Leadership styles and their Impact on Counterproductive Behaviour in the Workplace.

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Introduction

Prior to conducting this research project the knowledge I had of counterproductive behaviour was limited. It was based on employee relationships and behaviours within teams. Leadership was a separate topic which I thought I understood and had a wide knowledge of but upon beginning my research I realise my knowledge focused mainly on the qualities of a good leader. I understood that good leadership traits promote productive behaviour but had I never considered the traits of leadership that can impact employee behaviour negatively.

My first encounter with the term counterproductive behaviour was while in the second year of my business degree. The recommended course textbook discussed dysfunctional behaviours in the workplace. It describes these behaviours as “those that detract from rather than contribute to organisational performance” (Moorehead and Griffin, 2010, pp. 75). This definition is similar to other definitions explaining either deviant or counterproductive workplace behaviour. This textbook however mentions factors such as poor person job fit and the attitudes of the individual but mentions no other causes or factors of this behaviour. This shows counterproductive behaviour from the perspective that employee personality is the root of counterproductive behaviour. This perspective to me seems incomplete. My theory of counterproductive behaviour includes other factors which will affect the behaviour of employees. If we observe the counterproductive behaviour one can experience in other areas of their personal life for example, in schools children often misbehave in class and if they do not have a good relationship with a teacher or superior, they tend to misbehave even more. I also thought of the family unit; many children know the people in their family they can behave differently around. For example, sometimes they do not obey the rules set by their mother because they know she is lenient about punishments but often will strictly follow the rules set by their father because they know that he will reprimand them for their behaviour. This can change if the relationship between families becomes strained, for example if teenagers feel the rules are becoming too strict the often act out by not following any rules and behaving badly in their parents’ eyes. Each of the figures I have mentioned in these examples are leaders of some form at different stages of a person's life, and I have seen in my own experience that relationships and the way these leaders treat me has a huge
impact on how I will behave towards them. Could it therefore be the case that leadership in the workplace should be considered in the same way?

The aim of my research is to complete the picture of counterproductive behaviour and conclude whether poor leadership can lead to counterproductive behaviour of subordinates in the workplace, and therefore good leadership can lead to more productivity from subordinates in the workplace. I am under the impression that employees who are well motivated, satisfied in their role and satisfied with their relationship with their leaders will be less likely to engage in behaviour such as tardiness, absenteeism and working slowly. I also presume that if employees are unmotivated, dissatisfied with their role leader relationships they will become less positive about work, work much more slowly, become disengaged with their tasks, are more likely to be late and absent from work. Therefore, the question I am asking is “How will different Leadership Styles Impact Counterproductive Behaviour in the Workplace?”.

However, the examples I have mentioned above are purely from my own personal observation and not based on any concrete research therefore I am aware that I could prove myself wrong and realise that leadership is not a factor in counterproductivity of employees. It may be possible that the definition given by Moorhead and Griffin (2010) was accurate was and counterproductive behaviour is a result of the employees' personality alone.

Wu, Peng and Estay (2018, pp. 453) state in their study that leadership and employee behaviour are “two core themes in the field of organisational behaviour”. It also states in this study that when leadership traits such as undermining, enforcing and shouting are used against employees these employees tend to strike back. Poor behaviour in the workplace is not a new phenomenon but the research into counterproductive behaviour and its causes is fairly new according to Klotz and Buckley (2013, pp. 115). The study discusses counterproductive behaviour through history with the first mention of a specific anecdote being an attempted mutiny in 1520. The study also goes on to explain that the numerous new jobs created by the industrial revolution led to employers and researchers documenting these behaviours. Therefore, it can be assumed that counterproductive behaviour among employees has been causing problems for employers for centuries. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Suarez-Acosta (2013) discusses a study by Guadine and Thorne (2001) which suggests that when employees see unfair interactions towards their colleagues, they try to get justice for their peer by acting out
against the organisation or superior. This evidence suggests poor leadership could cause a reaction among employees. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Suarez-Acosta (2013, pp. 538) also suggest that employees can react to these unfair interactions by withdrawing constructive behaviours known as organisational citizenship behaviours. The results of Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Suarez-Acosta (2013, pp. 544) suggest that unfair interactions with leaders will cause employees to engage in counterproductive behaviour and decrease their organisational citizenship behaviour.

These studies have introduced me to the research surrounding the question which I aim to answer. In order to answer this question, I will be conducting my own research into leadership. One of the aims of this research project is to understand the types of leadership which are considered the least likely to promote productivity. Another aim of this project is to understand types of counterproductive behaviour and what affect it can have on a business and its employees. The main aim however is to answer my question and figure out if leadership styles do have an impact on counterproductive behaviour and therefore either promote productivity or cause counterproductivity?

**Literature Review**

**Counter Productive Behaviour**

Klotz and Buckley (2013) refers to counterproductive behaviour as an umbrella term. Within this umbrella there are two types of behaviours which will either effect individuals within the organisation or the organisation as a whole. Klotz and Buckley (2013) also highlights that although the research of counterproductive behaviour in the workplace is new, the act of behaving badly in the workplace is not new. Their study refers back to mutiny on ships, leading me to wonder why a mutiny may have took place. Mutiny would take place because those under a certain leadership were unhappy with the way they were treated; could this mean that leadership has been a factor in counterproductive behaviour of employees centuries ago and continues to this day? Another example of counterproductive behaviour outlined by Klotz and Buckley (2013) is from the 19th century. It discusses an example of automation brought about by the industrial revolution at a steel company in Philadelphia. Frederick Taylor having cut the piece rate of pay for his machinists to encourage them to work harder, experienced his employees acting out by physically breaking the equipment. This could be seen as a poor attempt to motivate the employees which in turn left them frustrated. Without understanding how to motivate employees Taylor's poor judgement to cut wages left him with an unmotivated workforce
who acted defiantly. Although this anecdote comes from the 19th century, automation of jobs is still relevant in today’s society.

Counterproductive behaviour is viewed from several different perspectives and often given different names depending on the study. Howladar et al., (2018) refers to it as deviant workplace behaviour. This study also lists other titles for counterproductive behaviours which other authors refer to it as. These titles include; counterproductive behaviour (Aubé, Rousseau, Mama and Morin, 2009), moral disengagement (Hystad, Mearns and Eid, 2014), Bennett and Robinson, 2003) and anti-social behaviour (Giacalone and Greenberg,1997). Howladar et al., (2018) also refers to the various behaviours which are considered to be forms of counterproductive behaviour. These behaviours are anything which is considered to be the opposite of productive and can interrupt the working day; employee withdrawal, theft, strikes, aggression and violence, sexual harassment, absenteeism, tardiness and working slowly. Klotz and Buckley (2013) discusses aggression such as property deviance, breaking equipment and theft. Klotz and Buckley (2013) also mentions less violent methods of counterproductive behaviour such as time banditry, output restriction and defamation through social media. This study discusses examples of counterproductive behaviour in the workplace throughout history and explains how the many ways an employee can sabotage a company has broadened over time. Brender–Ilan and Sheaffer (2018 pp.) use Gruys and Sackett’s (2003) definition to describe it as “any intended behaviour on the part of organisational members perceived as contrary to legitimate organisational interests”. They also describe workplace deviance as a subclass of counterproductive workplace behaviour, this viewpoint is not mentioned by other authors. Robinson and Bennet (1995) state that these deviant behaviours which are in violation of organisational norms; put the organisation and well-being of its employees at risk. This is consistent with Howladar et al., (2018) who have stated that up to 75% of employees in the U.S. reported some type of deviant behaviour in their workplace. Their study also states that it is possible that counterproductive behaviour is a factor in approximately 30% of business failures. Brender – Ilan ans Sheaffer (2018, pp.7) also state in their study that counterproductive behaviours of employees are “detrimental to organisation success” and can “impair quality of worklife”. Jensen, Opland and Ryan, (2010) discuss the effects of psychological contract breaches in their study. The psychological contract is defined as “the employee’s belief regarding the mutual obligations between the employee and the employer (Rousseau 1989, Jensen et al., 2010, pp. 568). The study suggests that counterproductive behaviour can be caused by breaches
in these contracts. The study shows evidence of employees partaking in abuse, production deviance and withdrawal as a result of either transactional or relational breaches of the psychological contract. This suggests that leadership can cause counterproductive behaviour if they breach elements of the psychological contract.

From the information I have gathered, it is clear that counterproductive behaviour has existed in the workplace since employment has existed but as mentioned by Klotz and Buckley (2013) it changes with modern times. A modern example of counterproductive behaviour according to Klotz and Buckley (2013) is time banditry. Klotz and Buckley (2013) describe this as using company time to conduct your own personal affairs. It is explained in the study that the modern employee has personal affairs such as their children’s afterschool activities or hobbies which they do not have time to organise outside of their working hours. As technology advances and social media has become so engrained into society it has become another way for employees to become counterproductive. Klotz and Buckley (2013) discusses the harm of social media stating that often social media becomes a place for employees to voice their dissatisfaction about their workplace and leaders and can lead to a bad reputation for the company or can backfire on the employee leading them to lose their job.

**Leadership and Leadership Styles**

Leadership can be defined as “the ability to motivate and influence the activities of groups of subordinates in an ethical, respectful and loyal manner, so that they can contribute to the achievement of objectives the team and organisation hold in common” (Rodrigues and Ferreira, 2015, p. 493). This introduces the question of what may happen when leadership is too dysfunctional to achieve this aim? From my research into leadership it is clear that not all leadership is influential in an ethical or respectful manner. My knowledge of leadership prior to this research project was consistent with the above definition because all of the information I had ever learned about leaders focused on the positives and the outcomes of positive leadership but not on the negatives and the effects it can have on employees. I am of the opinion that employee’s satisfaction with their role is crucial to the productivity of the organisation. Poor leadership leading to poor satisfaction in the role may lead to counterproductive behaviour such as disengagement, absenteeism, tardiness, aggression, strikes etc. Overtime frequent engagement in this behaviour will not only interrupt the working day but lead to business failure as the employees are no longer working productively. Solaja et al., (2015) states
that communication is a key factor in strong leadership. The communication between leaders and their subordinates determines the co-operation and level of performance leaders will receive from their subordinates. Therefore, if leaders do not communicate effectively it would increase the likelihood of subordinates partaking in counterproductive behaviour in the workplace. Klotz and Buckley (2013) describes in their study a situation in which poor communication of reasoning behind pay cuts led to employees engaging in theft compared to a substantially lesser amount of theft when the news was delivered positively by the leader. This shows support for the idea that communication is a key trait of leadership and poor communication may lead to counterproductivity. Klotz and Buckley (2013) also states that effective management can reduce certain counterproductive tendencies such as restricting output. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Suárez-Acosta (2014) suggests in their study that unfavourable interactional injustice towards their peers can lead employees to react using deviant workplace behaviour and organisational citizen behaviours. This would mean employees are likely to act out when an injustice is perceived to have occurred toward their colleagues. This shows the influence leadership can have on behaviour and the importance of using the appropriate leadership style for the right tasks and in an ethical way.

**Destructive leadership**

As stated by Hou (2017) destructive leadership is seen as leadership based on power which can be intentional behaviour or as a result of their personality traits. Wu et al., (2018) states that there are two main dimensions to destructive leadership. Similar to counterproductive behaviour destructive leadership either targets individual employees or the organisation as a whole. Hou (2017) states that the leader uses behaviour which is seen as improper and can be directed at either the organisation as a whole or at individual employees. The features of destructive leadership include abusive supervision, bullying, derailed leadership, tyrannical leadership and toxic leadership. This destructive behaviour disrupts an organisation by making goals, resources and tasks less effective. This results in long term as well as short term consequences for the organisation which can result in not only counterproductive behaviour among employees but can over time lead to business failure. Some of the outcomes associated with destructive leadership include low job satisfaction, high turnover, low commitment, and poor performance. It is also noted that employees exposed to destructive leadership adjust their attitudes towards performance downwards (Tepper, 2000). Tepper (2000) found that a feature of
destructive leadership; abusive supervision was positively and significantly correlated with counterproductive behaviour. Destructive leadership is also associated with a lack of job autonomy. This autonomy allows for employees to have meaning in their roles by having more responsibility and feel as though they are valued in the organisation. Destructive leadership lacking in autonomy will lead to employees feeling their role has no meaning and they may begin to engage in counterproductive work behaviours. Brender-Ilan and Sheaffer (2018) theories that even employees who have high levels of self-efficacy will engage in counterproductive behaviour when effected by destructive leadership but tend to be less likely to engage in this type of behaviour in general. Brender-Ilan and Sheaffer (2018) used a five-point Likert scale to determine the relationship between variables and found that destructive leadership increases counterproductive behaviour while autonomy decreases the level of counterproductive behaviour. Hou (2017) states that destructive leadership may cause employees to reduce their level of innovation in the workplace, as destructive leaders often reprimand employees whose ideas fail. Hou (2017, pp.1122) also states within the findings of their study that “leadership style has an important influence on employees’ performance, work attitudes and behaviour”. Brender – Ilan and Sheaffer (2018) state in the findings of their study that destructive leadership does increase counterproductivity in the workplace, which is consistent with the study conducted by Hou (2017).

**Autocratic**

Rehman et al., (2018 pp.2) states that the autocratic leadership style puts focus on employee performance with the belief that leaders exerting their power will make employees productivity increase. Focus is not put on employee welfare or even the employee themselves, only on the productivity of the company overall. Fiaz et al., (2017, pp.146) also suggests that this leadership style considers performance more important than people. Fiaz et al., (2017, pp.146) states that it is usually assumed by autocratic leaders that people are lazy, irresponsible and untrustworthy by nature and if managerial functions such as planning, organising and controlling are left to subordinates the organisation will become inefficient. Under this leadership, communication is poor, teamwork is rarely used if ever and motivation is monetary based on individual performance. Punishment is also used as way to motivate employees to perform and not make mistakes or under perform. This style of leadership is associated with a low level of commitment and job satisfaction from employees often leading to high turnover. Rehman et al., (2018 pp. 10) concludes that employees in their study dislike the exertion of power
of an autocratic leader. Autocratic leaders distance themselves or ‘move away’ from employees which decreases their level of motivation and lowers commitment to the organisation. These findings are consistent with Leary et al., (2013 pp. 123) which states that leaders who show dysfunctional leadership traits which ‘move away’ from employees decrease engagement with work, job satisfaction and cause employees to burnout. From my research of leadership styles, I would consider autocratic leadership to be a type of destructive leadership which can contribute to counterproductive behaviour among employees.

**Democratic**

This style of leadership is characterised by how employees are more involved in team building, making decisions and setting goals. The assumption of Jones et al., (2016) (as cited by Fiaz et al., 2017) about democratic leadership is that by nature people can be trusted, self-motivated and like to be challenged by their work and like to have responsibility. This is opposite to an autocratic point of view which I have discussed above. The research I have found on this type of research is divided. Some research such as Fiaz et al., (2017, pp.152) suggest that democratic has no significant impact on the motivation of employees and therefore I cannot assume what impact it may have on their engagement with counterproductive behaviour. However, the study does state that a preference for democratic or laissez faire leadership can improve morale and increase productivity. From this I can assume that makes employees less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviours under these leaders. Rehman et al., (2018, pp. 10) states that there is not a significant relationship between democratic leadership and employee productivity, this is consistent with Fiaz et al., (2017).

**Laissez Faire**

From my research of this leadership style, laissez faire seems to divide researchers, for example some researchers believe it can motivate employees by giving them responsibility however, others believe it could be detrimental to the organisation because not all employees will have equal intelligence or capacity for making decisions. According to Fiaz et al., (2017, pp.147) the underlying philosophical assumption of laissez faire leadership is that people can be unpredictable and uncontrollable by nature; to understand each new person in the organisation would be impossible and overall just a waste of time because if they are unpredictable their behaviour could change at any time. Laissez faire leaders try to refrain from creating any disturbances among employees. The
laissez faire leader does not make all the decisions in fact, according to Fiaz et al., (2017) they shun decision making and communication until necessary, believing employees can take care of themselves. The results of this study suggest that a preference for Laissez faire leaders can boost productivity and morale, this makes it less likely for employees to engage in counterproductive behaviour. Rehman et al., (2018) found that there was a significant positive relationship between laissez faire leadership and employee productivity.

**Transactional**

Transactional leadership is a style of leadership which was not taught as a style of leadership during my degree programme. However, the more research conducted into the topic it was realised that it is a common style of leadership which many people would encounter in their working life, although it is not mentioned in much literature. According to Rehman et al., (2018) this style of leadership is based on a transaction; the employee provides their services and in return they get renumeration in the form of a wage or salary. Motivation under this leadership style is based on performance. Rewards are given for high levels of performance and punishments are used to discourage poor performance. According to Rodrigues and Ferreira (2015) the leader will set out goals for the subordinate to follow while clarifying that if these goals are successful there will be rewards but if unsuccessful there will be punishments. “Power is given to the leader to evaluate, correct and train subordinates when performance needs to be improved and to reward effectiveness when the required outcomes are achieved” (Couto 2007, as cited by Brahim et al, 2015, p.10). Bass (1990) states that under transactional leadership employees often become content with working at a minimal level to avoid punishments for poor performance but will not be motivated to work beyond this (Brahim et al., 2015). Rehman et al., (2018, pp. 11) states that transactional leadership encourages organisational citizenship which enhances employee’s commitment and loyalty to the organisation, lessening the likelihood of employees taking part in counterproductive behaviour.

**Transformational**

Transformational leaders according to Rodrigues and Ferreira (2015) take into consideration the needs of their employees individually but at the same time encourage employees to put the needs of the organisation as a whole above their own individual needs, this leads to employees engaging in organisational citizenship behaviours.
Transformational leaders try to motivate and inspire employees by sharing wisdom, experiences and the organisation’s goals and vision with the employees. It allows employees to learn the challenges and threats which face the organisation, this enhances the psychological contract making employees more committed to the organisation subconsciously.

Howladar et al., (2018, pp.165) found that transformational leadership increases employee productivity and reduces their engagement in counterproductive behaviour. Rehman et al., (2018, pp.11) states that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employees’ productivity. This style of leadership motivates employees to reach their full potential in aid of the organisation by enhancing the psychological contract. Therefore, the likelihood of employees engaging in counterproductive behaviour under this leadership is low. Rodrigues and Ferreira (2015, pp.500) state that transformational leaders give their subordinates autonomy and responsibility to deal with problems. Brender-Ilan and Sheaffer (2018) found that higher levels of autonomy were related to lower levels of counterproductive behaviour. This suggests that transformational leadership is not a factor in employees’ engagement with counterproductive behaviour.

From my research of leadership styles, I have concluded that certain styles of leadership are more likely to be a factor in causing counterproductive behaviour among employees in the workplace. This can be done unintentionally as well as intentionally, with leaders using inappropriate tactics to motivate employees such as lowering their wages to encourage them to work harder to gain back more money or using reprimands as a fear tactic to discourage poor behaviour. Often leaders think these are the ‘right’ ways to encourage employees, but they have opposite effects. The leadership styles which stand out as a factor or cause of counterproductive behaviour are; autocratic, laissez faire and transactional. From my research of leadership, I would consider these styles of leadership to be negative. I have found evidence that negative leadership can cause counterproductive behaviour of employees due to promoting motivation only through monetary means, using punishments and penalties for poor performance, not encouraging employees to reach their potential through extra responsibility or autonomy. These styles of leadership cause employees to work slowly, become disengaged and dissatisfied with their jobs. Employees begin to partake in counterproductive behaviour such as doing the bare minimum of work needed to avoid punishment, frequently missing
work, being late often, stealing from the organisation and stealing time from the organisation through ‘time banditry’.

The leadership styles which stand out to be positive are democratic and transformational. These leadership styles motivate employees, allow them to gain more responsibility, share the news and goals of the organisation, boosts morale and promotes productivity. From these findings I assume that employees under these positive leadership styles will be less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour as their leaders are likely to increase production levels among employees. These styles of leadership are more likely to produce a positive work environment for employees to work in.

**Methodology**

There is limited research which looks at leadership from the same perspective as this research paper. Much of the research I have found looks at leadership and its impact on employee motivation, focuses on one industry or focuses on counterproductive behaviour of employees without looking at the influence of leadership. For example, Schmid et al., (2018) focuses on the effects destructive leadership can have on the organisation from the perspective of leadership behaviour such as leaders stealing from the company or exploiting employees to move up the ranks. Klotz and Buckley (2013) discuss in their study the counterproductive behaviour of employees with little mention of leadership as a direct cause, Moorhead and Griffin (2010) imply that counterproductive behaviour stems from the personality of the employee as a result of them not fitting the job role properly and Jensen et al., (2010) discuss counterproductive behaviour in relation to psychological contract breaches. The perspective of this research study is that those employees who are motivated by their leaders are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour because they are satisfied in their role and so, happy in their work environment and are motivated to work harder. Similarly, employees who are unmotivated by their leaders and unsatisfied in their role will be more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour. I understand that leadership is not the sole cause of counterproductive behaviour, but I also don’t believe that personality is the sole cause of counterproductive behaviour. This study aims to prove that negative leadership is a factor which can cause counterproductive behaviour and lead to negative work environments and positive leadership is a factor which leads to productive work behaviour and positive work environments.
The research in this field is conducted using questionnaires from which quantitative data is collected and analysed. Likert scale questions are used in the questionnaire and 5-point scales are most common. The questionnaire carried out for this research paper will follow these same methods used by fellow researchers in this field. Questionnaires are appropriate for this type of research because the data collected from Likert scale questions can be easily analysed to find relationships within the data. My questionnaire is broken down into sections of grouped questions answered on a Likert scale. Each group of questions focuses on one specific topic related to either leadership or employee behaviour. The first section of questions focuses on the participants’ opinion of leadership in the participants workplace, asking participants to rate their leadership and how positive their work environment is. This set of questions will allow me to establish whether an overall positive or negative leadership style is present in the participant’s workplace. Secondly, the questions begin to focus on encouragement from leaders and how often leaders communicate with employees or motivate them. From this section I will be able to establish if perhaps there is a correlation between positive leadership styles and frequent encouragement, motivation and communication from leaders and vice versa. Lastly, I have asked employees about their own participation in counterproductive behaviour such as tardiness, intentionally working slowly and absenteeism. This will finally allow me to conclude whether or not positive and negative leadership styles influence employee involvement in counterproductive behaviour. The questionnaire also asks participants a number of open-ended questions. These questions ask participants to, for example explain their answers to certain questions or to explain the ways leaders motivate them. These questions give extra evidence to answer the research question.

All questionnaires are anonymous. Questionnaires are distributed through social media by appealing to anyone who would like to volunteer to answer the questionnaire. I have chosen to distribute the questionnaire through social media rather than asking an organisation to host and distribute the questionnaire because I feel that people who willingly volunteer to partake and answer the questions will do so honestly and will feel comfortable to share more information about their leaders, especially if their leaders do not know they are completing it. I feel that if an organisation was to host the study, employees might feel less comfortable sharing information about their leaders because they might feel there is a chance their leaders will find out what they have said in the questionnaire or their leaders might put pressure on them to answer in a biased way which portrays them in a different light. Using social media to distribute the questionnaire
should also allow me to reach a wide and varied sample of participants from different walks of life and industries. This will then ensure the results reflect leadership in all types of jobs and not one particular industry or company. The questionnaire is completed via a link to the website which the questionnaire was constructed on. The website allows participants to answer the questionnaire without passing on any personal information, keeping the responses anonymous. The questionnaire also includes a short message explaining to participants that the survey is for examination purposes only, therefore it will not be published to a mass audience. This message also states that participants are under no obligation to complete the survey but if they chose to complete it, they are consenting to me using the data from their responses. Therefore, I do not know who completed each questionnaire, but I am aware that they have consented to the use of their data for my research project. This is to ensure the identities of the participants are hidden and the organisations they work for will be unidentifiable. This is also included in the message, I felt it was important to include this information as it will allow participants to feel more comfortable answering with total honesty when answering questions about their actions and experiences in the workplace.

To analyse the results from my questionnaire the responses will be exported to the statistics software SPSS. With this a number of statistical tests can be run. I have chosen to set one question of my survey as a base question and from this all other questions can be related to the responses from this base question. The theory behind this is that those participants who have answered that they agree or strongly agree or answer that they disagree or strongly disagree to the base question will also follow this pattern for other questions. The test used in analysing the questionnaire data was the Chi squared test. This allows us to compare assumptions to the actual results gathered from the questionnaire respondents. If the calculated p value from the chi squared test is less than the chosen significance level, then we reject the null hypothesis. There will be multiple p values to interpret as the questionnaire has multiple questions to compare to the base question. When each p value is interpreted it can then be interpreted based on the amount of p values less than the significance level whether to reject the null hypothesis or fail to reject the null hypothesis. The second test used was Spearman’s Rho. This test shows the strength of the relationship between two variables using correlation. By comparing the results of this test to the results of the Chi squared test it can be seen if the results accurately portray evidence for one hypothesis rather than just coincidental evidence.
The questionnaire asks a number of open-ended questions which will help to understand the influence leadership has on participants of my survey. It is however important to remember open-ended questions must be interpreted carefully and not overly relied on. These questions are used to get a better understanding of how the participant feels about the leadership in their workplace, but these emotions and experiences could be exaggerated, underplayed or only part of the whole picture. These questions will not be included in the numerical data but because the sample size is small these questions will tell me the relationship employees personally feel toward leadership and may be able to help me conclude if my results are accurate or coincidental. The open questions asked in the questionnaire will not be analysed using any software or statistical methods. They are interpreted based on the answers given to other questions and how these questions relate to each other. These questions are open to interpretation therefore must be analysed as objectively as possible and not from a biased perspective.

**Analysis and Findings**

As I have mentioned previously, my research is based around the question ‘will different leadership styles have an impact on counterproductive behaviour in the workplace?’. This research paper sets out to prove through a research questionnaire that positive styles of leadership will have an effect on employee behaviour by motivating and promoting productivity therefore, negative styles of leadership will have an effect on employee behaviour by reducing motivation and promoting counterproductivity. The null hypothesis will therefore be there is no relationship between leadership and employee behaviour thus neither positive nor negative leadership styles influence the counterproductivity of employees. My alternative hypothesis will try to answer the research question by stating positive leadership styles will influence behaviour by promoting productivity and motivation and negative leadership styles will influence behaviour by reducing motivation and causing counterproductivity.

The main form of data collection done in this field of research is a questionnaire using the Likert scale. Data is then analysed using statistical tests and models to suit the questions which are trying to be proven. For this research paper I will be following these methods of data collection and analysis. The demographics of my respondents are as follows: Female: 22 participants (42.3%), Male 30 participants (57.7%), Age categories: 18-24 = 24 participants (46.2%), 24-35 = 4 participants (7.7%), 35-55 = 21 participants (40.4%), 55-65 3 participants (5.85). My sample age is varied as I recruited my
participants by through social media. This is a reason why the sample is quite small, I depended on people’s willingness to do the questionnaire rather than sending it to a host business. This was in hoping that this would increase people’s likelihood to be honest about the leadership in their workplace when answering the questions and also allowed me to reach a wide sample. The questionnaire was viewed by a large number of people but at the time of analysing the data had 52 responses which is less than half the number of people who had viewed the questionnaire but chose not to complete it.

The first step I took was to dichotomise the data into positive and negative as that is the way I have chosen to set out my hypothesis. Here, any neutral answers such as ‘neither agree or disagree’, ‘sometimes’ or ‘average’ will be eliminated. Positive answers are those such as ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’. Negative answers are ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’. I have chosen to compare one question overall against the other questions in my survey, making question 3 of my questionnaire my overall research question. The data was then tested using the Chi squared test to enable me to compare and understand how my assumptions relate to the data I have collected from my questionnaire responses.

**Chi Squared Test Results**

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From this table it can be seen which questions have an existing relationship with question 3. “Would you agree that your organisation provides a positive working environment?” This question is used as the base question of the survey to establish whether or not a positive working environment is present in the respondent’s organisation. Answering positively to this question suggests that there is a positive environment, so in order to come to a full conclusion it is also required to relate how the participants also responded to the other survey questions. This allows us to draw an accurate conclusion as to whether or not leadership styles affect employee’s behaviour. The question does not directly ask the respondent about the leadership style in their workplace (i.e. positive or negative) but does so indirectly. This is because a negative working environment can be a result of various aspects such as lack of communication between management and staff, bullying in the workplace, regular and ongoing disputes, lack of motivation etc, all of which may result from a poor leadership style. Answering positively to this question tends to suggest that the employee is satisfied with their working environment and depending on how they answer the other questions in relation to this question 3 allows us to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. A small p value of less than 0.05 will suggest sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

When question 3 (the base question) is related to question 4 there is strong evidence based on the calculated p value of 0.001, against the null hypothesis. This question asks, “are the leaders in your organisation an influence on the positive environment in your organisation?” 55.77% (29 participants) answered both positively to the base question and question 4. This suggests that these participants agree that the leadership in their workplace is the reason for a positive environment in their workplace. Relating the base question to question 5 we once again see strong evidence against the null hypothesis. This question asks if participants agree that “leaders in your workplace encourage you through praise or recognition?” 23.07% (12 participants) answered positively to both questions suggesting their positive work environment is influenced by praise from their managers. Moving on to question 6 this question asks participants to rate their leadership in their workplace, 42.31% (22 participants) answered both positively to this and the base question which suggests their leadership is a positive style of leadership. Relating question 7 to the base question 38.46% (20 participants) answered positively to the question “are your leaders good at motivating yourself and
your colleagues?” This suggests that motivation from leaders has led to a positive work environment. There is evidence against the null hypothesis when question 8 is related to the base question. This question addresses communication between the participants and their leaders. 40.38% (21 participants) answered positively to both questions suggesting positive leadership relates to communication between leaders and subordinates. Question 9 asks for participants' opinion on fair decision making by their leaders. Here we see evidence against the null hypothesis. 42.31% (22 participants) answered positively to both questions here suggesting that their leaders are fair decision makers which influences their environment positively. Question 10 asks “do you believe your relationship with your leaders influences your behaviour positively?” 53.85% (28 participants) answered positively to both questions. Relating question 12 to the base question we see more evidence against the null hypothesis. This question asks, “do your leaders encourage you to work to your best ability?” 46.15% (24 participants) answered positively to both questions which suggests their leaders use praise to motivate employees. For question 13 no P value could be calculated because no participants answered negatively to this question. Relating question 14 to the base question we find evidence which supports the null hypothesis. This may be because the question asks about supervision from leaders and it is often shown that less supervision from leaders and given employees freedom and responsibility to work alone promotes motivation and productivity. This evidence can be seen when relating question 15 to the base question. This question asks “Do you believe you would be more satisfied with your role if leaders shared more knowledge of the organisation’s goals and gave you extra responsibility?”, 40.38% (21 participants) answered positively to this question suggesting that leaders who give employees more responsibility encourage a positive work environment and job satisfaction for their employees.

The following questions in the questionnaire ask participants about the frequency of their participation in counterproductive behaviour. Therefore, those who answer positively to the base question we assume are less likely to engage in these behaviours and should answer these questions negatively.

Question 16 related to the base question shows evidence against the null hypothesis. 32.70% (17 participants) who answered positively to the base question answered negatively to having lack of motivation which suggests that those who are influenced by positive leadership are more likely to be motivated in the workplace and
work more productively. Question 17 asks participants how often they are absent from work, no p value could be calculated here because no participants answered positively, this means that participants never or rarely miss work. Question 18 asks participants how often they are late to work. Here 61.54% (32 participants) answered that they have a positive work environment and never or rarely engage in tardiness. Question 19 asks participants do they ever engage in work slowly or not to their best ability, for this question 42.31% (22 participants) stated they never or rarely engage in this behaviour while also answering positively to the base question which suggests that positive leadership reduces this behaviour. Lastly, relating question 20 to the base question 42.31% (22 participants) answered negatively to this question while answering positively to the base question which suggests that those who have a positive work environment with positive leadership are less likely to engage in these behaviours.

From my analysis of results, I can conclude that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This would mean the statement of my alternative hypothesis “positive styles of leadership will have an effect on employee behaviour by motivating and promoting productivity therefore, negative styles of leadership will have an effect on employee behaviour by reducing motivation and promoting counterproductivity” cannot be rejected.

Spearman’s Rho Test Results

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
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Appendix 2

The next step in data analysis is Spearman’s Rho. Looking at the above table which shows results from Spearman’s Rho test, here the base question (question 3) has been compared to all other questions. From this table we can see there are a number of both positive and negative numbers. Positive numbers indicate the two questions are positively related and negative numbers indicate that they are negatively related. Once the correlation coefficient is greater than 0.5 or -0.5 there is a relationship between the
two and the closer to 1 or -1 the stronger the relationship. Question 4 when compared to the base question has a correlation coefficient of 0.614 therefore there is a strong positive correlation between the responses of the two questions. Question 5 compared to the base question has a moderate positive correlation between the responses of both questions. Question 6, 7, 9 and 12 all also have strong positive correlations between the respondents of the two questions. Looking at these question’s p values from the Chi squared test these questions all have small p values which shows strong evidence against the null hypothesis and they also have strong correlation coefficients. This information tells us that the results from the Chi squared test are not coincidental and gives us more evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It can also be seen that questions 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 when compared to the base question all have weak correlation coefficients which tells us that there is no significant relationship between the respondents of both questions. These question’s p values from the Chi squared test all had larger p values showing evidence for accepting the null hypothesis. Therefore, the results generated from both spearman’s rho and the Chi squared test are consistent with each other.

In the questionnaire a small number of open-ended questions were asked to try to better understand the relationship participants have with their leaders. When participants were asked if in their opinion their leaders were good at motivating themselves and their colleagues and why; there were reoccurring themes in their answers. The participants who agreed or strongly agreed that their leaders were an influence on their positive work environment when asked in the open questions how their leaders motivated them stated that they were often praised by their leaders, given updates about the company, had ongoing meetings and briefings with their leaders. One participant claimed that they are appraised fairly by their leaders. Another participant stated that they can complete their projects without creative limits. Lastly, a participant said their leaders were interested in the happiness of their employees in their workplace. These open questions suggest that respondents to my survey perceive positive leadership as coming from frequent communication with leaders about company goals, fair appraisal of their work, freedom and responsibility to complete tasks and a leader’s interest in the wellbeing of employees.

Many of the participants who answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that their leaders were good at motivation remarked that they never or seldomly received praise from their leaders. The participants said this lack of praise left them feeling
unmotivated because often they ‘went out of their way to complete tasks’ or felt they had ‘gone above and beyond’ but received no recognition for their efforts. These participants have also stated that their leaders only communicate with them when they have criticism for the employees. Some participants also mentioned their employers used bullying tactics or would ‘crack the whip’ to discourage poor performance but these tactics seem to have deflated the employees and left them with a poor relationship with their management. A small number of participants mentioned that their managers often tried to motivate them in a positive way but came across as false or did not work to the extent hoped, this may show a lack of proper training of leaders within companies or a lack of genuine relationships between management and subordinates. This leads me to my final analysis from participant’s open questions; a number of participants have mentioned a divide between leaders and their employees. One participant calling it a ‘polar divide’ and another stating it is ‘us and them’. This to me suggests management often become power crazed which can be detrimental to the company if employees turn against these destructive traits. From these responses I would define negative leadership as lack of praise, lack of communication and “power crazed”.

**Discussion of Research Limitations**

The purpose of this study was to conclude if different leadership styles can affect the behaviour of employees; essentially whether negative leadership can be a cause of counterproductive workplace behaviour and if positive leadership can lead to productive behaviour in the workplace. My research may offer some insight into the relationship between leadership and employee behaviour. From the results of the questionnaire I have found a connection between the two variables. However, it must be noted that the results of my survey may not be an accurate representation of the relationship because my sample size was small.

Although it was my assumption that leadership has an impact on counterproductive behaviour, I must also take into consideration that by nature humans have different personalities and different feelings towards figures of authority. This means my research is not a conclusive study of whether leadership is the cause of counterproductivity but rather trying to find evidence that leadership could be a factor in causing counterproductivity.

Time is also a limitation to my research. My research is for examination purposes and therefore it must be completed by a deadline. This limits the research study as I do
not have a long timeframe to collect questionnaire data and analyse it. More time would allow me to find more participants making my sample size larger and therefore my analysis would be more accurate and representative of a wider variety of people.

In the future, if this study was to be carried out again or expanded on, I believe it should be done so with a longer time frame and a bigger sample size. This would allow for the study to have a more prominent place in the field of research as it would mean results from a larger sample size are more representative of the entire population and any trends found would be more likely to be conclusive concrete evidence rather than a coincidental correlation.

I have also included open ended questions in the questionnaire which I have discussed briefly in my analysis. It must be understood that interpretation of these questions is subjective and should not be relied on for conclusive evidence of leadership being a causing factor in counterproductive behaviour. The main use of these questions was to get some personal reactions from employees of how leadership has affected their work life and organisation’s environment.

Another limitation to my study is the scale used for frequency. When asking participants to rate the frequency of their behaviour from ‘very frequently to never’ this should have been analysed as never being a positive answer because it means the rate of engagement in counterproductive behaviour is low however I have mistakenly analysed this as very frequently being the positive answer. This has meant when I discuss the findings of my questionnaire response data, I have had to relate positive answers with negative answers whereas I would have preferred to relate all positive answers.

**Conclusion**

This research project began with the assumption that leadership will have an effect on counterproductive behaviour in the workplace and was based on my own personal observations from experience with leaders in my own life. Along with this, the view of counterproductive workplace behaviour portrayed in textbooks for my degree programme felt incomplete. One of the aims of this research project was to understand the types of leadership which are considered the least likely to promote productivity and the ones most likely to promote productivity. I have highlighted these leadership types in my literature review and for the purpose of analysing my own research questionnaire I have split these types of leadership into two main types. These two types are positive
leadership which possesses traits such as encouraging employees, sharing organisational goals and motivating and negative leadership which possesses traits such as being power driven, unmotivating or using poor methods of motivation. Another aim of this project was to understand the types of behaviours and acts classed as counterproductive behaviour and what affect these can have on a business and its employees. I now understand that counterproductive behaviour in the workplace is any type of behaviour which can disrupt the working day. It is referred to with many different titles such as dysfunctional behaviour (Moorhead and Griffin, 2010), deviant behaviour (Howladar et al., 2018) and counterproductive behaviour (Klotz and Buckley, 2013). The behaviours of counterproductive behaviour include absenteeism, tardiness, disengagement, slowly working, time banditry and other more serious forms include violence, bullying, theft etc. Counterproductive behaviour even in its smallest forms can be detrimental to the business according to Howladar et al., (2018) it may be a factor in up to 30% of business failures and so in my opinion if leadership contributes to these behaviours or is a factor in the causation of them it is important that research is conducted into how leadership can actively try to reduce these behaviours.

Throughout this study I realised there is limited research into the connection between leadership and counterproductive behaviour, many studies focused on leadership and motivation therefore from reading these studies I have concluded that motivated employees are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour and any leader who is a good motivator is using a positive leadership style. Employees who are motivated by their leaders are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour because they are satisfied in their role and so, are motivated to work harder. The main aim of this research paper was to answer my question and find out if leadership styles do have an impact on counterproductive behaviour and therefore either promote productivity or cause counterproductivity. I can conclude from my own questionnaire analysis that leadership styles do have an impact on counterproductive behaviour as I have found evidence from both the Chi squared test and Spearman’s rho test to reject the null hypothesis. As when my questions were related to the base question, more of the results had a small enough p value (less than 0.05) to reject the null hypothesis. My own research has found that positive leadership in an organisation which motivates employees, has good communication channels and challenges employees by giving them responsibility makes them less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviour by
providing a positive work environment. I have come to this conclusion because more evidence was found to reject the null hypothesis than to accept it.

The study does however have limitations. The main limitation in my opinion is time. If the study was carried out under different circumstances which did not require a submission deadline for grading, then the study could be carried out on a much larger scale as more time would be available to gain more participants and analyse the extra data. This would give the research a more varied sample which is more representative of the population. Other limitations include a lack of funding and a small sample size, this would also give us a more representative sample. It must also be noted that due to the subjective nature of this study and data analysis the results are open to interpretation. The results of this paper have been interpreted based on the information gained from literature studied and a mixture of data analysis and open-ended questions.

Overall, this study is a contribution to the research carried out on leadership and its effects on counterproductive behaviour. More contributions with less limitations will be able to find more conclusive evidence of these effects. I believe this study opens a door for organisations to focus on the effects one person can have on the entire workplace. Negative leadership influencing employees to become less productive and more counterproductive can only lead to poor results for businesses. In the future studies should also take into account the effects of individual employee personalities and how different leadership styles influence different personalities. This would give us an even more complete picture of leaderships effect on counterproductive behaviour. With a better understanding of these effects on behaviour leaders will have the tools to create more positive and productive work environments.
Bibliography


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Chi Squared

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This image shows results of the Chi Squared test on questionnaire data with the base question (question 3) compared to all other questions.

Appendix 2: Spearman's Rho

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This image shows results of Spearman's rho on questionnaire data with the base question 3 compared to all other questions.
Appendix 3: Research Questionnaire Questions with short message explaining to participants about the use of their data and consent.

**Purpose of the questionnaire and use of your results:**
The following questionnaire aims to determine the leadership you are being influenced by in your workplace and if this leadership can impact your behaviour by encouraging productivity or causing unproductive behaviour.

The following questionnaire is being carried out for research purposes for a final year research project. The results of the questionnaire will be used for examination purposes only and will not be published to a mass audience. Your information will be anonymous when the results are published and there will be no connection made between the questionnaire and yourself or your workplace.

By completing the questionnaire and submitting your answers to me you are consenting to your anonymous information being used by me for my research project. However, you are free to choose not to take part in the research project and therefore do not have to complete the survey or submit your answers to me.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation, I really appreciate it.

1. Which age category do you fall under?

| 18 - 24 | 24 - 35 | 35 - 55 | 55 - 65 | 65+ |

2. Please select your gender.

| Male | Female | Prefer not to specify. |

3. Would you agree that your organisation provides a positive work environment?

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4. Are the leaders in your organisation an influence on the positive environment in your organisation?

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5. Leaders in your organisation encourage you through praise or recognition?
6. How would you describe leadership in your workplace?

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7. Do you feel your leaders are good at motivating you and your colleagues?

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Explain your answer.

8. How often do your leaders communicate with you personally about your work or the workplace?

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9. Do you feel your leaders make fair decisions and consult with other staff members including you and your colleagues?

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</table>

10. Do you feel your relationship with your leaders influences your behaviour in a positive way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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11. Does your relationship with your leaders influence your work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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12. Do your leaders encourage you to perform to your best ability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Briefly explain how your leaders encourage you to perform better.

13. Do your leaders often leave you to work without supervision?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Very Frequently

14. Does a lack of supervision or instruction from leaders discourage you to work harder?
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

15. Do you believe you would be more satisfied with your role if leaders shared more knowledge of the organisation’s goals and gave you extra responsibility?
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

16. Do you think you work slowly because of lack of motivation?
   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

17. Are you often absent from work?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Very Frequently

18. Are you often late to work?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Very Frequently

19. Do you ever intentionally complete tasks slowly or not to your best ability?
   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Very Frequently
20. Do you ever complete a task without properly following instructions from your leaders?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Briefly explain how leaders in your organisation can improve your attitude toward work.