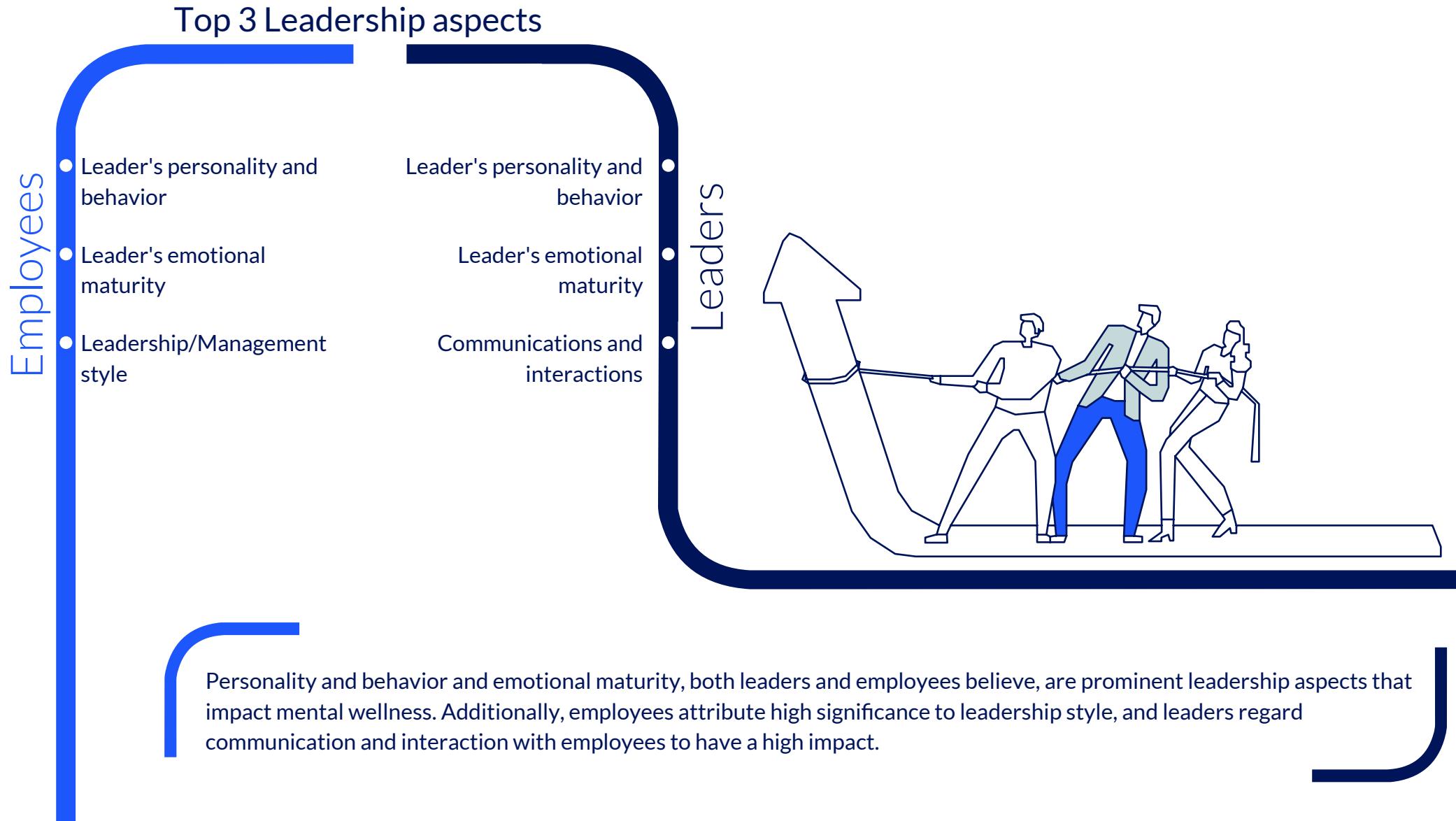
- A leader is someone who is emotionally intelligent.
- One can grow as a technical expert but one has to be emotionally intelligent to have the observational skills of a leader.
- The output of leaders bad EQ has its impact on state of mental wellbeing, productivity and overall health.



Transparency, according to **62%** of the leaders surveyed, catalyzes employee mental health as it boosts overall trust between employees and leaders. Effective communication & interaction (**55%**) between both also serves as a catalyst as it would facilitate a positive relationship and would eventually enhance employee productivity and motivation.

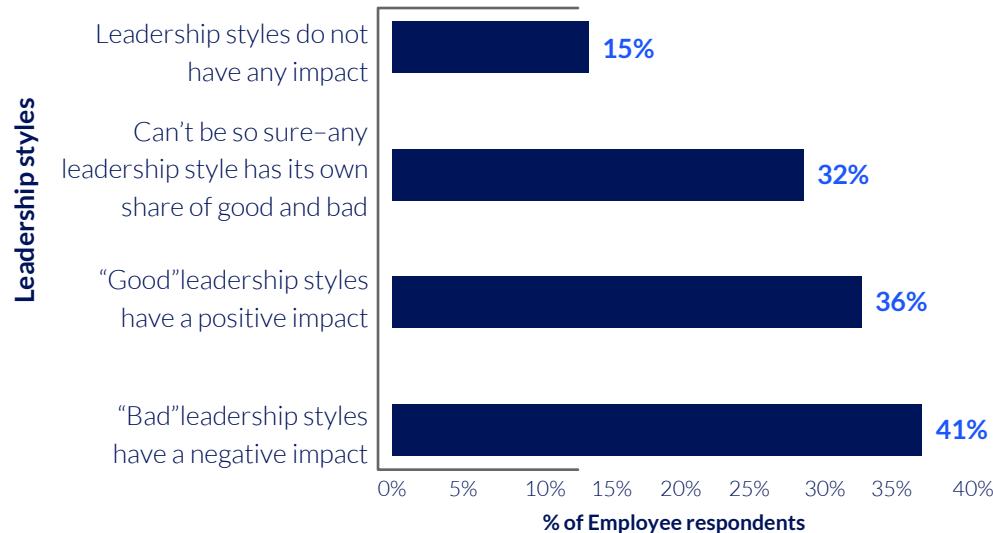
Leaders believe that personality & behaviour (**61%**) influences employee mental health the most, and is followed by their expectations from employees (**54%**). Personality and behaviour is also cited by leaders to be the biggest root cause of the nature of employee mental health (**27%**).

Employee and Leader Perception: Leadership Aspects

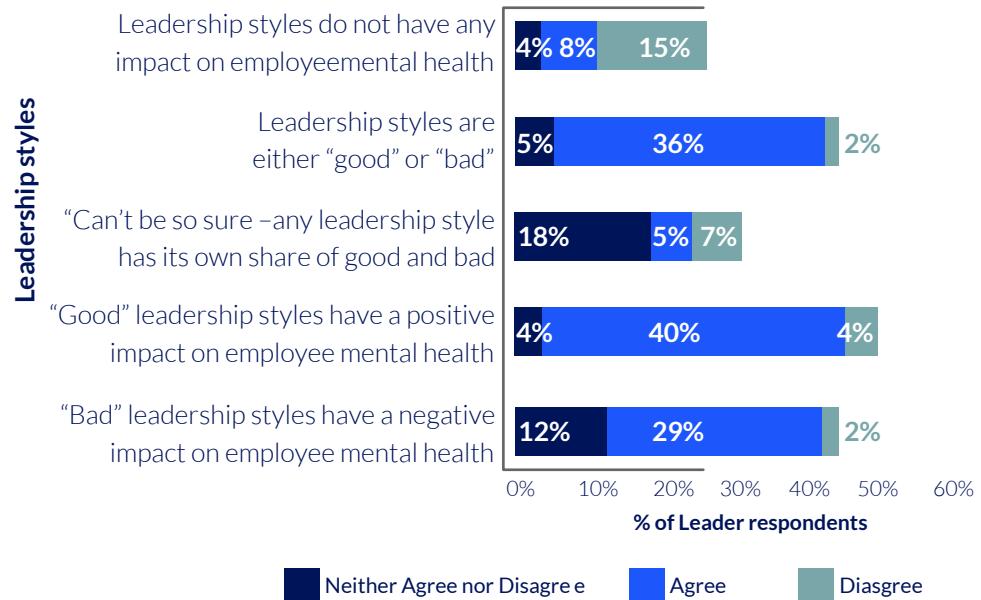


Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Mental Health

Employee opinion: Impact of leadership styles on mental health



Leader opinion: Impact of leadership styles on mental health



Employees and leaders agree on leadership styles either positively or negatively impacting employees' mental health. A significant proportion of leaders (40%) and employees (36%) believe that a good leadership style can positively impact employees' mental health. Conversely, 41% of employees 29% of leaders believe bad leadership styles can negatively impact employees' mental health. On the other hand, a small proportion of employees (15%) and an even smaller proportion of leaders (8%) believe leadership styles do not have an impact on employee mental health. More leaders than employees seem to believe that leadership style has an impact on employee mental health.

Note: The percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

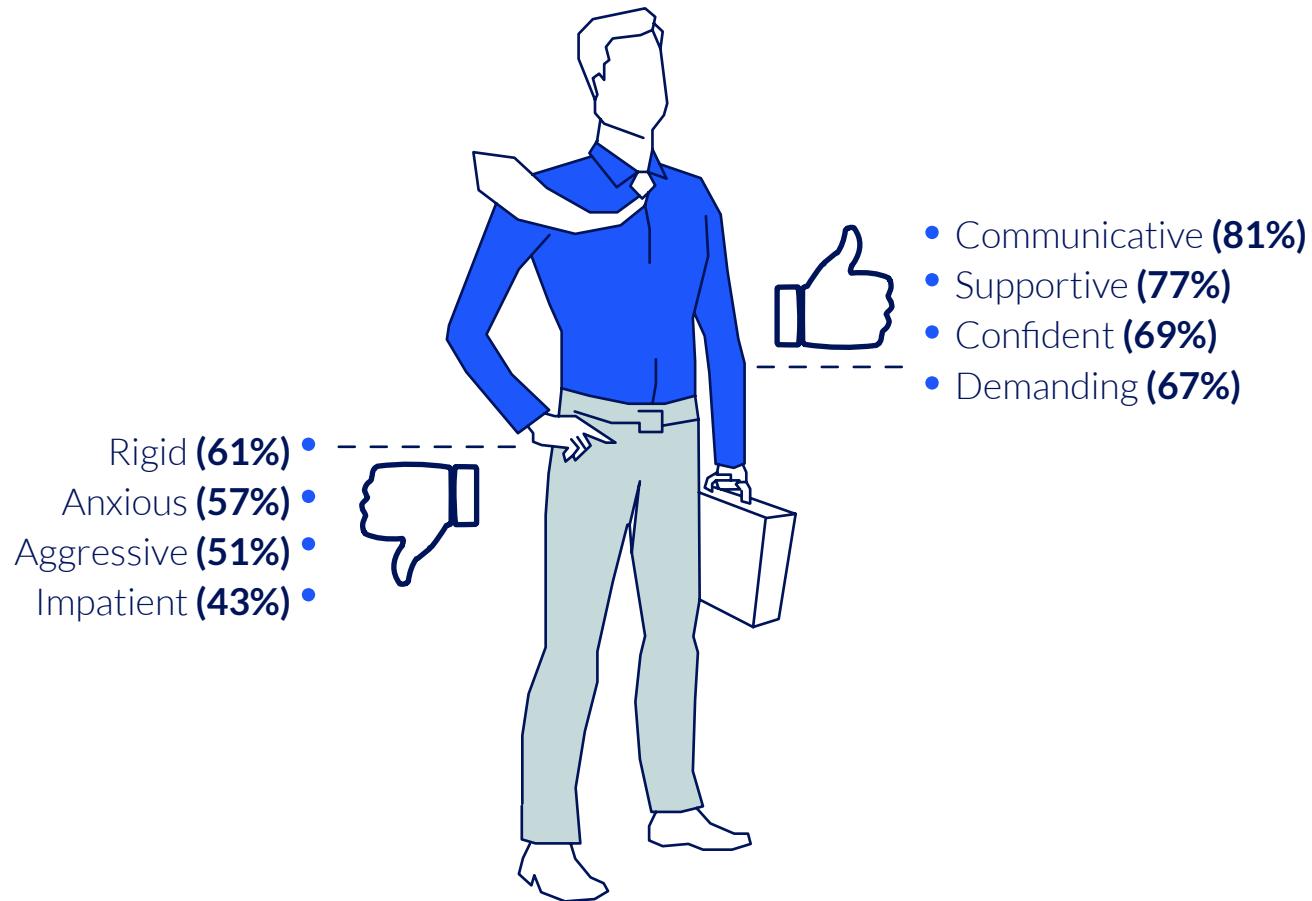
“
The differences between male and female leaders' traits are blurring a little bit these days, they're not so rigid.

“
Dr. Vipul Rastogi



Leadership Traits Influencing Employee Mental Wellness

Employee Rating: Impact of Leadership Traits on Employee Mental Health



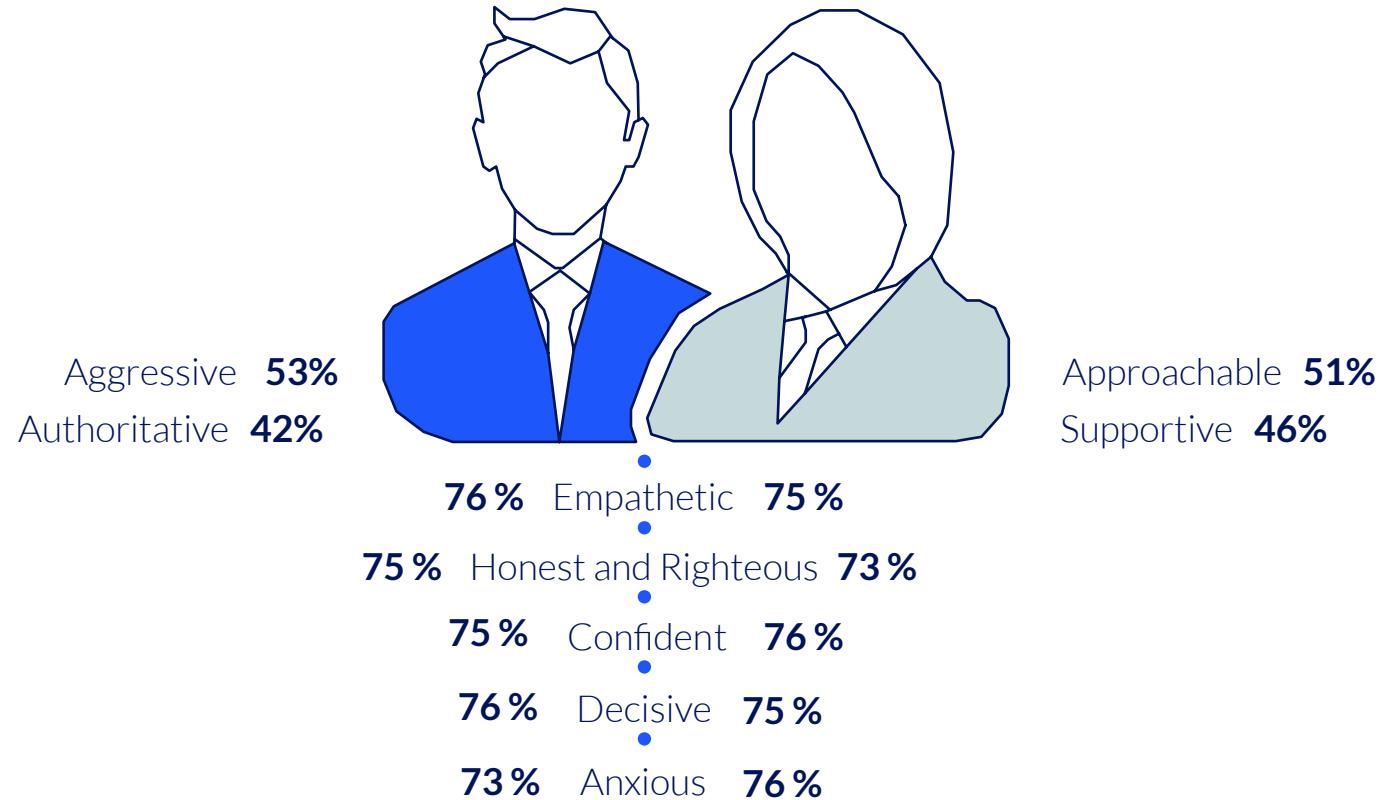
What the experts have to say:

- Trying to empathize with the employee is a good thing to make yourself accountable for an employee's mental well being.
- If the leader is approachable that is part of their mental wellbeing but also it supports the wellbeing of the people who work under them.



There is an overwhelming support, on part of employees, to the idea that specific leadership traits have either a positive or a negative impact on their mental health. Leaders who are Communicative/Responsive, Supportive, Confident, and Demanding are seen to positively impact mental health. Alternatively, leaders who are Rigid, Anxious, Aggressive, or Impatient are perceived to impact employee mental health adversely.

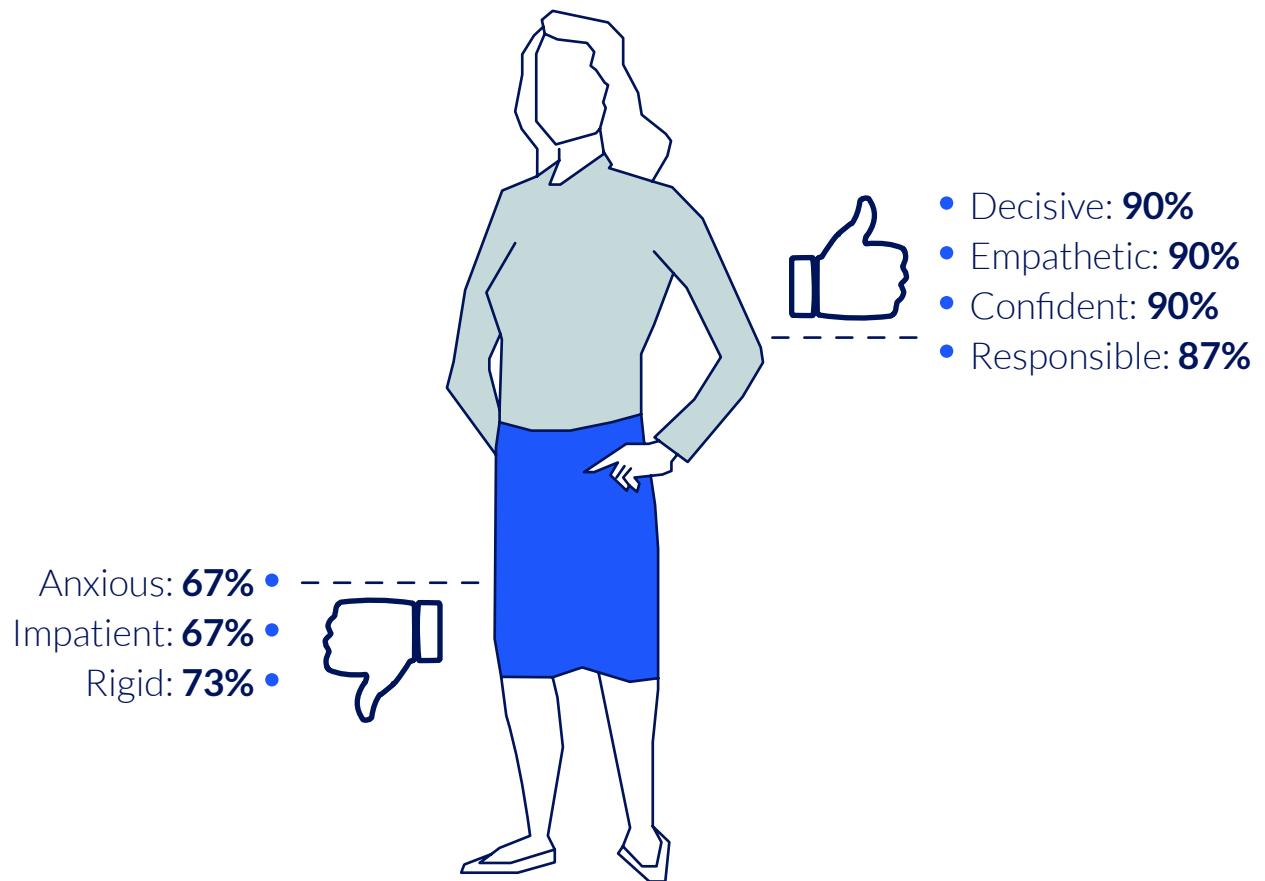
Employees' Rating: Impact of Leadership Traits – by Gender of the Leader



Employees do not see gender as a major differentiating factor when it comes to leadership traits. Male and female leaders are seen to be nearly on par with each other on a range of traits that include being Anxious, Empathetic, Decisive, Confident and Honest and Righteous. As an exception to the above perception of gender neutrality, employees seem to gender stereotype leaders on a couple of traits each – male leaders are rated marginally higher on being aggressive (53% versus 29%) and authoritative (42% versus 38%), and female leaders are rated marginally higher on being approachable (51% versus 21%) and supportive (46% versus 27%).

Leader Rating: Impact of Leadership Traits on Employee Mental Health

An overwhelming majority of leaders rate 'being decisive' (90%), 'empathetic' (90%), 'confident' (90%), and 'responsible' (87%) as desirable traits. On the contrary, two in three leaders report being 'anxious' (67%), 'impatient' (67%), and 'rigid' (73%) as not-so-desirable.



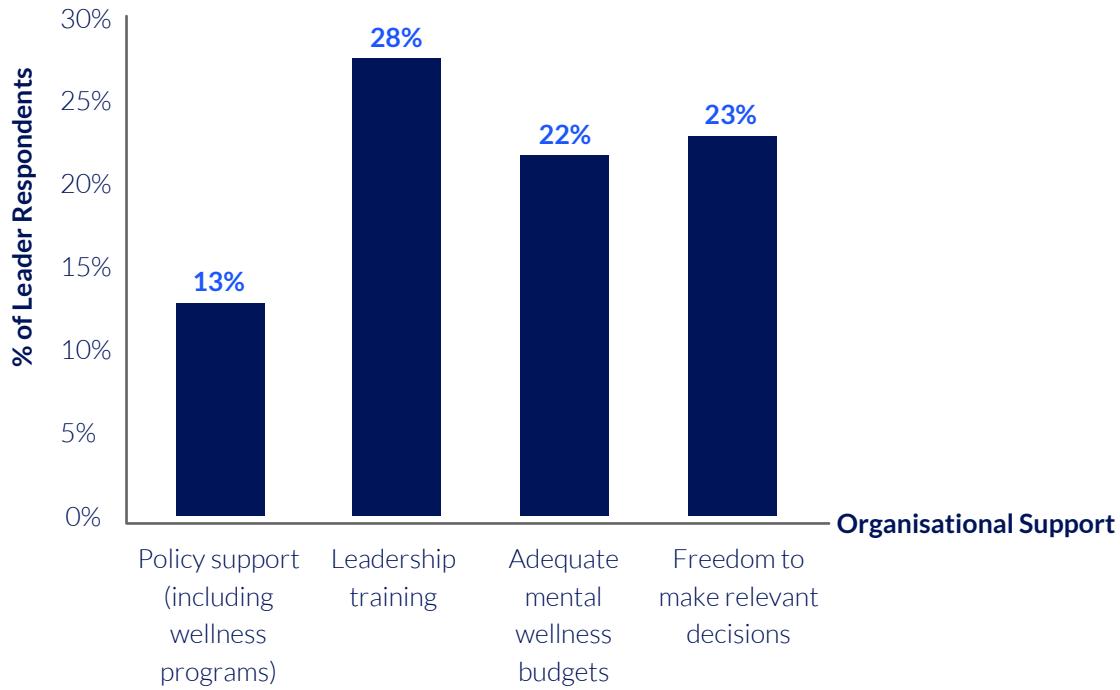
If office policies are not flexible enough or the manager is not flexible enough, the external environment will create pressure on employee mental health.

Dr. Rashmi Prakash



Organizational Support for Leaders in Ensuring Employee Mental Health

Organisational Support Leaders Receive



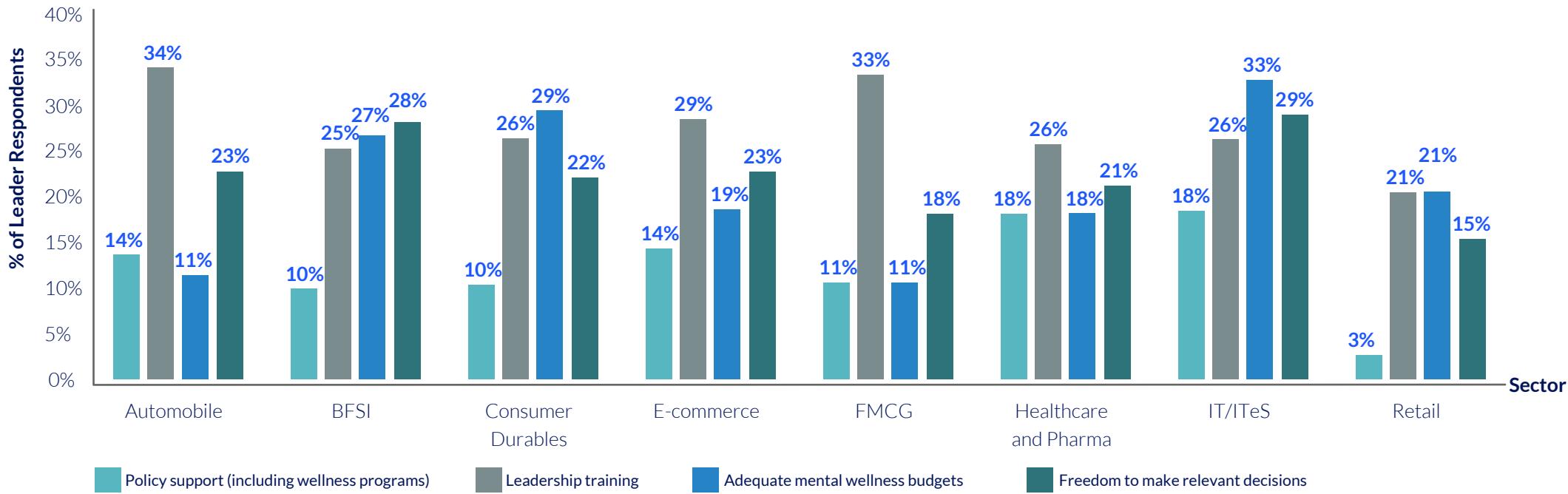
Many more leaders can do with appropriate organizational support to cater to employee mental health than the bleak proportion who say they receive it. While about one in four leaders receive organizational support in the form of training (28%), budgets (22%) and the freedom to make relevant decisions (23%), barely 13% receive adequate policy support.

What the experts have to say:

- An organisation needs to have a good super boss who gives freedom or ownership to the people below him to make some changes.
- Mental health awareness sessions should be held to tell people that having mental health concerns are not a sign of weakness.



Leader Opinion on Organizational Support: by Sector



Organizational support through leadership training is popular in nearly a third of the Automobile (34%), FMCG (33%), and E-Commerce (29%) sectors. A similar proportion of IT/ITeS (33%) and Consumer Durables (29%) lead in allocating adequate mental wellness budgets. The IT/ITeS (29%) and the BFSI (28%) sectors provide leaders with the freedom to make relevant decisions. IT/ITeS also leads on policy support, along with Health & Pharmaceuticals (both 18%).

“
The work culture trickles down from the top whether it is response to crisis, or finances, or company facing difficulties, or even the approach to mental health.

“
Dr. Vipul Rastogi



Leaders' Role in Managing Workplace Factors

Leaders' Role in Managing Workplace Factors

Workplace Stress

- **Act to Reduce**

Employees' perception: 73%
Leaders' perception: 28%

- **Help Manage**

Employees' perception: 55%
Leaders' perception: 57%

- **Help Relieve**

Employees' perception: 34%
Leaders' perception: 44%



Workload & Schedules

- **Plan & Optimize**

Employees' perception: 65%
Leaders' perception: 73%

- **Help Manage**

Employees' perception: 54%
Leaders' perception: 14%

- **Offer Flexibility**

Employees' perception: 30%
Leaders' perception: 42%



Employee Burnout

- **Help Prevent**

Employees' perception: 77%
Leaders' perception: 60%

- **Help Mitigate**

Employees' perception: 25%
Leaders' perception: 60%



Leaders are playing their roles more or less in line with employee expectations of managing workplace factors. The sweet spots happen to be – planning and optimizing the workload and office schedule (73% leaders and 65% employees), helping prevent employee burnout (60% leaders and 77% employees) and helping manage workplace stress (57% leaders and 55% employees). Workplace stress is an area where the two seem to have contrasting views – a higher proportion of employees (73%) than leaders (28%) believe leaders must act to reduce stress.

Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

Leaders' Role in Managing Workplace Factors

Safe Work Environment

- **Create**
Employees' perception: 72%
Leaders' perception: 74%
- **Maintain**
Employees' perception: 68%
Leaders' perception: 49%



Job Insecurity

- **Plan & Optimize**
Employees' perception: 52%
Leaders' perception: 41%
- **Help Manage**
Employees' perception: 56%
Leaders' perception: 21%
- **Help Relieve**
Employees' perception: 19%
Leaders' perception: 32%



Work-Life Balance

- **Encourage**
Employees' perception: 83%
Leaders' perception: 63%
- **Facilitate**
Employees' perception: 51%
Leaders' perception: 54%



The opinions on both sides are synchronized on the creation and maintenance of a safe work environment, and encouraging and facilitating work-life balance. A considerable difference in perception is seen among employees and leaders regarding job insecurity. More employees (56%) than leaders (21%) believe that leaders must 'help manage', or 'act to reduce' (52%, 41%) employees' sense of job insecurity.

Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

Employee Opinion: Leadership Characteristics in Ensuring Employee Mental Wellness



Rating scale:

1 stands for "Strongly disagree"

5 stands for "Strongly agree"

Note: the responses are indicated in the form of average rating

Leadership entails certain characteristics that can ensure employees' mental wellness. Employees accord high ratings for leaders to be trained for attitudes, empathy and interpersonal behavior (4.2 on a scale of 5) and being sensitive to employee mental wellness (4.1 on a scale of 5). Further, leaders' willingness to take up responsibility and accountability commands a rating of 3.7. Delegating work well scores relatively lower at 2.9.



If you are ignorant of your mental health, you will see it as a behavioral aspect. You will blame it on the situation, on the team, on your boss.

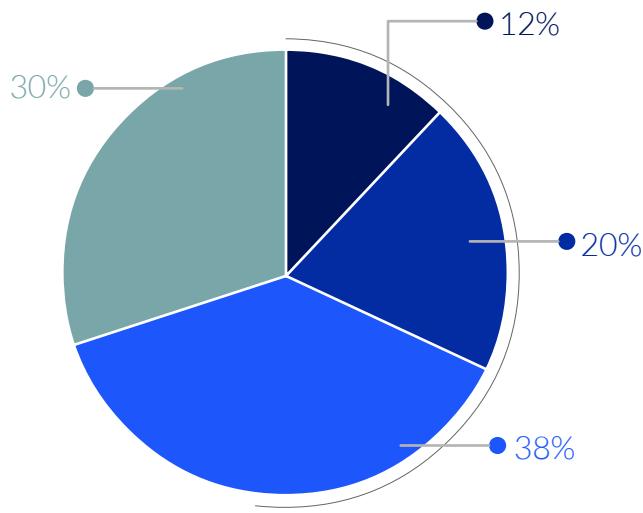
Dr. Rashmi Prakash



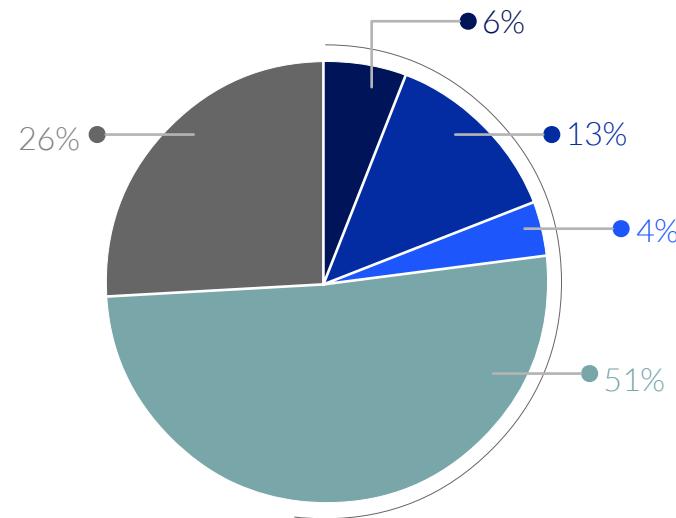
How a Leader's Own Mental Health Affects Employee Mental Health?

Dependency Assessment: Impact of Leaders' Mental Health on Employee Mental Health

Employee opinion: Impact of leaders' mental health on employee mental health



Leader opinion: Impact of employers' mental health on employee mental health



What the experts have to say:

- If the mental health of a leader is not sound, it will spill over to the employees.
- It will affect everyone depending on how fragile they are.
- It's okay for leaders to be vulnerable. Leaders should be frank & open about it when talking to their team .



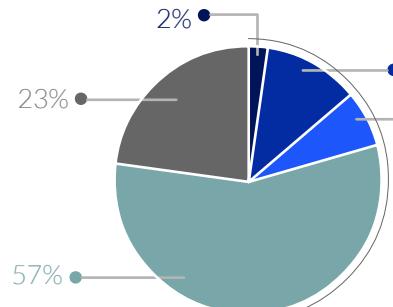
- Don't know /Can't say
- No effect
- Not much
- Significant effect

1 2 3 4 5

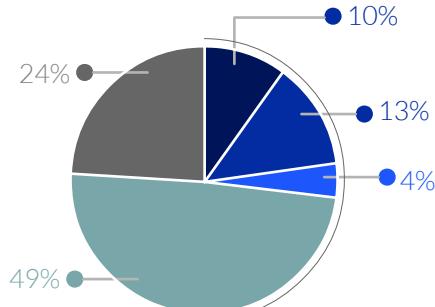
Rating scale:
1 stands for "no effect at all"
5 stands for "significant effect"

A nearly equal proportion of employees (30%) and leaders (26%) believe that leaders' mental health has a significant impact on employee mental health.

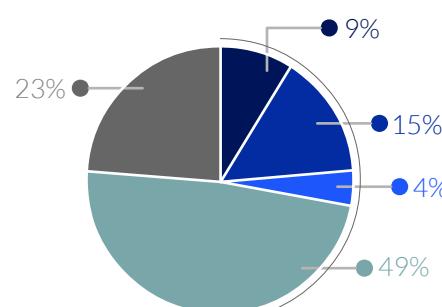
Leader Opinion: Impact of Leaders' Mental Health on Employee Mental Health – by Sector



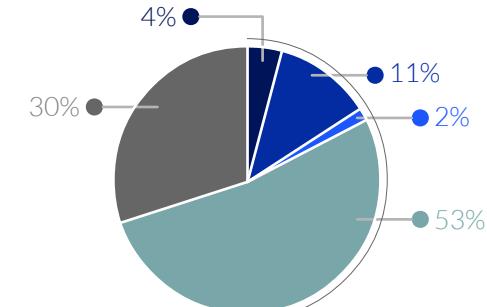
Automobile



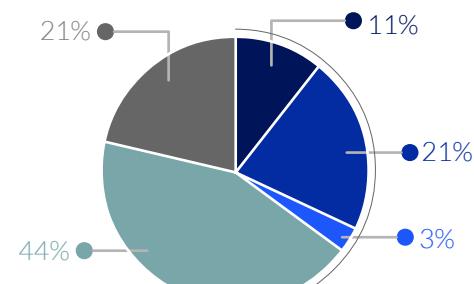
BFSI



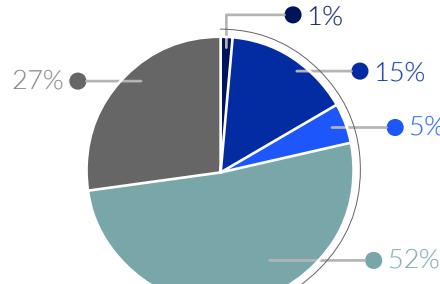
Consumer Durables



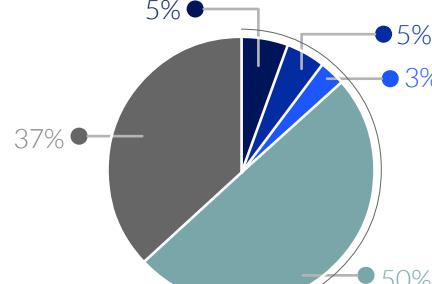
E-commerce



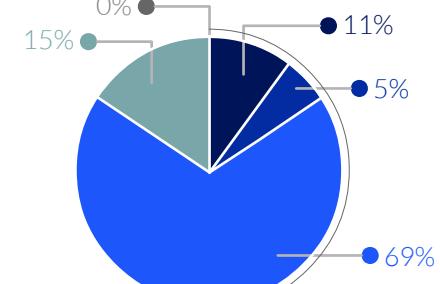
FMCG



Healthcare and Pharma



IT/ITeS



Retail



Rating scale: 1 stands for "no effect at all"
5 stands for "significant effect"

Just about one in four leaders across most sectors recognize the impact of their own mental health on employee mental health.

The two prominent exceptions with slightly higher proportions of leaders recognizing a significant impact are IT/ITeS (37%) and E-Commerce (30%). And Retail is a sole exception on the other end of the spectrum, with merely 15% recognizing the significance of the impact.

Interventions: How Leaders Manage their Own Mental Health

Strategies resorted by leaders' for managing their own mental health

Mental health strategies



What the experts have to say:

- It is difficult for people to seek professional help because of the feeling that somehow the organization might come to know.
- Having an open & honest communication and Mindfulness help leaders in dealing with their own mental health.

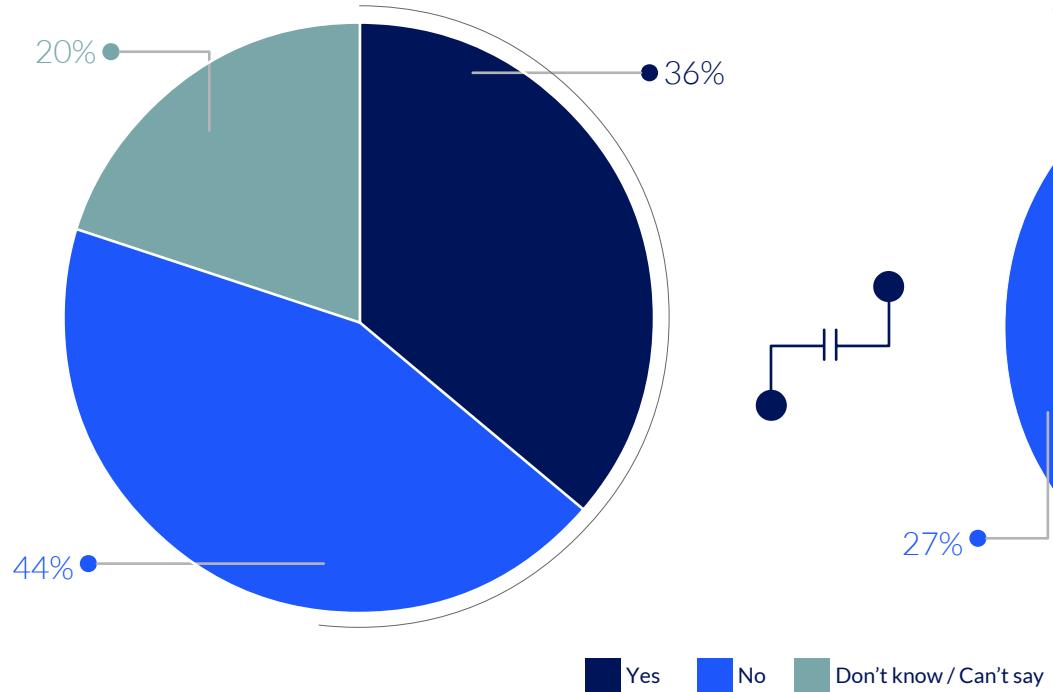


Leaders adopt a variety of means to deal with their own mental health. Cultivating self-awareness strategies is popular among the majority of leaders (41%). A modest proportion of leaders opt for interventions like yoga & meditation techniques (31%) and taking micro-breaks (30%). With only 15% of the leaders surveyed preferring to consult mental health professionals, the adoption of formal means to combat mental health issues clearly needs leadership walking the talk.

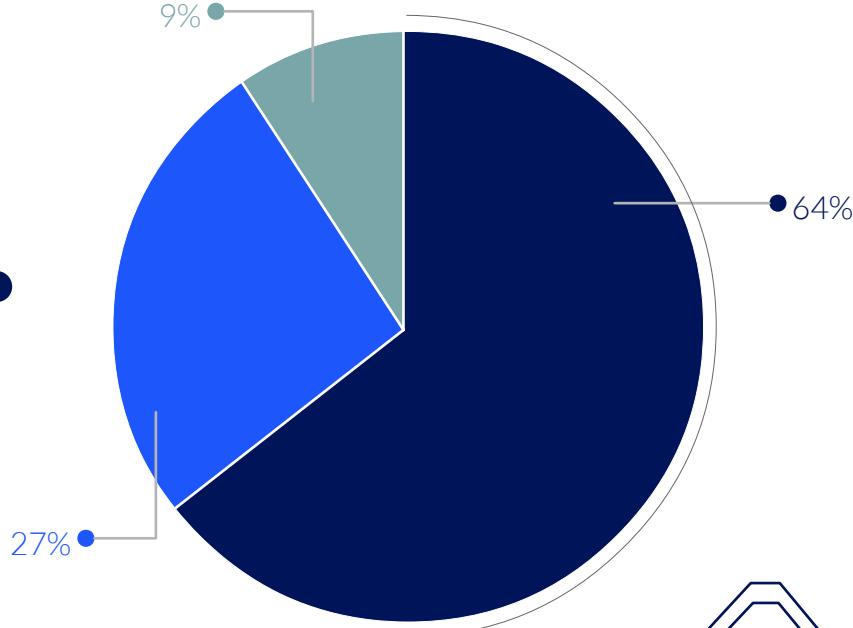
Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

The Disconnect: Should Leaders be Role Models for Mental Wellbeing?

Employee Opinion



Leader Opinion



Nearly two in three leaders (64%) put the onus of being mental wellness role models upon themselves. On the other hand, considerably fewer employees (36%) believe that leaders must take on this mantle. Nearly half of all employees surveyed (44%) do not share the notion.



It's hard to observe leadership trait changes in a virtual environment than you can do in an in-person environment.

Mr. Rahul Mullick

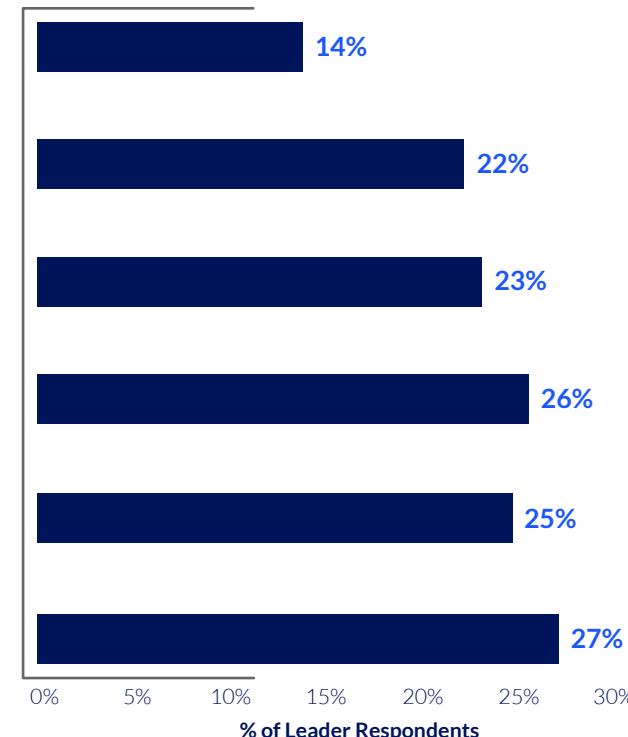


The Pandemic After-effect

Covid-19 effect: Leaders' Role in Managing Employee Mental Health

Leader Opinion: How did pandemic effect the role of leaders in managing employee mental health?

Leaders Role in Managing Employee Mental Health



Note: the percentages add up to more than 100 since each respondent is allowed multiple responses

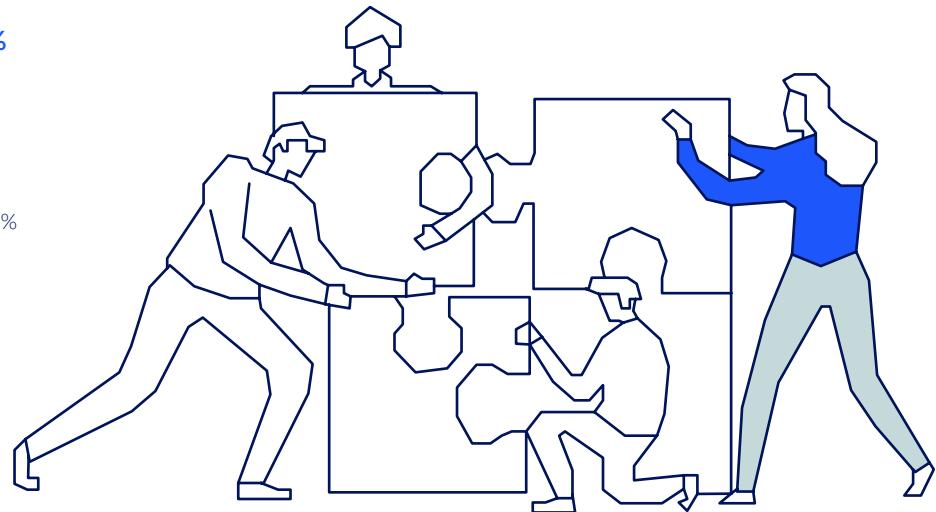
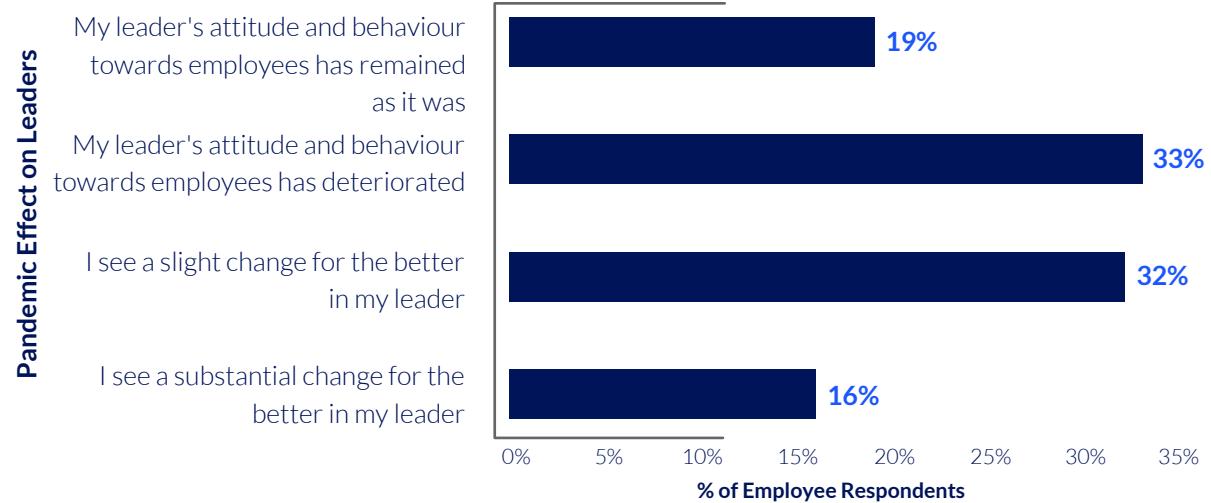
The Covid-19 pandemic forced organizations and leaders to operate in unprecedented ways and, as a consequence, to fundamentally rethink the equation with employees. Leaders believe that this has ushered in a positive change on their part. Nearly three in ten leaders surveyed state that they are more empathetic towards their employees (27%) and have changed their leadership style to moderate stress levels (26%). One in four respondents (25%) have rethought their interpersonal behavior.

At the same time, 14% of the respondents also felt that managing employee mental health has become more challenging now.



Covid-19 effect: Employees Relationship with their Leaders

Employee Opinion: How did the pandemic affect employees relationship with their leaders?

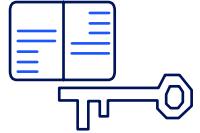


Although employee opinion on their post-Covid relationship with leaders is fragmented, it still paints an optimistic picture. On the one hand, 33% of the employees believe that their leaders' attitudes have deteriorated since the pandemic and 19% believe it has remained as it was. On the other hand, however, 32% saw a slight change for the better in their leaders and 16% witnessed a substantial change for the better.



Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways



- Employee mental health is being accorded prominence by a great majority of leaders, and issues such as psychological safety, workplace factors, leadership traits and leaders' own mental health form a common ground of agreement between leaders and employees. There needs to be, however, a greater acknowledgment of leaders' responsibility of employee mental health, and psychological safety is a great place to begin this conversation.
- There is scope for leaders to closely align themselves with employee expectations of how, and how much, control needs to be exerted by leaders on workplace factors impacting employee mental health. A fair degree of alignment exists between the two on how most workplace factors need to be controlled by leaders. Significant gaps, as in case of workplace stress and job insecurity, need to trigger a discourse aiming for appropriate modes of closure.
- Organizational support to leaders in managing employee mental health is perceived to be inadequate today. Only a small minority of organizations have instituted a formal, policy based approach to support leaders. While leaders in one in three organizations undergo related training, barely one in four leaders receive adequate budgetary support and have the freedom to make decisions shaping employee mental wellness .



Annexure -1: Expert Opinion Extracts

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



Good Vs Bad mental health

- Mental health works on a spectrum. There is a lot in between not so good and good mental health.
- Good mental health is when you are able to cope with a day to day stresses in a healthy way.
- Bad mental health is when people struggling with disorders, rather than going to counselors, professionals, use unhealthy coping strategies to cope with their mental health.

Manifestations of mental health issues

- It manifests in employees' behavior and in their physical health.
- Somebody who is mingling kind of person, who is very sociable, starts isolating.
- Presentism becomes a bigger issue than absenteeism. They are there, but actually not there and it increase with increase in mental health issues

External Factors that contribute to good & poor mental wellbeing

- There are internal as well as external factors and internal factors that affect employee mental wellbeing.
- External factors may be finances, work environment, ambiguity in roles/job, too much uneven work distribution
- Feeling of being unvalued in the organisation & lack of recognition.

Dr. Rashmi Prakash
Executive Coach, Corporate Trainer and Psychologist

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



Impact of Leaders' traits

- The leaders and, managers need to care for the health of the team as it goes a long way. To evaluate the mental wellbeing of an employee care is important.
- Being open minded is something which is very important especially when it comes to mental health.
- Empathy is important. empathy is not necessarily gender oriented, anyone can be empathetic. However women are a little more compassionate than men.

Pandemic effect

- Post pandemic, the mental health issues have increased and as people are struggling more now, it's evident, because challenges are more, work from home is a big ask, nobody gets their own personal space.
- Now more people are seeking professional help for their mental health. Now they are coming with the problems.

Dr. Rashmi Prakash
Executive Coach, Corporate Trainer and Psychologist

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



Manifestations of mental health issues

- People start becoming isolated. They will not come forward they will stop contributing in meetings and just sit back.
- Their work might start taking more time or you might find more mistakes in their work.
- Irritability on the floor increases.

Impact of leaders' traits

- If the leader is approachable that is part of their mental wellbeing but also it supports the wellbeing of the people who work under them.
- There were times when that arrogant streak sort of leadership was welcome but that is not so right these days as people are moving towards a more compassionate, empathetic listening .

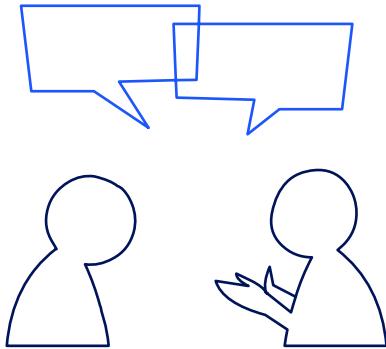
Barrier in reaching out for mental health concern

- The first one is the stigma that people have in their own heads. That has been an ongoing issue with psychiatry and mental health since time immemorial.
- The second of course is the anonymity right whether the organization will come to know.
- The third one is that helplessness that what change will come out of it.

Dr. Vipul Rastogi
Psychiatrist

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



What leaders can do to foster employees mental wellbeing

- To eliminate job insecurity, having a dialogue over what you can do better really helps. It empowers people to know how the other person is thinking.
- Having regular well-being meetings, which doesn't touch upon work, hobbies, interests, are a good way of knowing what a person might be going through.
- It is important for a leader to be able to give bad or difficult feedback in the best possible manner

Dr. Vipul Rastogi
Psychiatrist

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



Workplace factors that contribute to good & poor mental wellbeing

- The individual to whom they report to as that's the person they engage most with and that person's behaviour has a big role in their mental well being
- The environment in which the policies of the organization are there contribute to a good or poor mental well being.
- Organizations having a culture of working Saturdays, extending late, staying back in office for longer periods of time, has a bearing on the employee mental wellbeing

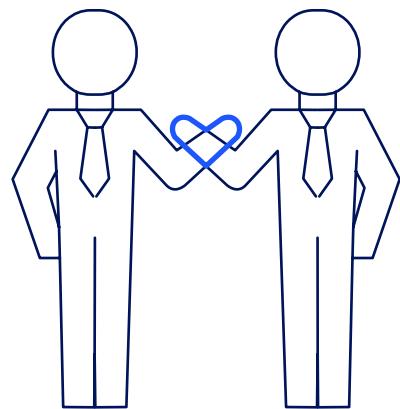
Leaders role in an organisation towards mental health

- As a senior leader, your responsibility is to look at how the organization is setting up policies, support structures and mechanisms for people.
- The other responsibility is the kind of culture you can influence in your role as a leader. Is it a culture of empathy? Or is it a culture of your performance and numbers.
- As a leader of a certain set of team members, your responsibility extends into looking at their wellbeing. You need to look into if they are finding enough motivation, are they adequately empowered or do they see themselves as a contributor towards the success of the organisation.

Mr. Rahul Mullick
Digital Leader in Social Impact

Annexure 1:

Expert Opinion Extracts



Traits & skills, good leaders should have

- Listening is a good skill to have as you want to keep a view of how things in your team are and how to give everybody the space.
- Trying to empathize with the employee or with the person is a good thing to do in a general way to make yourself accountable for an employee's well being.
- Having a Good EQ as it helps you understand how can you help your team deliver better and understand the reason if they have not been able to deliver on time.

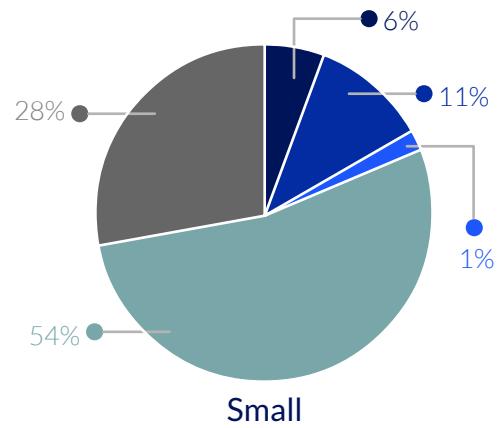
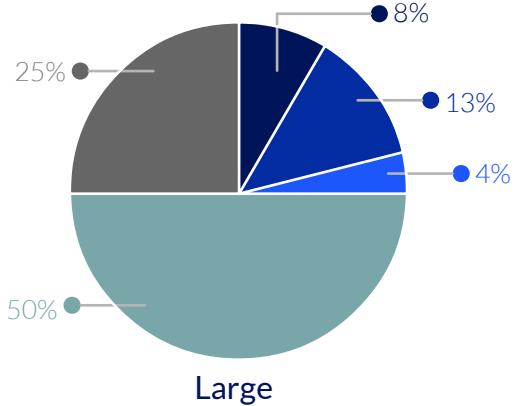
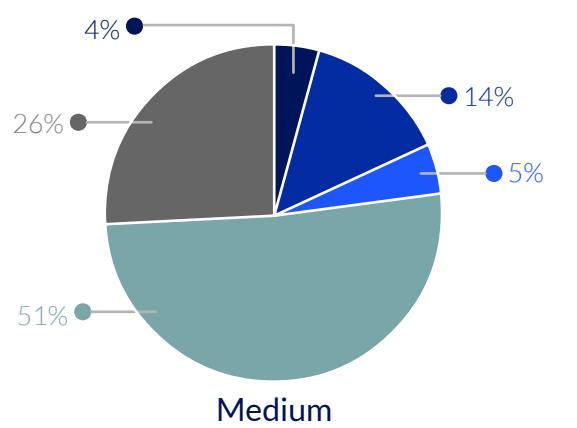
Mr. Rahul Mullick
Digital Leader in Social Impact



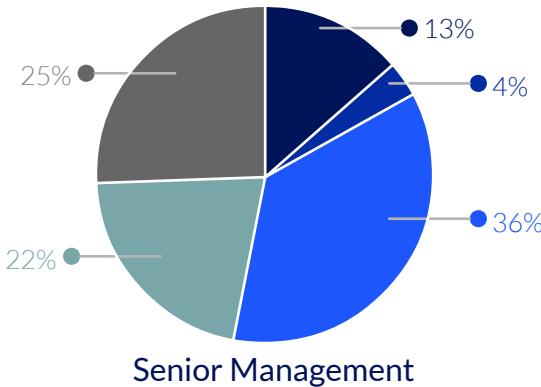
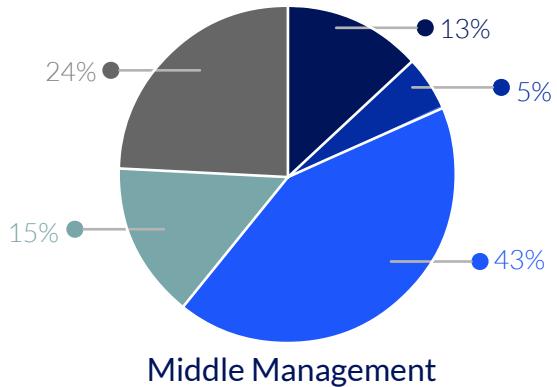
Annexure-2: More Findings

Leaders' Opinion

Impact of leaders' mental health on employees' mental health: Organisation size wise

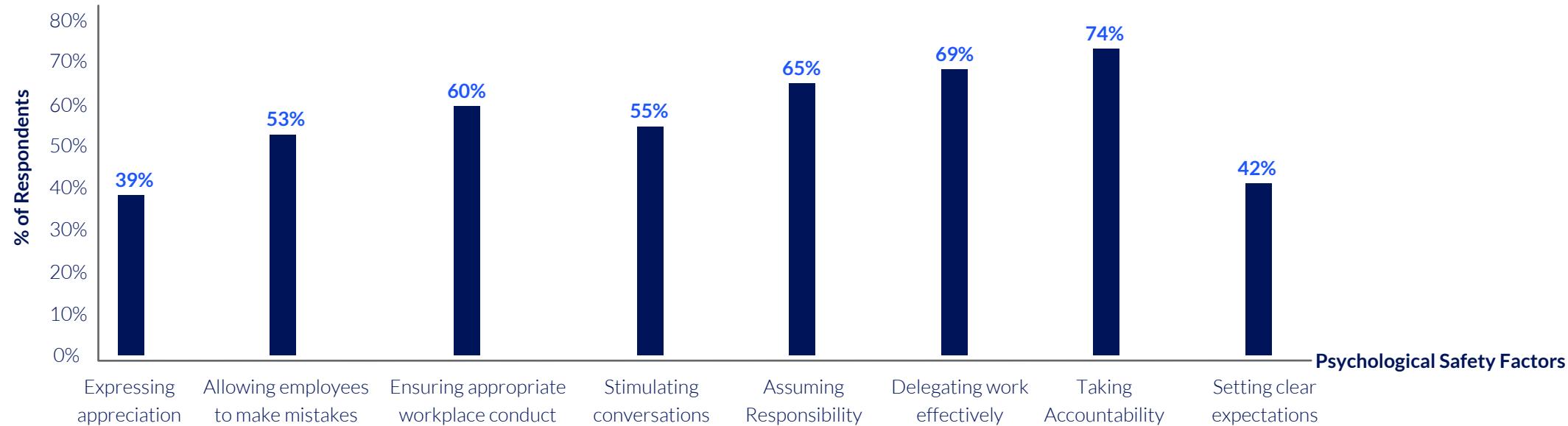


Leaders responsibility towards employees mental wellness: Hierarchical wise

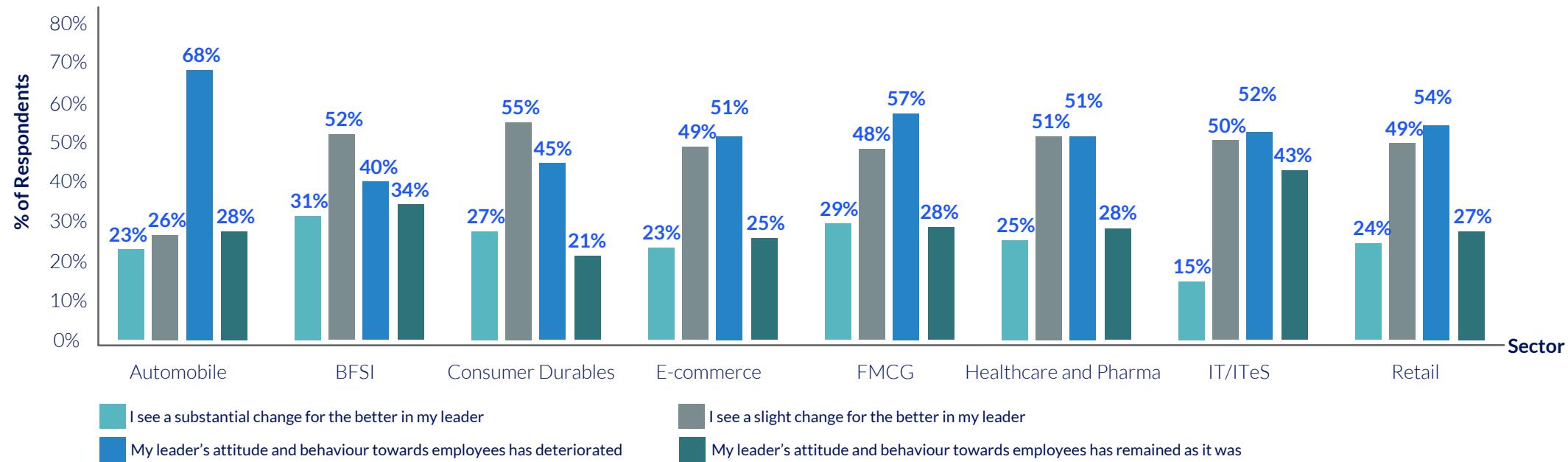


1 2 3 4 5

Employees opinion on these factors, who think that workplace psychological safety has a significant impact



Employees perception of change in leaders across sectors





Annexure - 3:

Research Analysis, Methodology Bibliography

Research Methodology – Exploratory Survey Design

- **Secondary research:**

Literature review

- **Exploration covers:**

Major Indian research resources about mental illness and mental health issue trends in India



- **Expert interviews**

Sample size:

- Experts: panel of 2 mental wellness experts and one corporate leader

Questionnaire covering:

- Background and experience in the field of mental health.
- What is Good & not so good mental health?
- Why seeking professional help for mental health concern is difficult?
- Identification of mental health issues at workplace
- The first thought that comes to your mind while talking about a leader and leadership qualities/skills.
- Role of a leader in the collective mental health of an organization
- Definition of a good and not so good leader, in terms of their influence on the mental health of their employees
- Changes seen in the organization in the past 5 years in the context of people's mental health
- Leaders building a sense of connectedness and belonging for employees
- Organizational support that leaders feel is adequate in promoting the mental wellbeing of employees
- What measures has organization taken to ensure employee mental wellness?
- What initiatives leaders can take to maintain a mental-healthy work environment. How does one cultivate and propagate healthy emotions and responsiveness that foster meaning and fulfilment.
- Workplace culture/ factors and policy implementation for dealing with employees mental health concerns.

Research Methodology – Quantitative Research

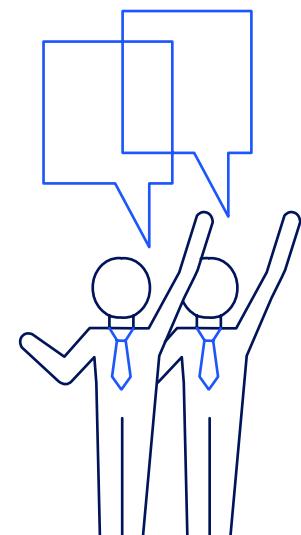
Primary survey methodology:

Sample size: 504 Leader respondents

- Reporting Heads/Managers (middle management and above)

Questionnaire covering:

- Leaders influence on employees mental health
- Leadership aspects having the highest impact on employee mental health
- Degree of leaders responsibility towards ensuring employees mental wellness.
- To what extent leaders mental health affect your employees' mental health
- Intervention strategies adopted by leaders to manage their own mental wellbeing.
- Degree of impact of workplace psychological safety for employees mental wellbeing
- Factors can leaders build on, to ensure employees' psychological safety at work
- Rating traits of leaders, in the context of ensuring employee mental health
- Impact of Leadership styles on employees mental health
- Perception on leaders being the role models of mental wellbeing
- Leadership factors in causing, catalysing & influencing employees mental health
- Leaders role in controlling the workplace factors affecting their employees
- Providing organizational support in ensuring employee mental wellness
- Impact of pandemic on leaders role in managing employees mental health



Note: Leader and Employee samples were drawn from different organizations.

Research Methodology – Quantitative Research

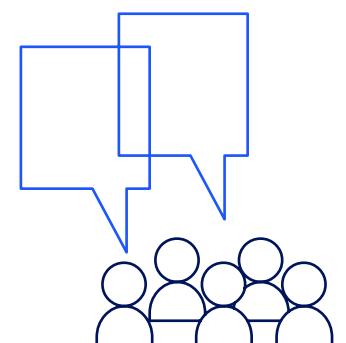
Primary survey methodology:

Sample size: 1008 Employee respondents

- Age – across 4 various levels
- Gender – Male/Female categories

Questionnaire covering:

- Leaders influence on employees mental health.
- Leadership aspects having the highest impact on employee mental health
- Degree of leaders responsibility towards ensuring employees mental wellness.
- Rating personal traits of leaders, in the context of ensuring employee mental health
- Rating traits of male and female leaders, in the context of ensuring employee mental health
- Degree of impact of workplace psychological safety for employees mental wellbeing
- Factors can leaders build on, to ensure employees' psychological safety at work
- Impact of Leadership styles on employees mental health
- Perception on leaders being the role models of mental wellbeing
- To what extent do you think your leader's own mental health is impacting your mental health
- Rate the leadership characteristics in the context of ensuring employee mental wellness
- Leaders role in controlling the workplace factors affecting their employees
- Impact of pandemic on relationship between employees & leaders.



Note: Leader and Employee samples were drawn from different organizations.

Research Methodology – Survey design

Total 504 Leader Respondents

| Sectors | Total No. of Respondents |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Automobile | 66 |
| BFSI | 62 |
| Consumer Durables | 62 |
| E-commerce | 66 |
| FMCG | 62 |
| Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals | 60 |
| IT/ITeS | 66 |
| Retail | 60 |

| Business Size | Total No. of Respondents |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Large (greater than 1000 employees) | 160 |
| Medium (100 to 1000 employees) | 166 |
| Small (less than 100 employees) | 178 |

| City | Total No. of Respondents |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Bangalore | 90 |
| Chennai | 86 |
| Hyderabad | 82 |
| Kolkata | 80 |
| Mumbai | 80 |
| NCR | 86 |

Total 1008 Employee Respondents

| Sectors | Total No. of Respondents |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Automobile | 126 |
| BFSI | 126 |
| Consumer Durables | 126 |
| E-commerce | 126 |
| FMCG | 126 |
| Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals | 126 |
| IT/ITeS | 126 |
| Retail | 126 |

| Business Size | Total No. of Respondents |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Large (greater than 1000 employees) | 287 |
| Medium (100 to 1000 employees) | 344 |
| Small (less than 100 employees) | 377 |

| Gender | Total No. of Respondents |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Female | 312 |
| Large (greater than 1000 employees) | 81 |
| Medium (100 to 1000 employees) | 116 |
| Small (less than 100 employees) | 115 |
| Male | 696 |
| Large (greater than 1000 employees) | 201 |
| Medium (100 to 1000 employees) | 228 |
| Small (less than 100 employees) | 267 |

| City | Total No. of Respondents |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Bangalore | 172 |
| Chennai | 168 |
| Hyderabad | 168 |
| Kolkata | 164 |
| Mumbai | 168 |
| NCR | 168 |

| Age | Total No. of Respondents |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 26 - 35 years | 276 |
| 36 - 45 years | 255 |
| 46 years or more | 306 |
| Less than 25 years | 171 |

Bibliography: What is psychological safety and why is it important?, Nov 2019, Bewell Stanford

