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## **THE IMPACT OF THE AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP OF THE LEADERS ON THE SUBORDINATE WELLBEING: IN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY**

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### **Abstract:**

*A leader may try various approaches to lead and manage an organization that helps to formulate strategy, adopt the positive direction and motivation, and above all lead to subordinate wellbeing. In the current study, an attempt is made to study the impact of the authentic leadership of the leaders on the subordinate wellbeing. The current study adopted a survey method to test the hypotheses. Authentic Leadership was measured by a 16-item scale developed by Avolio, Gardner and Walumbwa (2007). General Wellbeing was measured by a 19-item scale developed by Dupuy (1970). The data were collected from a sample of 315 respondents from the organization of the Petroleum Industry. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to assist both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and maintained the transparency and credibility of the research. The results revealed the significant correlation between the authentic leadership of the leaders and subordinate wellbeing in the Petroleum Industry.*

**Keywords:** Authentic Leadership; General Wellbeing and Subordinate Wellbeing.

**Cite This Article:** Dr. Deepti Dilip Shinde. (2018). "THE IMPACT OF THE AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP OF THE LEADERS ON THE SUBORDINATE WELLBEING: IN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY." *International Journal of Engineering Technologies and Management Research*, 5(11), 49-60. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2117154.

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### **1. Introduction**

During the last several decades of leadership research, a number of leadership styles have been tested by organizational leaders. The literature review based on leadership shows that leaders have been studied with various perspective traits based (Yukl, 2006; Zaccaro, et al., 2004) on behavior approaches to leadership (Bass, 1990) and situational context (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958; cited in Maurik, 2001). Recent research has shown that the role of positive psychology (Deci & Ryan, 1985) in the study of leadership has led to a focus on authentic leadership style (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) in a workplace context. Importantly, the leadership style adopted by leaders may influence the leaders as well as followers (Kipnis, Schmidt, Prince & Stitt, 1981). In fact, choosing the right style, at the right time in the right situation is a key element of the leader's effectiveness. Despite different leadership styles, authentic leadership style is being adopted by the leaders consciously in the present era in view of subordinate wellbeing. As a leader in today's uncertain and turbulent world, one's biggest challenge is to inspire subordinates with his/her leadership behavior and build subordinate wellbeing. An Authentic leader possesses qualities like; self-confidence, genuineness, and trustworthiness. He/She believes in subordinates'

strength, broad thinking, ability to create positivity and engaging organizational context (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005). Authentic leadership influences self-awareness and self-regulated behavior in both leaders and subordinates. It also enhances positive personal growth and self-development. Organizations achieve higher performance results from a cordial relationship between leaders and subordinates, when they choose a positive leadership style to motivate them. In a results-oriented organization, leaders face invariable challenges to motivate their subordinates to be more productive in a demanding work environment and they understand that their own rise is subject to the performance of their subordinates. Once the leader can motivate the subordinates with the help of productivity, subordinate wellbeing can be achieved. So, can a subordinate be motivated by leadership styles? The answer is, yes he can! The objective of this paper is to explore the prevalence of authentic leadership style of leaders in the Petroleum Industry and its impact on subordinate wellbeing.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Authentic Leadership

The roots of authenticity can be traced back to Greek philosophy (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and are often portrayed through an extract from Shakespeare's Hamlet: "to thine own self betrued" (Act 1, Scene 3). However, the term authenticity means "owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences or beliefs and processes captured by the injunction to know oneself and further implies that one acts in accordance with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p. 382). The term 'Authenticity' first time appeared in management and organizational studies through Barnard (1938). Later, the term 'Authentic Leadership' together was used by Begley (2001) in the literature review of a research paper. It wasn't until practitioner George (2003) wrote about authentic leadership in his book titled, "Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value" that authentic leadership found the intensity of attention, which is seen today. The term 'Authentic Leadership' is somewhat generic and can be associated with other forms of positive leadership, e.g. transformational, charismatic, servant, and spiritual (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). According to Luthans (2002) the positive construct was needed for sound leadership development. Hence, positive organizational behavior researchers became the catalyst for the same (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). The term 'Authentic Leadership' was used and defined by Luthans and Avolio; furthermore, they used the term 'Authentic' to describe the most basic genuine elements of positive leadership development. Since then a number of studies of this phenomenon have been conducted.

Though, authentic leadership is the new buzz-term in the leadership realm, it has been written about extensively in recent decades. Bekker (2012) stated, "If you want to sell a book, write about authentic leadership". The message is clear: authenticity sells! It sells because subordinates want the real thing and authentic leadership conveys authenticity and values; hence, greater attention was paid by scholars to study authentic leadership because the influence of authentic leaders extends well beyond success. Also, authentic leaders have a role to play in the organization as well as society by addressing organizational and social problems (George, 2003). Throughout the twentieth century, a number of significant writers and theorists (giants) helped generate fertile ground for the emergence of a focus on the qualitative dimensions of organizational life as well as on the study and practice of leadership, including authentic leadership. Authentic leadership theory

emerged from the core of the leadership, ethics, positive organizational behaviour and scholarly literature. The broad theoretical formation of authentic leadership posits that mainly authentic leaders draw upon their life experiences, psychological capital (i.e. hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy), moral perspective, and a supporting organizational climate (e.g. based on ethics and strength) to create better self-awareness and self-regulation with positive behaviors (i.e. relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing). In return the authentic leaders encourage their own and subordinates' authenticity and development, resulting in wellbeing and veritable, persistent performance (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005; Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

In forming the concept of authentic leadership theory, researchers developed many features in relation to authentic leadership. Initially, authentic leadership was labelled as a "root construct" considering its positive forms and development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Avolio & Luthans, 2006). While authentic leadership is considered independent of other forms of leadership, to explain subordinate outcomes, it has been presented empirically beyond ethical and transformational leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008). It is also theorized to clarify some of the basic element processes, such as self-awareness, that underlie all positive forms of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). This means that while a transformational leader may be authentic, because he truly cares about transforming subordinates into leaders (a key goal of transformational leaders), an authentic leader may not be transformational. Authentic leaders emphasise on developing their own and subordinate authenticity. This behavior is considered as a dynamic and interactive processes (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), although, this is not empirically tested. Avolio and Gardner (2005) viewed in due course that authentic leaders' values and beliefs become a vital part of their life; subordinates respond positively to these leaders' integrity, which in turn fosters the leaders' sense of authenticity. Furthermore, authenticity is recognized as being a matter of degree. Thus, the leaders are not entirely authentic or inauthentic, but can be described as achieving levels of authenticity (Heidegger, 1962; Erickson, 1995, as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

In conceptualizing authentic leadership theory, Gardner et al. (2005) emphasized that more authentic leaders may not be bias-free than less authentic leaders and also more authentic leaders are expected to have the capability and motivation to assess the perspectives of several stakeholders in a more objective manner when making decisions. In contrast, less authentic leaders are less objective in processing information than more authentic leaders. Besides, according to Gardner et al. (2005) the term, relational transparency significantly reflects the openness and transparent behavior in which authentic leaders and subordinates share information, as compared to relational authenticity. Deci and Ryan's (1995, 2000) stated that in self-determination theory, authenticity could be achieved through internally driven regulatory process, rather than through an external process. Kernis's (2003) identifies four elements of authenticity: self-awareness, unbiased processing, relational authenticity, and authentic behavior/action under optimal self-esteem theory. While both theoretical examples notably influenced the initial conceptualization of authentic leadership theory, some significant developments have taken place, particularly with regards to the definition of unbiased processing and re-labelling of relational authenticity.

According to Robin Sharma (2012), authentic leadership is all about being the person you know in your heart as yourself and always longing to be. Authentic leadership does not come from the

position you acquired or salary you earn, but comes from ones' self-being. He listed 10 interesting things that authentic leaders do on a regular basis in the life: 1) They speak their truth, 2) They lead from the heart, 3) They have rich a moral fibre, 4) They are courageous, 5) They build teams and create communities, 6) They deepen themselves, 7) They are dreamers, 8) They care for themselves, 9) They commit to excellence rather than perfection, 10) They leave a legacy. Avolio et al. (2004) stated that the unique element that sets apart authentic leadership from other forms are that, it is at the very core of what represents intensely positive leadership in whatever form it exists. According to Avolio et al. (2004), it is critical that authentic leadership is based on transparency, positivity, and high ethical standards. Moreover, authentic leaders are expected to evoke subordinates' self-concept and they share similar values with the leaders.

## 2.2. Wellbeing

Cambridge Dictionary (2016) defines wellbeing as, "the state of feeling healthy and happy". Oxford English Dictionary (2005) defines wellbeing as, "the state of being or doing well in life; being in a happy, healthy, or prosperous condition; moral or physical welfare (of a person or community)". Perhaps, the researchers have not yet reached the conclusion of its definition or its approach towards the study. Initially, researchers tried to define the construct of wellbeing on the basis of dimensions and descriptions. To develop the refined definition of wellbeing, one has to consider three key areas: An idea of a set point for wellbeing, the unavoidable condition of stability and the see-saw condition of challenges and available resources. Under the domain of psychology, wellbeing can be defined on the basis of three main features. First, wellbeing is a unique feeling in which individuals calculate their range of happiness under the subjective belief (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Second, wellbeing is full of emotions whereby an individual is likely to experience more positive emotions than negative emotions (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Third, most individuals consider wellbeing as a great persona, which is beyond physical health (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

Historically, the concept of wellbeing is debatable. The traditions based on philosophy, offer various theories as to what wellbeing is and how it matters (cf., Sumner, 1996; Tiberius & Hall, 2010). However, the contemporary terminology of wellbeing is used by psychologist, sociologists, ecologists, biologists, politicians and social reformers in varied ways. Defining wellbeing is based on two main approaches, namely: hedonic wellbeing and eudaemonic wellbeing. Hedonic and eudaemonic well beings are well connected to the personal and social life of an individual that consists of emotions, physical health, wealth, social activities, affection with family, and relatedness with society, life-span perspective and cultural influence. However, to a great extent, it is a matter of importance, not only for psychological theories but to every human being. It is a study of the relation between personal and social wellbeing and alimentially wellbeing of the universe. Wellbeing is complex to define and is a vague concept. Its perception varies by person and situation (Wilcock et al., 1998). It is measurable by using various wellbeing scales. In a current materialistic world, a lot of attention is given to the concept of wellbeing and many researchers carried out and are also continuing their research on different aspects of wellbeing. Truly, the concept of wellbeing makes people's life happy and healthy by all means. Maybe it is for this reason, that achieving wellbeing in the true sense is the World Health Organization's goal of "healthy mind in a healthy body in a healthy environment" (Shri, 2007).

However, the characteristics associated with subordinate feelings like pleasure, arousal, anxiety, comfort, depression, and enthusiasm at work may directly be the consequence of job dissatisfaction, the intention to quit the existing organization and get mental, physical, and emotional recovery at the end of the working day. That is why the current study will label these characteristics together as subordinate wellbeing.

### 2.3. Studies Linking Authentic Leadership Style and Subordinate Wellbeing

The concept of authenticity (i.e. being one's true self) has significant implication for the meaningfulness of subordinates' lives, especially in the process of leadership. It also influences how one lives one's life. Authenticity on the part of leaders influences not only the leaders' own wellbeing but also influences their subordinates' wellbeing. The moral and ethical foundation of contemporary organizational leadership is in the essences of positive approaches of leadership (Luthan & Avolio, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges & Avolio, 2003). On the basis of various researchers' definitions of authentic leadership, authentic leaders influence subordinates' wellbeing. First, the personal togetherness and prominent self-awareness of authentic leaders incorporated with their motivation for honest relationships, leads to unconditional belief on the part of their subordinates, which enhances subordinates' organizational working self-concept by influencing subordinates' personal identification with the leaders. Second, authentic leaders influence subordinates wellbeing through emotions. Also, authentic leaders create an atmosphere to experience positive emotions, and their own positive emotions influence subordinates' experiences. Third, leaders serve as positive behavioral role models for personally meaningful and authentic behaviors. Fourth, authentic leaders support the freedom of subordinates, by providing opportunities for skills and personality development. Finally, through social exchanges, authentic leaders influence and enhance subordinates wellbeing.

However, despite different leadership styles, authentic leadership style is being adopted by the leaders consciously in the present era for the wellbeing of the employees as well as the organization. In this, leaders take a personal interest in both on-the-work and off-the-work domains and attempt to promote subordinates' personal welfare. Authentic leadership relates to two different, yet overlapping philosophical approaches to human happiness, hedonic happiness and eudaemonic wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001) and its impact on subordinate wellbeing. This study examines the impact of authentic leadership on subordinate wellbeing in the Petroleum Industry. Leaders take a personal interest in on-the-work and off-the-work domains to promote subordinate wellbeing. Considering the same, in this study, an attempt is made to know, whether authentic leadership style of the leaders seems to lead subordinates' wellbeing in the Petroleum Industry.

Based on the above discussion, the current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To know the relationship between authentic leadership style of the leaders on subordinate wellbeing.
- 2) To investigate the impact of authentic leadership style of leaders on subordinate wellbeing.

Based on this discussion it was hypothesized that:

**H1:** Authentic leadership style of a leader has a direct positive impact on the subordinate wellbeing in Petroleum Industry.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

Data was collected through the Web-based survey, as well as through the hard copy. The Web-based survey link (<https://goo.gl/forms/eTf6eGDuskM3HXCK2>) was created in ‘Google’ and the link was emailed to all respondents with a brief description of the research background and purpose of the study. A total of 315 responses were gathered to report on their leader’s Authentic Leadership Style and self-administered General Wellbeing (GWB) scale. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20 was used to analyze the raw scores for the current study. The respondents were between assistant-manager and chief-manager levels.

Authentic Leadership Scale (Avolio, Gardner & Walumbwa, 2007) was used to measure authentic leadership style of leaders. It consisted of sixteen items with four dimensions: Self-awareness, relational transparency, moral perspective, balanced processing using a five-point Likert scale, varying from ‘1= rarely’ to ‘5= always’. General Wellbeing Schedule (Dupuy, 1970) was used to measure subordinate wellbeing. The scale consisted nineteen items with six sub-scales: anxiety, depressed-mood, general-health, positive-wellbeing, self-control, and vitality.

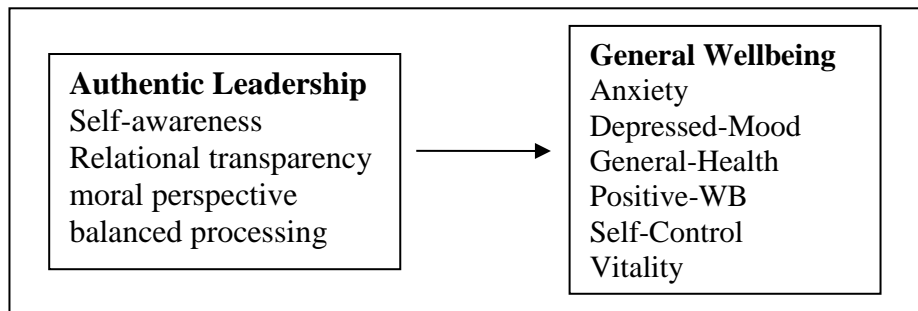


Figure 1: Research model showing the relationship between AL and GWB

### 4. Research Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Sample description

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	male	274	87.0
	female	41	13.0
	Total	315	100.0
<b>Age</b>	>30	75	23.8
	31-40	76	24.1
	41-50	80	25.4
	51-60	84	26.7
	Total	315	100.0
<b>Edu. Qualification</b>	Engineer	162	51.4
	MBA	52	16.5
	CA	25	7.9
	Others	76	24.1

	Total	315	100.0
<b>Designation</b>	Assit. Manager	103	32.7
	Dy. Manager	65	20.6
	Manager	66	21.0
	Sr, Manager	56	17.8
	Ch. Manager	25	7.9
	Total	315	100.0
<b>Exp. in Existing Org.</b>	up to 5	66	21.0
	6-10	49	15.6
	11-15	28	8.9
	16-20	43	13.7
	21+	129	41.0
	Total	315	100.0

N=315

#### 4.1. Reliability and Correlation Analysis Among Variables

The reliability analysis (Cronbach’s alpha) (table 2) shows an acceptable level for the scales, AL and GWB. Table 3 shows the correlation results between the variables and their dimensions under study. There is significant correlation association observed between the variables and their dimensions under study. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that authentic leadership style of a leader has a direct positive impact on the subordinate wellbeing in Petroleum Industry is proved.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Authentic Leadership	0.95	16
General Wellbeing	0.94	19

Table 3: Correlation Matrix between Variables

No.	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	AL_SA	1											
2	AL_RT	0.76**	1										
3	AL_IMP	0.72**	0.80**	1									
4	AL_BP	0.73**	0.80**	0.80**	1								
5	AL_TOT	0.88**	0.94**	0.91**	0.90**	1							
6	GWB_A	0.30**	0.35**	0.26**	0.36**	0.35**	1						
7	GWB_DM	0.30**	0.34**	0.30**	0.37**	0.36**	0.82**	1					
8	GWB_GH	0.12*	0.23**	0.17**	0.25**	0.21**	0.60**	0.56**	1				
9	GWB_PW	0.30**	0.32**	0.25**	0.33**	0.33**	0.70**	0.70**	0.44**	1			
10	GWB_SC	0.31**	0.39**	0.34**	0.38**	0.39**	0.76**	0.80**	0.49**	0.64**	1		
11	GWB_V	0.24**	0.30**	0.24**	0.28**	0.29**	0.78**	0.76**	0.57**	0.70**	0.70**	1	
12	GWB_T	0.31**	0.38**	0.31**	0.39**	0.38**	0.92**	0.92**	0.69**	0.81**	0.87**	0.88**	1

N=315, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## 4.2. Multiple Regressions

Table 4 shows multiple regression results between Authentic Leadership as the criterion variable and total General Wellbeing as the predictor variable. Specifically, these analyses were concerned with:

- 1) To what extent overall total authentic leadership predicts total general wellbeing in the composite sample.
- 2) To what extent dimensions of authentic leadership predict total general wellbeing in the composite sample.

The study was carried to find out the prevalence of authentic leadership style in the petroleum industry. It was hypothesized that authentic leadership style of a leader impact on the subordinate wellbeing positively. When authentic leadership and all the sub-dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, & balanced processing) were taken as independent variables, then R<sup>2</sup> improved to 17 percent of dependent variable GWB, due to the authentic leadership of the leaders (Table 4). This proves the hypothesis that authentic leadership style of a leader has a direct positive impact on the subordinate wellbeing in Petroleum Industry. The analysis of the first equation of the multiple regressions (Table 4) showed that total authentic leadership predicts 14 percent of total GWB of the composite sample. The authentic leadership significantly contributed to GWB in the composite sample. This proved that authentic leadership style of the leaders contributes to subordinate wellbeing. This means that the overall authentic leadership of the leaders contributes to creating subordinate wellbeing. The analysis of the second regression equation showed that the dimensions of self-awareness of the authentic leadership of the leader did not contribute significantly in explaining subordinate wellbeing in the composite sample. The dimensions of relational transparency of the authentic leadership significantly contributed to explaining subordinate wellbeing in the composite sample. The dimensions of the internalized moral perspective of the authentic leadership of the leader lack to contribute significantly to explaining subordinate wellbeing in the composite sample. The dimensions of the balanced processing of the authentic leadership significantly contributed to explaining subordinate wellbeing in the composite sample. This means that leaders, who practice authentic leadership style and have strong relational transparency & balanced, processing, enhance subordinate wellbeing. This enables leaders to groom the subordinate as a future leader. Also, those leaders, who practice authentic leadership style and did not exhibit self-awareness & internalized moral perspective did not contribute to enhancing subordinate wellbeing by all means. Thus, based on the findings of the current study, the role of authentic leadership was revealed to be very important to the Petroleum Industry, particularly for subordinate wellbeing. The relation between the authentic leadership and its dimensions and subordinate wellbeing was significant in a total sample. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Ha1: Authentic leadership style of a leader has a direct positive impact on the subordinate wellbeing in Petroleum Industry.



Table 4: Multiple Regression with General Wellbeing as Predictor Variable, with Dimensions of Authentic Leadership as Criterion Variable

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variables	
	General Wellbeing Total	
	Beta	t-value
<b>Authentic Leadership</b>	0.38	7.19***
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.14***	
	Beta	t-value
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	-0.01	-0.07
<b>Relational Transparency</b>	0.24	2.36***
<b>Internal Moral Perspective</b>	-0.11	-1.17
<b>Balance Processing</b>	0.29	2.93***
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.17***	

N=315, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Implications and Future Direction

Authentic leadership construct is a recent development and needs further development in terms of its theoretical base and empirical validity. For this reason, the scholars' of authentic leadership have projected several directions in which further research would be a focus. For example, Cooper et al. (2005) stress on defining, measuring, and rigorously researching the construct of authentic leadership. Avolio et al. (2004) emphasized that the theory and study of authentic leadership are still developing and researchers need to integrate a number of alternative research designs for further studies on this area. Since, authentic leadership is a multi-dimension construct (Avolio et al., 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003), it also requires multi-level research. It is also important to explore some areas such as: the historical background of Authentic Leadership Development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Gardner et al., 2005; Avolio, 2007); skills that authentic leaders use to influence their subordinates and organizations (Avolio & Luthans, 2006); and basic social processes that yield authentic leadership influence. Our findings have implications for leaders. First, the results show relational transparency & balanced processing tend to positively affect subordinate wellbeing. Second, self-awareness & internalized moral perspective of authentic leaders do not favor subordinate wellbeing, therefore, our findings suggest that leaders' self-awareness & internalized moral perspective fails to enhance subordinate wellbeing, Future researchers should conduct a wider study to explore authentic leadership style of the leaders in the petroleum organization and how it impacts on subordinate wellbeing in a varied manner. The respondents in the current study were restricted to assistant-manager to chief manager category from the Petroleum organization, who measures authentic leadership for their leaders. Thus, potential researchers should include non-management employees as well as higher-level managers (GM and above) from the Petroleum industry as respondent. The potential researchers should conduct a wider study on subordinate wellbeing in the petroleum industry in a varied manner. Fundamentally, general wellbeing scale self-reporting surveys are the most effective method of capturing the subjective nature of the leader-subordinate relationships and subordinate wellbeing. It would not be sensible to employ alternative sources such as leaders to evaluate these constructs, as they are generally subjective, and based on individual experiences. In the current study,

subordinates evaluate their own wellbeing keeping their leaders/bosses in mind. In future research, scholars should consider leaders themselves to evaluate their own wellbeing as well as subordinate wellbeing.

## 5.2. Limitations

- 1) The respondents were from one organization of Petroleum Industry of the city of Mumbai. Hence, there was the lack of diversity in the sample group.
- 2) Respondents were restricted to subordinates category. The leaders' category was not a part of the research.
- 3) Subordinates were restricted to the job group of assistant manager to chief manager grades, which consist of lower and middle management. Thus the findings obtained in this study did not represent top management leadership.
- 4) An electronic survey prevented some respondent from participating due to outdated or incorrect email addresses.

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