



# Transformational Leadership During COVID–19: Does Leadership Style Impact Leader Holistic Wellbeing?

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## Abstract

This study investigated Leadership Style as a predictor of leader holistic Wellbeing during COVID–19. A sample of convenience of 266 leaders participated in the study and self-assessed their Transformational Leadership behaviors and their Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, and Community Wellbeing and their Overall Life Satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the effects of Transformational Leadership as measured by the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (Avolio & Bass, 1995) on the five dimensions of holistic Wellbeing as measured by the *Leaders Four–Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985), when controlling for age, gender, marital status, income, and education. Analysis included ANOVA, *t*-tests, and Scheffé post-hoc tests. Results found significant positive relationships between both Age and Income and Overall Life Satisfaction. Major findings are that Transformational Leadership was a significant predictor of all five holistic Wellbeing components.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Full Range Model of Leadership, Wellbeing, Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, Community, Overall Life Satisfaction, COVID–19

## 1 Introduction

The impact of Leadership Style on Wellbeing has been widely studied (Donaldson-Fielder, Munir & Lewis, 2013; Montano, et al., 2017). Recent empirically based books on Wellbeing offer a more comprehensive definition and examination of the topic (Johnson, Robertson, & Cooper, 2018; Rath & Harter, 2010). This broader approach to Wellbeing gives organizations the ability to better support their workforce, including the leaders, by utilizing Leadership Styles that promote more comprehensive Wellbeing. This is appealing because empirical research shows Leadership Styles that support higher individual Wellbeing can also support increased worker effectiveness and performance (Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) which can translate into greater organizational performance and success.

Leadership research shows, for example, that the transactional nature of the Leader–Member Exchange style can positively effect employee task and organizational citizenship performance while also reducing counter-productive performance (Martin, et al., 2016). Further, we know that Transformational Leadership can foster employee sense of purpose and engagement (Johnson, Robertson, & Cooper, 2018), although it has also been linked to longer-term leader exhaustion (Zwingmann, Wolf, & Richter, 2016). Lack of worker Wellbeing often results from work-related strain and work/life imbalance (Harms et al., 2017; Munir et al., 2012). So while follower Wellbeing and the research surrounding it are important,

leader Wellbeing is also critical to the health and success of organizations. Therefore, research that identifies the impacts of Leadership Style on leaders and may help promote both their Wellbeing and their leadership success is crucial, especially in highly dynamic environments and times of crises, such as that experienced during the COVID–19 pandemic.

In January 2020, medical personnel identified the SARS –CoV–2 virus as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness in China (CDC, 2022), and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an international public health emergency. As of April 2022, the world continues to experience the effects of this pandemic, with WHO reporting over 450 million confirmed cases and more than 6 million deaths globally. New regulations and guidelines have been implemented across the globe, and vaccines have been developed. However, there have been repercussion beyond the health effects that continue to impact the economy, business, organizations, individuals, families, and communities. Economic stressors have resulted in the worst global recession since 1930, leading to corporate bankruptcies, business closures, and organizational restructuring as sales activity, cash flows, and revenue decrease (Shen et al., 2020; Acikgoz & Gunay, 2020; Abid & Modh, 2020). In addition to the significant negative physical and mental health effects of the virus, there remain economic stressors caused by lost income due to reduced work and lay-offs. Too, there has been reduced access to food, supplies, medical services, care givers and other basics.

Chen and Sriphon (2021) found that effective leadership response to the COVID-19 environment demands positive, robust direction and guidance from leaders who are credible, transparent, competent, optimistic, empathetic, open-minded, and resilient. Navigating leadership challenges, particularly in times of crisis, requires leaders with both a strong repertoire of leadership behaviors and solid Wellbeing. This study investigated the relationship between Leadership Style and leader holistic Wellbeing.

## 1.1 Background

Many organizations focus less on Wellbeing and more on Leadership Styles that positively impact workers and their performance. Therefore, much empirical research has been dedicated to Leadership Style and its impact on employees. However, most organizations expend significant resources and time recruiting leaders and developing them into the effective, productive managers they need for their teams and projects. These leaders, though, often face pressures to accomplish more with less while also increasing team productivity under situations of constant change. Despite strong skills and organizational training, the negative impacts of these work-related pressures include amplified stress, conflict, and burnout accompanied by reduced job performance and Wellbeing (Harms et al., 2017; Byrne, et al., 2014). Research shows that positive leadership and Wellbeing are both essential to preventing disabled leadership and dysfunction and to building more resilient leaders (Harms et al., 2017). Since positive leadership is linked to greater performance, less stress and depression, and more physical and psychological Wellbeing in followers (Byrne et al., 2014), perhaps a better understanding of the impacts of Leadership Style on the leaders may also promote their Wellbeing and thereby foster more robust leaders (Zwingmann et al., 2014).

Leadership training and coaching are increasingly available and often provided by the employing organization. Can a better understanding of the relationship between Leadership Style and leader Wellbeing facilitate the ability of leaders – as well as their organizations, trainers, and coaches – to utilize Leadership Styles that do not overlook the Wellbeing of the leaders? Are there Leadership Styles that more effectively mitigate lack of Wellbeing or even actively support leader Wellbeing? Can Leadership Style contribute to increasing Wellbeing and resilience, effectiveness, and longevity in our leaders?

### 1.1.1 Leadership Style

Many organizations desire positive leadership behaviors such as those found in Transformational Leadership, a leadership style that is one of the three components of the Full Range Model of Leadership developed by Bass and Avolio (1994). Transformational Leadership and a second component of the Full Range Model, Transactional Leadership, were initially presented by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985, 1999) and clarified by Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999). Burns saw Transformational Leadership as a dynamic collaboration between leaders and followers who are united in the pursuit of higher goals and pooled interests. The theory introduced leader behaviors that foster a relationship, morality, motivation, and success. By focusing on a combination of charismatic leader behavior and “higher goals” that motivate followers to accomplish more (Green, 2015), the theory moved beyond Leader–Member Exchange. With transactional behaviors, the Parties may have different goals, and to ensure performance the leader provides rewards that are contingent upon performance in quid pro quo arrangements. Burns saw these Transformational and Transactional behaviors as separate, at opposing ends of a single continuum. Bass, however, saw them as independent, each existing on a continuum where leaders can be high or low on both (Avolio & Bass, 1999; Green, 2015). Under both views leaders foster follower motivation and performance.

Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership are both active forms of leadership that have been found to be effective and are, therefore, quite popular (Kraft & Bausch, 2016; Syrek, Postell, & Antoni, 2013; Wang, et al., 2011; Johnson, et al., 2009; Dumdum, Low, & Avolio, 2002; Jung, 2001; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational Leadership is highly influenced by charismatic leadership and involves leader dedication of time and effort to influence, motivate, and empower followers through use of five behavioral dimensions. First, there are two idealized influence dimensions, one focusing on traits attributed to the leader and the other on leader behaviors. Leaders are viewed as exemplary role models and are admired and respected; they behave with high ethical and moral standards and are viewed as someone who can be trusted to do the right thing. Through these attributed and behavioral characteristics, the leader influences and engages others. Second, the individual consideration dimension relates to the leader serving as a mentor and coach to others whose needs the leader links to the organization’s mission while providing them with feedback and encouragement to develop and motivate them. The inspirational motivation dimension, third, speaks to the active role the leader takes in providing the work with meaning and challenge to encourage team spirit and organizational commitment. The final Transformational Leadership dimension, intellectual stimulation, concerns the leader’s ability to productively challenge normal beliefs and views and thereby stimulate positive innovation, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

The Transactional Leadership component of the Full Range Model consists of two dimensions and involves an exchange relationship whereby the leader provides rewards to followers for compliance with expectations and meeting clear goals (Green, 2015). Both the contingent reward and management by exception (active) dimensions reflect, to differing degrees, the leader’s level of active engagement in behaviors that foster others’ abilities to successfully perform. The leader may actively supervise follower activities and quickly correct matters to prevent problems or may wait for problems to surface before addressing issues (Bass, 1999). This latter behavior moves into the Model’s third leadership component.

Passive Avoidant leadership also consists of two dimensions that both generally reflect avoidance of leadership responsibility and activities, which usually results in ineffective leadership (Green, 2015). The management by exception (passive) dimension reflects an inactive approach of failing to engage in management or intervene to correct an issue until problems result in negative attention. The passive avoidance dimension reflects a general “absence” of leadership where an inactive leader provides no direction or decision-making.

This study utilized the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X)* (Bass & Avolio, 1995) to measure all three components of the Full Range Model – Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership. The study explored the impact of Transformational Leadership on holistic Wellbeing, as compared to Transactional and Passive Avoidant Leadership.

### 1.1.2 Wellbeing

Historically, the definition and measurement of Wellbeing primarily reflected two perspectives. First is a focus on measures such as life expectancy, poverty rates, and Gross Domestic Product; and second are subjective psychological methods to measure how people rate their life and what people experience in daily life (Rath & Harter, 2010; Diener, et al., 2009).

However, a more contemporary view inspired the approach to Wellbeing taken by Rath and Harter (2010) and Agrawal and Harter (2011) reflected in their global study that remains underway. This modern perspective was heavily influenced by both Ed Diener and Daniel Kahneman. Diener focuses on cognition and people’s positive and negative assess-

ments of their lives. Kahneman expresses greater distinction by delineating two aspects of subjective Wellbeing, describing “experienced” Wellbeing as people’s concern with their experiences and emotions in the moment, and “evaluative” Wellbeing as their after-the-fact memory of the experience. In defining Wellbeing as “all the things that are important to how we think about and experience our lives” Rath and Harter (2010) created a synthesis of the perspectives presented by Diener and Kahneman and utilized this more holistic concept in their study.

Based on the results of their global study, Rath and Harter (2010) assert that Wellbeing includes work/life aspects and encompasses a host of factors outside of the work environment. They, therefore, offer a broader definition of Wellbeing that includes physical, career, social, and community dimensions and addresses overall Wellbeing. Physical Wellbeing relates to individuals having good physical and psychological health and enough energy to get things done daily. Career Wellbeing reflects how individuals spend their time and like performing their work or volunteer roles. Social Wellbeing is about having a life that includes strong relationships and love. Community Wellbeing indicates individuals’ engagement with the community in which they live. Overall Wellbeing refers to individuals’ overall level of satisfaction with life.

Perhaps a better understanding of the relationship between Leadership Style and leader Wellbeing would contribute to the ability of organizations and their leadership development specialists and coaches to cultivate more robust leaders, less impacted by the cycle of stress and burnout and more able to achieve work/life balance. Specifically, a broader view of Wellbeing that includes some of Rath and Harter’s (2010) Wellbeing elements, as measured by the *Leaders Four–Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008), and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, et al., 1985), may help identify key mind-sets, behaviors and strategies that support Wellbeing and are consistent with positive Leadership Styles.

### 1.1.3 Leadership Style and Wellbeing

When technical skills are underdeveloped or misaligned with the needs of the work environment, performance and Wellbeing can suffer. Similarly, “soft skills” such as Leadership Style also facilitate or constrain accomplishment of organizational activities and impact the Wellbeing of both leaders and followers. Wellbeing and its association with Leadership has been extensively studied. However, the focus of many research studies has been on follower Wellbeing to the exclusion of leader Wellbeing (Montano et al., 2017; Zwingmann et al., 2014; Donaldson–Fielder et al., 2013; Nielson & Daniels, 2012; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Alimo–Metcalf, Alban–Metcalf, et al., 2008; Podsakoff, Bommer & Podsakoff, 2007). Additionally, many studies concentrate primarily on physical and psychological Wellbeing or on the job performance components of career Wellbeing rather than taking a holistic approach (Rath & Harter, 2010).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research investigating the effects of Leadership Style often focuses on employees and explores job satisfaction, productivity, work-life balance, or happiness. Wellbeing is frequently defined as physical and psychological wellness (or the absence of illness) (Zwingmann, et al., 2014; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010), despite existence of a well-researched, more comprehensive definition of Wellbeing (Rath & Harter, 2010).

While a substantial body of research reveals compelling evidence of a relationship between Leadership Style and follower Wellbeing, the continued emphasis on the Wellbeing of the follower has resulted in little research focusing on the leader. There exists well-established literature on the Full Range Model of Leadership and particularly Transformational Leadership

(Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Generally, though, studies of the relationship between Leadership Style and leader Wellbeing are limited, and there is little empirical research that measures the connections between Leadership Style and leader Wellbeing. Therefore, a need exists to better identify and understand the Leadership Styles that support leaders’ own Wellbeing, not only that of their followers. Leaders need to be able to identify and use Leadership Styles that support their work and their Wellbeing, and leadership development needs to include styles that produce both positive Leadership and positive Wellbeing outcomes.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study explored Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership as predictors of leader holistic Wellbeing. The study also utilized a more comprehensive definition of Wellbeing, reflective of aspects of Rath and Harter’s more holistic approach. It investigated self-assessed Leadership Style as measured by the *MLQ–5X* (Avolio & Bass, 1995), and its relationship with leader self-assessed holistic Wellbeing, when controlling for age, gender, marital status, income, and education. Five dimensions of holistic Wellbeing – career, physical and psychological, social, and community – are assessed using the *Leaders Four–Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008). The fifth aspect, overall life satisfaction, is measured using the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985).

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study focuses on answering the following five research questions:

- (1) Is there a significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Physical and Psychological Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education?
- (2) Is there a significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Career Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education?
- (3) Is there a significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Social Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education?
- (4) Is there a significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Community Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education?
- (5) Is there a significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Overall Life Satisfaction when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education?

## 1.5 Conceptual Definitions

### 1.5.1 Leadership Style

This study defined Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership based on the Full Range Model of Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Burns (1978) and Bass (1985, 1999), define Transformational leaders as those who motivate followers to do more than originally expected by serving as good role models. They are charismatic and trustworthy,

provide workers with feedback and encouragement and inspire and develop them by providing meaningful and challenging work.

Transformational Leadership has five subscales (Bass & Avolio, 1995): (1) Idealized Influence—attributes and (2) Idealized Influence—behaviors (both signifying the leader as an influential role model), (3) Individual Consideration (the leader caring about workers as individuals), (4) Inspirational Motivation (the leader as a motivator), and (5) Intellectual Stimulation (the leader as a mentor, developer, and challenger).

Transactional Leadership describes leaders who reward followers for high performance and compliance with expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This is a leader–follower exchange relationship where leaders set clear objectives, goals, and standards that they use to measure and reward progress and performance. The Contingent Reward subscale reflects the process whereby followers exchange their work performance for rewards specified by the leader. The Management–by–Exception (active) subscale reflects a management approach of actively monitoring workers and taking corrective action when standards and goals are not achieved.

Passive Avoidant Leadership describes leaders who avoid active participation in their leadership role and responsibilities (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The Management–by–Exception (passive) subscale refers to leaders who fail to act until problems become serious and clearly noticed by others. The Laissez–faire subscale refers to an overall lack of leadership and responsibility, wherein management and decision-making are avoided.

### 1.5.2 Wellbeing

Wellbeing encompasses multiple facets of life, including how people think and how they feel about aspects of their life. This research defined Wellbeing as the leader's self-assessment of their Wellbeing based on the dimensions of career (work), social (home and family), community, and physical and psychological (self: mind, body, and spirit), and Overall Life Satisfaction. Career Wellbeing was conceptually defined as how people think and feel about how they spend their time in their work (or volunteer) roles. Social Wellbeing was conceptually defined as how people think and feel about having love, home, family, friends, and other close relationships and rewarding activities in their lives. Community Wellbeing was conceptually defined as how people think and feel about their community and their engagement with it. Physical and Psychological Wellbeing was conceptually defined as how people think and feel about their physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual health. Overall Life Satisfaction was an overall Wellbeing measure conceptually defined as how much people think and feel that they are getting the things in life that are most important to them and that they are living a life close to their ideal.

## 1.6 Literature Review

Empirical support for relationships between Leadership Style and multiple Wellbeing dimensions were found in research studies and meta-analyses. Various demographic variables were also found to effect Wellbeing.

### 1.6.1 Leadership Style and Wellbeing

Research shows Leadership Style impacts several aspects of Physical and Psychological Wellbeing, including emotional intelligence, overall burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, low personal accomplishment, neuroticism, depression, anxiety, and workplace alcohol consumption, (Harms & Credé, 2010; Harms et al., 2017; Zwingmann, Wolf, & Richter, 2016; Bono & Judge, 2004; Byrne et al., 2014). Leadership Style has been found to also affect the leader job/career effectiveness, success, and satisfaction aspects of Career Wellbeing (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Jones & Jones, 2017; Haider & Riaz, 2010). Too, it has been found that

Leadership Style effects Social Wellbeing in terms of extraversion, openness, agreeableness, social aspects of emotional intelligence, and family–work dynamics (Bono & Judge, 2004; Litano et al., 2016; Harms & Credé, 2010). Additionally, empirical evidence shows Leadership Style affects aspects of societal activity and Community Wellbeing, such as altruism, public service motivation, civic virtue, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Meihami, Varmaghani, & Meihami, 2013; Fazzi & Zamaro, 2016; Zehir et al., 2014; Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007; Puranova, Bono, & Dziewieczynski, 2006).

### 1.6.2 Demographics and Wellbeing

Empirical evidence shows relationships between demographic attributes and Wellbeing. Age has been found to impact satisfaction with life, depression, emotional exhaustion and control, cynicism, engagement, withdrawal from work, home–work conflict and imbalance, social memberships and support, volunteerism, positive relations with others, and purpose in life (Lee et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2004; Tomaszewski, 2013; Sironi, 2012; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Studies have also found Gender differences with respect to satisfaction with life, perceived leader effectiveness, emotional exhaustion, depression, anxiety, burnout, social support, and positive relations with others (Davis & Wu, 2014; Gerrans, Speelman, & Campitelli, 2013; Sironi, 2013; Paustian–Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014; Converso et al., 2020; Rout, 1999; Walsh, 2013; Tomaszewski, 2013; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Marital Status has also been shown to impact Wellbeing in terms of satisfaction with life, career development, full utilization of training, upward mobility, full-time employment, annual earnings and work hours, work–family dynamics, depressive symptoms, social networks and memberships, and volunteerism (Sironi, 2012; Diener et al., 2000; Subramaniam, Arumugam, & Akeel, 2014; Houseknecht & Vaughan, 1987; Pollmann–Schult, 2011; Ahituv & Lerman, 2007; LaPierre, 2009; Lapierre et al., 2018; Tomaszewski, 2013).

Income has been found to impact Wellbeing. Research shows Income is correlated to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, social participation and support, overall Wellbeing and bad health, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dyslipidemia, obesity, anxiety, depression, insomnia, sleep quality and sleepiness (Davis & Wu, 2014; Tay & Diener, 2011; Judge et al., 2010; Tomaszewski, 2013; Tan, et al., 2020; Zissimopoulou et al., 2020).

Research has also shown Education to be linked to Wellbeing in terms of salary, promotion, job satisfaction, subjective Wellbeing, and satisfaction with life (Ng et al., 2005; Adeoye, Akoma, & Binuyo, 2014; Tan et al., 2020; Davis & Wu, 2014). Studies have revealed relationships between Education and mental health problems, depression, societal participation, volunteerism, social contacts, and memberships (Tomaszewski, 2013, Sironi, 2012; Lee et al., 2017).

## 2 Methods

Participants self-identified as leaders based on the stated definition and choose to participate or not participate. Subjects completed a demographic survey, a leadership style assessment, and two Wellbeing assessments.

### 2.1 Recruitment, Sample, and Procedure

#### 2.1.1 Recruitment Pool

This survey study utilized a sample of convenience, and the recruitment pool ( $N = 2,065$ ) was derived from the principal researcher's professional network. This pool consisted of entry– to executive–level leaders and company founders/owners in various roles and industries including pub-

licly and privately held companies ranging from small businesses to international conglomerates as well as Government and Non-Governmental Organizations. Invitations to participate were sent to individuals in the United States in all 50 states and its 5 territories and in 40 other countries.

### 2.1.2 Sample and Procedure

To obtain the sample ( $N = 266$ ), invitations to participate were sent to those in the recruitment pool through LinkedIn and private email. The invitation included a link to the Qualtrics site that opened to the Informed Consent information, including the definition of a “leader” and the opportunity to self-identify as a leader, and all participation was completed through the Qualtrics links. Leaders who consented to participate were taken to the survey to complete the demographic information and assessments. Those who did not consent were automatically closed out of the on-line survey.

A demographic survey consisting of five questions regarding Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education was administered. To obtain Leadership and Wellbeing information, leaders completed the *MLQ-5X* (Bass & Avolio, 1995), *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008), and *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985).

## 2.2 Ethical Considerations

Participant anonymity and confidentiality were assured through the Informed Consent process; therefore, responses were tracked based only on total number of responses received, and a 12.9% response rate was achieved. Participation in the survey was voluntary, without participant costs or monetary incentives. Participants could discontinue the survey at any time for any reason or no reason, without penalty. While the focus of this study was Leadership and Wellbeing, it involved no health risks; no Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) data was collected. This study was approved by the Our Lady of the Lake University Internal Review Board. Permission to utilize the *MLQ-5X*, *Leaders Four-Way Assessment*, and *Satisfaction with Life* instruments was secured from each Mind Garden, Friedman, and Diener et al, respectively.

## 2.3 Operational Definitions, Reliability and Validity

The Leadership independent variables were operationalized via mean scores from the *MLQ-5X* (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The Wellbeing dependent variables were operationalized via mean scores from both the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985).

### 2.3.1 Leadership Style Variables and Instruments

The *MLQ-5X* (Bass & Avolio, 1995) measured Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership. The instrument utilizes a five-point Likert scale with scores ranging from zero to four to produce a mean score for each Leadership Style. The instrument consists of 36 questions that address 9 dimensions. Transformational Leadership consists of 5 components, each with 4 items (20 questions); Transactional Leadership has 2 components, each with 4 items (8 questions); and Passive Avoidant Leadership has 2 components with 4 items (8 questions).

Developed by Bass (1985), the *MLQ* is a behavioral research instrument for effective leadership that has been subject to validation Studies at the Gold Bar Standard. Internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha) ranges are, for the Transformational scale .62 to .76, for the Transactional scale .60 to .76, and for the Passive Avoidant scale .60 to .64 (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

### 2.3.2 Wellbeing Variables and Instruments

Wellbeing was assessed by two scales. The *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) measured specific components of Wellbeing identified by previous research as essential to Wellbeing (Rath & Harter, 2010). Also, the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985), a psychological assessment, captured data on leader self-perceived overall life satisfaction.

**Leaders Four-Way Assessment.** This tool uses a 6-point Likert scale with 18 questions measuring 4 Wellbeing dimensions, producing a mean score for each dimension. The Self: Mind, Body, and Spirit dimension measured Physical and Psychological Wellbeing through leader self-ratings of the dimension’s importance and their own focus, performance, and satisfaction levels. Likewise, the Work/Career dimension measured Career Wellbeing, the Home/Family dimension measured Social Wellbeing, and the Community/Society dimension measured Community Wellbeing.

Internal reliability for this tool was found by Barrientos (2018) in a study of business owner success with work, home, community, and self. Cronbach Alphas were for the Work dimension .70, the Community dimension .88, the Home dimension .80, and the Self dimension .88.

**Satisfaction with Life Scale.** This 5-question assessment (Diener et al., 1985) uses a 7-point Likert scale to measure overall Wellbeing in terms of life satisfaction and produce a mean score. The Scale has been found reliable against other tools measuring meaning of life (Steger et al., 2006), happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), hope (Bailey et al., 2007), and life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Pavot et al., 1991). Developmental Cronbach Alpha for the Scale is .87 (Diener et al., 1985), and a study of the scale’s reliability and validity produced an Alpha of .84 (Galanakis et al., 2017).

### 2.3.3 Control Variables and Demographic Survey

The literature review found significant relationships between each Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education and Wellbeing. These control variables were operationalized via the Demographic Questionnaire.

- (1) **Age** was operationalized as age based on date of birth, as of the date the leader completed the survey.
- (2) **Gender** was operationalized as three choices: Female, Male, or Prefer Not to Respond.
- (3) **Marital Status** was operationalized as five choices: Never Married, Married, Widowed, Divorced, or Separated.
- (4) **Income** was operationalized as five brackets (for year 2019, in U.S. dollars): \$0 to \$24,999; \$25,000 to \$49,999; \$50,000 to \$99,999; \$100,000 to \$199,999; or \$200,000+.
- (5) **Education** was operationalized as five choices: High School or Below; Associate’s/Vocational Degree; Bachelor’s Degree; Master’s Degree; or Doctoral Degree or Equivalent.

## 2.4 Research Design and Statistical Analysis

### 2.4.1 Research Design

The research design encompassed gathering demographic data and collecting and analyzing the leaders’ perceptions of (i) their own leadership behaviors via the *MLQ-5X* (Bass & Avolio, 1995), and (ii) their own Wellbeing via the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985). The study controlled for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income and Education.

### 2.4.2 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, Pearson correlations ( $r$ ), and multiple regression, all conducted at a significance level of  $p < .05$ . For categorical variables, explanation of variance ( $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$ ) included  $t$ -Tests, ANOVAS for differences between three or more groups, and Scheffé post hoc tests for differences between means. For the significant continuous variables, explanation of variance ( $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$ ) included beta weights ( $\beta$ ), partial correlations ( $r_p$ ), and scatterplots.

### 3 Results

The data showed 292 leaders (14.2%) consented to participate, and up to 266 (12.9%) provided sufficient useable data. The analysis included descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and final results.

#### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The statistics include descriptions of the five demographic variables, three Leadership Style independent variables, and five Wellbeing dependent variables. Statistics include mean, standard deviation, mode, median, range, and skewness.

##### 3.1.1 Demographic Control Variables

Descriptions reflect the results of the demographic survey.

**Age.** Age data, as provided by 215 respondents, revealed a distribution that approximated normality (skewness =  $-.399$ ), with a range of 28 to 70 years, mean of 54.39, standard deviation of 9.93, and mode and median both of 55.90 years.

**Gender.** As provided by 264 subjects, gender data reflected 133 females (50.4%) and 131 males (49.7%).

**Marital Status.** Responses from 265 participants reflected a distribution of 190 Married (71.7%), 38 Divorced (14.3%), 26 Never Married (9.8%), 7 Separated (2.6%) and 4 Widowed (1.5%). Because the two categories Separated and Widowed had few respondents, the sample group was not likely to be representative of the population. To increase statistical power and reduce the probability of Type II error, these groups were combined.

**Income.** As provided by 265 participants, income data revealed a distribution of 3.8% in the \$0 to \$24,999 income bracket ( $N = 10$ ), 6.0% in the \$25,000 to \$49,999 bracket ( $N = 16$ ), 16.2% in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 bracket ( $N = 43$ ), 42.3% in the \$100,000 to \$199,999 bracket ( $N = 112$ ), and 31.7% in the \$200,000 and above bracket ( $N = 84$ ). The lowest two income brackets had very few respondents, so these two groups were combined to increase statistical power and reduce Type II error probability.

**Education.** Information on highest education level attained was provided by 266 respondents. Data reflected a distribution of 2.3% for High School or Below ( $N = 6$ ), 5.6% for Associate/Vocational Degree ( $N = 15$ ), 24.0% for Bachelor's Degree ( $N = 64$ ), 48.1% for Master's Degree ( $N = 128$ ), and 19.9% for Doctoral Degree or Equivalent ( $N = 53$ ). The number of respondents in the lowest two categories was small, so to increase statistical power and reduce Type II error, these groups were consolidated.

##### 3.1.2 Independent Variables: Leadership

The descriptive statistics for 244 respondents reflect *MLQ-5X* (Bass & Avolio, 1995) results for the 3 Leadership variables.

**Transformational Leadership.** The distribution of responses to 20 questions across 5 subscales approximated normality (skewness =  $-.898$ ), with scores ranging from 1.37 to 4.00. Results revealed a mean of 3.26, standard deviation of .42, median of 3.35, and mode of 3.40. Comparison of the

study's sample mean to *MLQ* normative data ( $M = 3.02$ ) showed a significant difference,  $t(243) = 8.766$ ,  $p < .001$ ; the sample mean was higher.

**Transactional Leadership.** The distribution of responses to 8 questions across 2 subscales reflected normality (skewness =  $.010$ ), with scores ranging from .88 to 3.75. Results revealed a mean of 2.37, standard deviation of .488, and median and mode both of 2.38. There was a significant difference,  $t(243) = 2.507$ ,  $p < .014$ , between the study's sample mean and the *MLQ* normative data ( $M = 2.29$ ); the sample mean was higher.

**Passive Avoidant Leadership.** The distribution of responses to 8 questions across 2 subscales approximated normality (skewness =  $.883$ ), with scores ranging from .00 to 2.50. Results revealed a mean of .74, standard deviation of .485, median of .63, and mode of .50. A significant difference,  $t(243) = -3.141$ ,  $p < .014$ , was found between the study's sample mean and the *MLQ* normative data ( $M = .84$ ); the sample mean was lower.

##### 3.1.3 Dependent Variables: Wellbeing

The descriptive statistics for 241 respondents reflect *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) for the 5 Wellbeing variables.

**Physical and Psychological Wellbeing.** The Self: Mind, Body, and Spirit dimension of the assessment measured Physical and Psychological Wellbeing. The distribution of responses to 6 questions approximated normality (skewness =  $-.669$ ), with scores ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, a mean of 3.87, and standard deviation of .68.

**Career Wellbeing.** The Work/Career dimension of the assessment measured Career Wellbeing. The distribution of responses to 4 questions approximated normality (skewness =  $-.684$ ), with scores ranging from 1.50 to 5.90, a mean of 4.15, and standard deviation of .55.

**Social Wellbeing.** The Home/Family dimension of the assessment measured Social Wellbeing. The distribution of responses to 4 questions approximated normality (skewness =  $-.441$ ), with scores ranging from 1.75 to 5.09, a mean of 4.06, and standard deviation of .658.

**Community Wellbeing.** The Community/Society dimension of the assessment measured Community Wellbeing. The distribution of responses to 4 questions approximated normality (skewness =  $-.247$ ), with scores ranging from .25 to 5.00, a mean of 3.20, and standard deviation of .871.

The following descriptive statistics for Overall Life Satisfaction reflect *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985) results for 241 subjects.

**Overall Life Satisfaction.** The distribution of responses to 5 questions ranged from 1.60 to 7.00, with a mean of 5.46 and standard deviation of 1.12. At  $-1.047$ , the skewness indicated that the sample scores deviated notably from what would have been found in a normal distribution. It is possible this could lead to underestimated correlations for this sample.

### 3.2 Statistical Analysis Result

#### 3.2.1 Bivariate Correlations

Table 1 provides the results of Pearson  $r$  correlation analysis. Results are shown only for statistically significant relationships.

**Demographic Control Variables.** Pearson analysis revealed that Age was the only statistically significant control variable, showing a positive correlation with Career Wellbeing ( $r = .164$ ,  $p < .05$ ) as measured by the Work/Career dimension of the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman,

2008). Age also showed a positive correlation with Overall Life Satisfaction ( $r = .149, p < .05$ ) as measured by the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985).

**Main Leadership and Wellbeing Variables.** Pearson analysis found significant relationships between the main variables that are the focus of this study: Leadership as measured by the *MLQ* (Avolio & Bass, 1995), and Wellbeing as measured by the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) and *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985).

Transactional Leadership and Career Wellbeing had a positive correlation ( $r = .273, p < .01$ ), reflecting the more Transactional Leadership, the more Career Wellbeing. Passive Avoidant Leadership and Career Wellbeing showed a negative correlation ( $r = -.301, p < .01$ ), indicating the more Passive Avoidant Leadership, the less Career Wellbeing.

Transformational leadership showed a significant relationship with all five dimensions of Wellbeing. Positive correlations were found with Career ( $r = .486, p < .01$ ), Physical and Psychological ( $r = .326, p < .01$ ), Social ( $r = .311, p < .01$ ), and Community ( $r = .275, p < .01$ ) Wellbeing, and Overall Life Satisfaction ( $r = .258, p < .01$ ). Results indicate the more Transformational Leadership, the more Career, Physical and Psychological, Social and Community Wellbeing, and Overall Life Satisfaction.

**Inter-correlations.** Inter-correlations were found among the Leadership independent variables and among the Wellbeing dependent variables.

**Leadership.** The independent variables showed inter-correlations reflecting predictable amounts of convergent validity since all three measure components of the Full Range Model of Leadership. Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership had a positive inter-correlation ( $r = .346, p < .01$ ), while Transformational Leadership and Passive Avoidant Leadership had a negative inter-correlation ( $r = -.208, p < .01$ ).

**Wellbeing.** Positive inter-correlations were found between Physical and Psychological Wellbeing and Social Wellbeing ( $r = .448, p < .01$ ), Community Wellbeing ( $r = .472, p < .01$ ), and Career Wellbeing ( $r = .305, p < .01$ ). Positive inter-correlations were also found between Social and Community Wellbeing ( $r = .454, p < .01$ ), as well as between Career Wellbeing and both Community Wellbeing ( $r = .203, p < .01$ ) and Social Wellbeing ( $r = .265, p < .01$ ).

The Wellbeing variable Overall Life Satisfaction showed positive relationships with each Career Wellbeing ( $r = .325, p < .01$ ), Physical and Psychological Wellbeing ( $r = .310, p < .01$ ), Social Wellbeing ( $r = .371, p < .01$ ), and Community Wellbeing ( $r = .234, p < .01$ ). Results indicate the more Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, and Community Wellbeing, the more Overall Life Satisfaction.

**Table 1A. Significant Bivariate Correlations (Pearson  $r$ ) Leadership (Independent Variables)**

	AGE	LEADERSHIP		
		TRF	TRX	PA
AGE				
TRF				
TRX		.346**		
PA		-.208**		
P&P		.326**		
CAR	.164*	.486**	.273**	-.301**

SOC		.311**		
COM		.275**		
OLS	.149*	.258**		

**Table 1B. Significant Bivariate Correlations (Pearson  $r$ ) Wellbeing (Dependent Variables)**

	WELLBEING				
	P&P	CAR	SOC	COM	OLS
AGE					
TRF					
TRX					
PA					
P&P					
CAR	.305**				
SOC	.448**	.265**			
COM	.472**	.203**	.454**		
OLS	.310**	.325**	.371**	.234**	

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .05$  (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

- Cohen's (1988) conventions used to interpret effect

Weak: -.29 to .29

Moderate: -.49 to -.30 and .30 to .49

Strong: -.1.0 to -.50 and .50 to 1.0

- TRF, TRX, PA: Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership

- P&P, CAR, SOC, COM: Physical & Psychological Wellbeing (Self: Mind, Body & Spirit), Career Wellbeing (Work), Social Wellbeing (Home/Family), Community Wellbeing (Community/Society)

- OLS: Overall Life Satisfaction (Satisfaction with Life)

### 3.2.2 Reliability Analyses

**Independent Variables.** For the Leadership variables, reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach Alpha. Analysis was completed for each of the study's three leadership dimensions measured by the *MLQ* (Bass & Avolio, 1995). All resulting values were within acceptable levels.

**Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Values for Leadership Dimensions**

**Dependent Variables.** Reliability analysis was performed for this study's five aspects of Wellbeing measured by the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008) and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985). All resulting Cronbach values were within acceptable reliability levels.

**Table 3. Cronbach Alpha Values for Wellbeing Dimensions**

Leadership Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha
Physical & Psychological Wellbeing (Self: Mind, Body, and Spirit Scale)	.776
Career Wellbeing (Work/Career Scale)	.792
Social Wellbeing (Home/Family Scale)	.835
Community Wellbeing (Community Scale)	.892
Overall Life Satisfaction Satisfaction with Life Scale	.863
Note: Acceptable levels of reliability are $\geq .50$ for group analysis and $\geq .80$ for individual analysis	

**3.2.3 Multiple Regression Analyses**

Multiple regression was used to assess the impact of Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant Leadership and the five confounding variables (Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education) on Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, and Community Wellbeing plus Overall Life Satisfaction.

**3.2.4 Multiple Regression Results**

The study includes five null hypotheses (HO), each corresponding to one of the research questions.

**HO<sub>1</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Physical and Psychological Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education.

Based on the analysis (Table 4. Model Summary), HO<sub>1</sub> was rejected. Results of multiple regression analysis found Transformational Leadership explained 11.0% of the variance ( $R^2 = .110$ ) in Physical and Psychological Wellbeing, as measured by the Self: Mind, Body, and Spirit component of the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008). The findings indicated the higher the Transformational Leadership ratings, the higher the leader Physical and Psychological Wellbeing ( $\beta = .331$ ).

**Table 4. Model Summary**  
**HO<sub>1</sub>: Physical & Psychological Wellbeing**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	$r_p$	df 1	df 2	Sig
(a)	.331	.110		.331		1	195	.000

(a) Transformational Leadership

**HO<sub>2</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Career Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education.

Based on the results (Table 5. Model Summary), HO<sub>2</sub> was rejected. This Model Summary indicates that the three Leadership variables and the control variables Age and Marital Status contributed to the Career Wellbeing variance, as measured by the Work dimension of the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment*

(Friedman, 2008). Age explained 2.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .027$ ), and results indicated the older the leaders, the higher their Career Wellbeing ( $\beta = .150$ ). Although regression analysis results indicated Marital Status explained 5.2% of the variance, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated none of the Marital Status categories were significant predictors of leader Career Wellbeing. Regression analysis also indicated Passive Avoidant Leadership explained 4.4% of the variance ( $R^2 = .044$ ) and revealed an inverse relationship between Passive Avoidant Leadership and leader Career Wellbeing ( $\beta = -.221$ ,  $r_p = -.255$ ). Further, the analysis found Transactional Leadership explained 2.1% of the variance ( $R^2 = .021$ ), and a positive relationship between Transactional Leadership and leader Career Wellbeing ( $\beta = .158$ ,  $r_p = .177$ ). The results also showed Transformational Leadership explained 20.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .203$ ), and results reflected the higher the Transformational Leadership ratings, the higher the leader Career Wellbeing ( $\beta = .357$ ,  $r_p = .369$ ).

**Table 5. Model Summary**  
**HO<sub>2</sub>: Career Wellbeing**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	$r_p$	df 1	df 2	Sig
(a)	.164	.027		.150		1	195	.021
(b)	.281	.079	.052			3	193	.014
(c)	.531	.282	.203	.357	.369	1	192	.000
(d)	.571	.326	.044	-.221	-.255	1	191	.001
(e)	.589	.347	.021	.158	.177	1	190	.014

- (a) Age
- (b) Age, Marital Status
- (c) Age, Marital Status, Transformational Leadership
- (d) Age, Marital Status, Transformational Leadership, Passive Avoidant Leadership
- (e) Age, Marital Status, Transformational Leadership, Passive Avoidant Leadership, Transactional Leadership

**HO<sub>3</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Social Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education.

Based on the results (Table 6. Model Summary), HO<sub>3</sub> was rejected. The analysis found that Transformational Leadership explained 8.8% of variance ( $R^2 = .088$ ) in Social Wellbeing, as measured by the Home dimension of the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008). Results revealed the higher the Transformational Leadership, the higher the Social Wellbeing ( $\beta = .297$ ).

**Table 6. Model Summary**  
**HO<sub>3</sub>: Social Wellbeing**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	$r_p$	df 1	df 2	Sig
(a)	.297	.088		.297		1	195	.000

Leadership Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha
Transformational Leadership	.885
Transactional Leadership	.550
Passive Avoidant Leadership	.651
Note: Acceptable levels of reliability are $\geq .50$ for group analysis and $\geq .80$ for individual analysis	

(a) Transformational Leadership

**HO4.** There is no significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and leader Community Wellbeing when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education.

Based on the multiple regression analysis, HO<sub>4</sub> was rejected. The results (Table 7. Model Summary) showed that Transformational Leadership explained 5.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .057$ ) in Community Wellbeing, as measured by the Community/Society dimension of the *Leaders Four-Way Assessment* (Friedman, 2008). The results indicated the higher the Transformational ratings, the higher the Community Wellbeing ( $\beta = .240$ ).

**Table 7. Model Summary**  
**HO<sub>4</sub>: Community Wellbeing**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	$r_p$	df 1	df 2	Sig
(a)	.240	.057		.240		1	195	.001

(a) Transformational Leadership

**HO<sub>5</sub>.** There is no significant relationship between leader Full Range Model of Leadership (Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant) and Overall Life Satisfaction when controlling for Age, Gender, Marital Status, Income, and Education.

Based on multiple regression analysis (Table 8. Model Summary), HO<sub>5</sub> was rejected. Results showed Age, Income, and Transformational Leadership all contributed to explaining the variance in Overall Life Satisfaction as measured by the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985). Age accounted for 2.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .023$ ), and results indicated the older the leader, the higher their Overall Life Satisfaction ( $\beta = .100$ ). Analysis showed Income accounted for 6.2% of the variance ( $R^2 = .062$ ). ANOVA results were significant  $F(3, 236) = 4.754, p = .003$ , and the Scheffé post-hoc test revealed between-group differences: the lowest income group bracket of \$0 to \$49,999 was associated with lower Satisfaction with Life ratings than the other three higher income brackets. Furthermore, the analysis showed Transformational Leadership explained 4.7% of the variance ( $R^2 = .047$ ), and the results indicated the higher the leader Transformational Leadership ratings, the higher their Overall Life Satisfaction ( $\beta = .231, r_p = .226$ ).

**Table 8. Model Summary**  
**HO<sub>5</sub>: Overall Life Satisfaction**

Model	R	R Square	R Square Change	Beta	$r_p$	df 1	df 2	Sig
(a)	.149	.023		.100		1	196	.001
(b)	.290	.084	.062			3	193	.005
(c)	.362	.131	.047	.231	.226	1	192	.002

(a) Age

(b) Age, Income

(c) Age, Income, Transformational Leadership

### 3.3 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This study focused on the Full Range Model of Leadership in an effort to better understand the impact of Leadership Style on leader holistic Wellbeing. Key findings are summarized below.

**Age and Wellbeing.** This study showed positive relationships between Age and both Career Wellbeing ( $R^2 = .027, \beta = .150, p < .05$ ) and Satisfaction with Life ( $R^2 = .022, \beta = .100, p < .05$ ). It found the older the leader, the greater their Career Wellbeing and their Overall Life Satisfaction.

**Income and Wellbeing.** This study found that Income affects Overall Life Satisfaction. ANOVA results were significant,  $F(3, 236) = 4.754, p = .003$ . Additionally, Scheffé post-hoc test results showed that the lowest income bracket of \$0 to \$49,999 was associated with lower Satisfaction with Life ratings than the other three higher Income brackets.

**Leadership and Wellbeing.** The study revealed positive relationships between leader use of Transformational Leadership and all five aspects of leader Wellbeing that were the focus of this research. Analysis showed the higher the leader Transformational Leadership, the higher their Career ( $\Delta R^2 = .203, \beta = .357, r_p = .369, p < .05$ ), Physical and Psychological ( $R^2 = .110, \beta = .331, p < .05$ ), Social ( $R^2 = .088, \beta = .297, p < .05$ ), and Community Wellbeing ( $R^2 = .057, \beta = .240, p < .05$ ), and for Overall Life Satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = .047, \beta = .221, r_p = .226, p < .05$ ).

## 4 Conclusions

### 4.1 Overview

Increasing demands on both organizations and leaders impacts not only organizational success but also individual Wellbeing. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between Leadership Style and leader Wellbeing. Transformational Leadership was found to have significant effects on leader Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, and Community Wellbeing and on leader Overall Life Satisfaction. Therefore, it may be helpful for leaders to recognize how their Leadership Style impacts their own Wellbeing and performance, and not only that of their subordinates and organizations.

### 4.2 Implications and Applications

**Age and Wellbeing.** This study found the older the leader, the greater their Career Wellbeing. This finding aligns with prior research where Age was positively related to intrinsic motivation, affective commitment, job involvement, satisfaction with the work itself, and overall job satisfaction (Ng and Feldman, 2010). An implication is that older leaders, with more years of work history, may have more work skills, knowledge, and relationships that could support stronger work performance, more success, and greater career satisfaction.

The study also found that the older the leader, the greater their Overall Life Satisfaction. This is in alignment with existing research showing Age to be positively correlated to the Purpose in Life dimension of Satisfaction with Life (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Older leaders, with more years of life lived, may have a broader perspective that includes not just the current situation and future goals and plans, but also an appreciation for past accomplishments and the journey. This reflective view could enhance feelings of Overall Life Satisfaction.

An application of these findings could be that organizations may want to consider if it would be beneficial to modify some of their practices related to their human capital. Perhaps organizations want to consider mechanisms for intensifying efforts to screen, hire, and promote employee of all ages. Maybe organizations would find it beneficial to evaluate if the increased performance and satisfaction older workers experience could be leveraged into greater performance and success for the company. For example, organization may want to contemplate whether there are any advantages to implementing mentoring programs between older and younger leaders that could enhance skills and strengths and might promote Career Wellbeing.

**Income and Wellbeing.** This study found an effect for Income on Overall Life Satisfaction. The higher the Income bracket, the higher the mean satisfaction with life ratings. Also, compared to the other three groups, the lowest Income bracket had a lower mean satisfaction with life rating that was statistically significant. These findings imply that higher income could lead to greater purchasing power for goods and services necessary for and complementary to life. Leaders may then participate in a higher standard of living, which may result in increased feelings of getting the things in life most important to them and enhance their feelings of overall life satisfaction. That the lowest Income bracket is correlated to lower satisfaction implies that, for this Income bracket, these financial rewards and feelings of success and satisfaction do not exist as strongly.

In considering Income as it relates to work compensation, one aspect is pay as appropriate remuneration for a job based on required levels of skill, education, and experience. Therefore, some positions and industries will pay more than others. Another aspect relates to equity or “fairness” when evaluating comparably skilled and experienced individuals in highly similar positions. It is difficult for organizations to impact compensation in the first situation as this is generally “market driven” based on supply and demand. In the second situation, companies may want to consider application of these findings in taking salary actions. Perhaps organizations would consider escalating their efforts to ensure that compensation at all position levels aligns with reputable private and government published salary data. Quality detailed data exists that can guide organizational compensation scales. Consistent utilization of this data and the resulting standardized pay scales could increase position-specific consistency. That is, it could reduce the occurrence of considerable salary differences that do not align with “fairness” or equity which, based on this study’s findings, may increase work satisfaction and Overall Life Satisfaction.

**Transformational Leadership and Wellbeing.** There is substantial empirical evidence that Transformational Leadership supports worker and organizational performance and follower Wellbeing (Montano et al., 2017; Zwiggmann et al., 2014; Donaldson-Fielder et al., 2013; Nielson & Daniels, 2012; Kearney & Gebert, 2009; Alimo-Metcalfe, et al., 2008, and Podsakoff, Bommer, & Podsakoff, 2007). This study also shows Transformational Leadership supports leader multi-dimensional Wellbeing: the more leaders use Transformational Leadership, the greater their Career, Physical and Psychological, Social, and Community Wellbeing and their Overall Life Satisfaction. This indicates that the benefits of using Transformational Leadership extend beyond the work environment into where leaders live and socialize. These results support both the idea that the effects of Transformational Leadership on various aspects of Wellbeing may be interconnected and that Transformational Leadership supports leader abilities to transform themselves and others in multiple environments.

In the work environment, mentoring followers and providing them with meaningful, challenging roles are fundamental aspects of Transformational Leadership that could strengthen follower commitment, effort, and work performance. In turn, this could enhance team accomplishments and increase leader success and job satisfaction in ways that boost leader Career Wellbeing. Encouraging team spirit and organizational commitment are also basic aspects of Transformational Leadership, and these efforts by the leader could increase team collaboration and accomplishment. More efficient and effective functioning, accompanied by heightened performance results, could reduce physical and mental stress and foster leader Physical and Psychological Wellbeing. Additionally, the high ethical and moral standards characteristic of Transformational leaders promote trust, admiration, and respect by others – which could occur both within and outside the work environment. When extended beyond the job setting, this could strengthen family and close relationships, thereby enhancing leader

Social Wellbeing. Serving as a role model is another essential attribute of Transformational Leadership that can extend beyond the work setting and into leader involvement in community and societal activities in ways that create success and satisfaction central to Community Wellbeing. The combination of positive benefits from these various Wellbeing dimensions can accumulate as well. When this occurs, the leader can experience greater success and satisfaction in multiple components of Wellbeing simultaneously, which can strengthen leader feelings of Overall Life Satisfaction.

Given this connection between Transformational Leadership and multiple essential aspects of Wellbeing, organizations may want to consider application of these findings to individual and group professional development activities. Increasing Leadership-Wellbeing programs, with an emphasis on Transformational Leadership, may be an option. As professional development programs are designed, organizations may want to consider that studies show increased use by leaders of Transformational Leadership is beneficial to both leaders and followers in numerous ways that positively impact performance and success and that these benefits are shown to extend outside the work environment into self-care, home and family life, community and societal activities, and overall life satisfaction.

### 4.3 Limitations

A few timing-related and sample-related limitations exist. This study was conducted in 2021, during the COVID-19 when many people experienced negative impacts to their Wellbeing. In addition to its physical effects, the virus affected mental and emotional health (Cullen, Gulati, & Kelly, 2020; Douglas, et al., 2020; Fioiello & Gorwood 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020; Xiang, et al., 2020). It brought significant changes to the ways people conduct business, socialize, and engage with community activities. Therefore, the pandemic potentially impacted all five elements of Wellbeing that are the subject of this research. It is possible that had the research survey been conducted prior to the pandemic, different findings could have resulted. Replication of the study in a post-pandemic environment, should one arrive, could also produce different results. These findings relate to the population of leaders and most directly to Leadership Style and its impacts on Wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sample-related limitations affecting generalizability of the findings include that the study utilized a sample of convenience, so the sample may differ from the broader leader population in terms of Leadership Style. This does not, however, mean the study’s findings are not significant. There are many factors that could impact the Wellbeing variables, and the results of this study could have importance to the population studied and contribute to the leadership field. Mean scores for the sample compared to the *MLQ* developmental means showed differences for each Transformational,  $t(243) = 8.766, p < .001$ , Transactional,  $t(243) = 2.507, p < .014$ , and Passive Avoidant Leadership,  $t(243) = -3.141, p < .014$ . The sample had higher Transformational and Transactional Leadership ratings and lower Passive Avoidant Leadership ratings, and these results could lower the chances of obtaining significant findings. This study did, however, produce significant findings for Transformational Leadership as a predictor for all five Wellbeing dimensions. Also, for both Transactional and Passive Avoidant Leadership, there were significant findings for Career Wellbeing, although not for any of the other Wellbeing dimensions.

### 4.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Recommendations for future Leadership-Wellbeing research include replicating the study in a post-COVID pandemic environment. Conducting the study with other Leadership and Wellbeing instruments could further clarify the Leadership-Wellbeing relationship. Including control variables that capture details related to industry, management level, job tenure,

ethnicity, and geographic location could reveal important Wellbeing factors and differences. Expanding the study to include greater international participation may also yield results generalizable to a larger population.

### 4.5 Key Take-Aways

Key take-aways include that leader Age was positively related to both Overall Life Satisfaction and Career Wellbeing, and there were significant effects for Income on Overall Life Satisfaction. During this COVID-19 period, the highlight is that Transformational Leadership was positively related to leader multi-dimensional Wellbeing.

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### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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