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THE INVISIBLE TRIGGER: EXPLORING THE PSYCHO BEHAVIOURAL UNDERPINNINGS OF INEFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOURS

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INTRODUCTION

An organisation's performance is increasingly being governed not just by the profits generated but by its approach to building an employee centric environment in which every employee is committed to the organisational goals. This demands high level of engagement, as a growing body of research establishes the positive impact of employee engagement on productivity, retention, innovation and overall performance. As a result, organisations have pumped up investments in engagement enhancement initiatives. Despite such measures, many firms continue to struggle with disengaged workforces. One main reason is that in a bid to enhance engagement, firms focus on employees rather than employers. Behaviour of managers is an aspect which tends to be often overlooked though it plays a critical role in driving engagement. This study seeks to examine managerial behaviours which might be negatively impacting employee engagement and digs further to explore a deeper psychological dimension of managerial behaviour. Are there underlying causes of such ineffective behaviours of managers? Are these behaviours rooted in unresolved inner feelings and emotional states of managers themselves? These are the questions which this study aims to find answers to. Thus, this paper investigates how certain inner emotional conditions in managers could manifest externally through ineffective behaviours. These invisible linkages between the inner feelings of managers and their behaviours which leads to poor organisational performance through adversely impacted employee engagement are explored in depth.
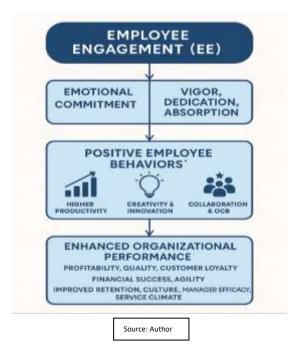
RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

There are abundant studies which focus on employee engagement and examining the impact of leadership styles on the same. However, very few studies have explored the 'why' behind certain consistent patterns in managerial behaviour which hinders employee engagement. The usual approach is to address managerial behaviours through performance management or leadership training. The underlying causes, which could be deeply emotional or psychological, are not explored or addressed. This study aims to fill this gap by zeroing in on the most common 'ineffective behaviours' of managers and tracing back to their internal emotional experiences. In doing so, organisations would not only improve engagement scores but contribute towards creating psychological self-awareness and emotional well-being of their leaders and employees.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Kahn (1990) defines employee engagement (EE) as "harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances." Approaching the concept from an employee's perspective, Schaufeli et al. (2002) explains it as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption". A more

behaviour centred approach looks at employee engagement as "a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy" (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Thus it refers to the extent of emotional commitment which the employee has towards the organisation and its goals. Engaged employees are more productive, loyal and invested in the organisation. It is found that employees who are actively engaged demonstrate superior work performance contributing significantly to organisation's productivity and overall success. Organisations which prioritise and allocate resources for EE are found to experience enhanced retention rates, higher productivity levels, improved customer satisfaction levels and overall improved performance. Engaged workers are found to be more productive, creative and collaborate better for problem solving. They tend to be more customer- centric leading to enhanced customer satisfaction scores for the organisations. Good management practices are found to play a significant role in enhancing EE and overall organisational performance (Meenakshi Sharma, 2023). Engaged employees are instrumental in creating pleasant service climate which creates a favourable impression about the organisation's products and services. The efficiency with which engaged employees approach and complete their tasks enhances overall organisational performance. Furthermore, when EE is improved, organisations would have better capacity to improve on past performances and stay agile (Muller et al, 2018). Vyas, R. M. B. (2023) rightly pointed EE is a strong positive predictor of organisational performance, emphasizing the two-way relation between employer and employee. Engaged employees would be attached to their organisation emotionally, involved in their work and would exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour going the extra mile for the success of the organisation. EE initiatives were found to have direct impact on organisational performance measured across 'profitability, improved quality, customer loyalty, financial success, enhanced employee performance, improved commitment and motivation, better retention rates, organisation culture and manager self-efficacy (Patro, C.S., 2013).

Source: Author

INEFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOURS

According to Hogan and Kaiser (2005), ineffective managerial behaviours are the "habitual actions or patterns of leadership that hinder team performance, damage morale and impair the development or engagement of subordinates." Leaders who lack emotional intelligence are found to exhibit poor communication, micromanagement, inability to manage conflicts and emotional distance pushing down the morale and performance of the team (Goleman, D., 1998). It was also observed by Zaleznik, A. (1977) that managers who exercised too much control demotivated others and obstructed innovation. Benson and Hogan (2008) classifies ineffective managerial behaviours as those behaviours

which undermine employee confidence, trust or autonomy and is found to be associated with managers' poor interpersonal competence, strategic thinking and ethical integrity. Thus, ineffective managerial behaviours are observable actions or habits of managers which are consistent and lead to disengagement of employees, poor team dynamics and performance and result in poor organisational performance. These could include micromanagement, lack of trust to delegate, emotional disconnect, harsh communication, holding back appreciation, failure to accept feedback etc. Though these behaviours are noticed regularly, little or no attention is paid to identifying the root cause of such behaviours.

IMPACT OF INEFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOURS ON EMPLOYEES

Behaviours and actions of managers can have lasting impact on employee morale, engagement and motivation. Tendency to micromanage, withholding feedback and appreciation and emotional detachment can significantly erode employee engagement as it makes employees feel undervalued, mistrusted and unheard. Over time, the organisation would face the compounded effects of these leading to higher turnover and fall in productivity. A report by Goh. J et al, (2016) which examines the relation between workplace stress and mortality quotes that "more than 120,000 deaths per year and approximately 5%–8% of annual healthcare costs are associated with and may be attributable to how U.S. companies manage their work forces". Ineffective leadership was found to cause both psychological and physiological health problems among employees. These are found to cause sense of depression, belittlement, humiliation and meaninglessness about their role in the organisation. Along the same lines are the observations made by CIPD in a report (2023) which shows a direct link between poor managers and negative mental health, job satisfaction and performance among employees. Those who scored poorly in the 'line manager quality index' were found to negatively impact their employees' wellbeing and performance. It was found that a leader who enables counterproductive and non- supportive work environment results in tension, frustration, anger, depression and anxiety among subordinates. Subordinates' social, psychological and psychosomatic social stress stemming from ineffective leaders are observed to negatively impact their self- efficacy and ability to perform their duties Jacobs, C.M. (2019). Day and Hamblin (1964) reported that micromanagement and punitive supervision by managers were also found to lead to increased verbal aggression and fall in productivity.

Many of these behaviours lead to cascading effects as observed by Skakon, J. et al. (2010). Leaders' behaviour, interpersonal relationship with employees and their specific leadership styles were found to be associated with employee stress and well- being. Poor interpersonal relationship between leaders and subordinates was found to negatively impacts employees' psychological well-being, performance and results in conflicts (Martin, R., 2017). It is also found to result in anger, poor performance and strife. Ineffective supervision was found to lead to exhaustion, physical symptoms, dissatisfaction on the job, intention to quit and ultimately poor performance (Pyc, L.S et al, 2017). Harmful leadership behaviours were found to be related to job satisfaction, engagement, psychological safety, knowledge sharing, deviance and team stress related absenteeism (Almeida et al., 2021).

Managerial behavioural patterns, namely; low consideration and high structure were found to lead to high grievances and employee turnover (Fleishman& Harris, 1962). A study conducted among Australian employees revealed that there exists strong association between negative supervisor behaviour and Presenteeism suggesting that job stress related Presenteeism is subject to supervisor influence (Gilbreath and Karimi, 2012).

Impact of poor support from supervisors/ managers on the well-being of employees have been examined from varied angles. Studies have established the negative association between supervisory and co- worker support and blood pressure and heart rate of employees. Female respondents were found to report stronger negative association between blood pressure and supervisory support. A similar study conducted among Iranian employees observed that supervisory support, which is one among the job characteristic variables, significantly predicts job related well-being of employees. Along the same lines, the findings of the study among 1530 employees highlights that high work demands increased the risk of insomnia among employees. Poor leader support is found to be a contributing factor. (Karlin et al, (2003), Karimi et al (2011), Jansson, M. and Linton, S.J. (2006)

Source: Authors

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is particularly relevant in today's work environment where employee well-being, leadership effectiveness and seamless communication between stakeholders are central to workplace culture. Not just human resource professionals, but business leaders and organisational psychologists can benefit from these insights in multiple ways such as:

- Embedding psychological perspectives into leadership development programmes
- Redesigning performance management for managers
- Developing reflective and emotionally intelligent leadership
- Building psychologically safe environment which ensures employee well-being.

The study shall offer actionable insights and research backed rationale for organisations. By offering timely insights into how unconscious emotions of managers may be impacting engagement and thereby productivity and overall performance, organisations can equip themselves with emotionally intelligent leadership strategies which would drive engagement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the most prevalent ineffective managerial behaviours observed across organizational contexts?
2. What are the underlying emotional or psychological causes of such ineffective managerial behaviours?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between specific inner feelings and specific ineffective behaviours among managers?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key managerial behaviours which impact employee engagement.
- To explore the psychological or emotional causes underlying such behaviours of managers
- To examine correlation and causation between the inner feelings of managers and their identified ineffective behaviours and offer suggestions for organisational strategies which address behavioural changes in managers

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based on self-reported data from managers via a questionnaire and hence is subject to self-perception inaccuracies. Inner feelings have been assessed using predefined constructs. In-depth psychological assessments and interviews would be able to shed more light into these aspects of the study. As the sample size is 69, though diverse, may not be representative of all industries and countries. Long term implications via longitudinal research would strengthen the validity of the causal relationships established in the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INEFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOURS

Ladany, Mori and Mehr, (2013) identified lack of involvement of supervisor, weakened supervisory relation characterized by humiliation, distrust, lack of support, nonverbal behaviours causing discomfort, not respecting boundaries, lack of empathy, lack of understanding the needs of the supervisee as ineffective supervisory behaviours. Supervisors offering inadequate guidance and direction in skill and knowledge development of supervisee was highlighted as an ineffective behaviour. At the same time, offering only positive feedback, offering only negative/ punitive feedback, inadequate feedback or inconsistent feedback were pointed out as ineffective behaviour. Negative personal characteristics of the supervisor such as micromanaging, dominating, being judgmental and opinionated negatively impacted supervisees. Relational support offered by the leaders is found to significantly influence individual and team learning. Lack of adequate support and individual relations with employees are found to adversely affect the workplace learning development (Jarl, 2024). Most common destructive behaviours reported by employees were micro management, condescension, failure to listen to employees and undermining the subordinates. These behaviours on the part of the leaders were found to make the followers feel devalued, developing distrust for the leader and negatively impacting the quality of their work (Martin, 2014).
A survey conducted among employees of Second Bangkok International Airport found that wrong use of power, poor communication and low experience of the managers are the most significant ineffective behaviours in the workplace. Other ineffective behaviours were found to be cold and arrogant behaviour to subordinates, narcissism, personalized use of power and insensitivity (Toor and Ogunlana, 2009). Similarly, abusive attitude, lack of vision, refusal to empower employees and inability to communicate effectively are found to be poor leadership behaviours which have a negative impact on employee morale and productivity. Lack of trust, cooperation and open lines of communication were also cited as aspects which impede employee morale. Unwillingness to convey opinions freely and choosing undesirable possibilities are found to result in low morale and lack of cooperation from the employees (Wejinya, O. O., & Agwoje, S. E., 2023).
Managers who enjoy the power to make decisions autocratically are also found to lead to counterproductive work behaviours in employees. It reduces employee commitment and increases emotional exhaustion which in turn negatively impacts employee behaviour (Luqman et al, 2020). The same observations were made by Oh, Kim and Kim, (2023) and (Hight, Gajjar and Okumus, (2019). Leaders who manage the entire decision making process without taking the employees' opinions and ideas into consideration were found to have a negative impact on organisational trust, which in turn is revealed to have an adverse impact on employee job satisfaction and commitment.
Almeida et al., (2021) categorized intimidation, lack of support, self- centeredness and excessive pressure for results were categorized as harmful leader behaviour (HLB) in the study conducted among 1921 employees in 196 teams. These behaviours were found to be negatively correlated to effective leadership forms such as ethical and transformational and positively related to unethical and abusive supervision. Similarly, Hayers (2000) observed that workers who were feeling under pressure were those who worked with supervisors and leaders who followed harsh supervision and control approach and rarely allowed their followers to participate in decision making. Managers who intimidate, threaten, shout and basically treat their employees disrespectfully are categorized as toxic leaders in the study by Hadadian and Sayadpour, (2018). Disparaging supervision aimed at disrespecting workers was found to be the most offensive leadership behaviour. Such toxic leadership was observed to negatively impact job- related well- being of workers with the mediating role of job stress.

Indecisiveness of leaders are found to bring about several negative organisational consequences along with demotivation of employees. Indecisiveness was found to be a consequence of lack of trust, hierarchy, complexity and fear of failure of the leaders. Such indecisiveness of managers is revealed to result in revenue, resource and opportunity loss for the organisation and demotivation of employees/ teams (Motloung and Lew, 2023, Motloung, 2021). The same observations were made by a Harvard Business Review study (Botelho et al., 2019). Indecisive leaders were found to perform 12 times lower than decisive ones. Lack of direction leading to poor morale and retention issues are reported to be the consequence of increased employee frustration stemming from such indecisiveness of managers. Delay in taking decisions leading to stalled progress of key projects is also found to erode staff motivation. For the organisation, it results in missed market opportunities and dip in revenues. Managerial indecisiveness is found to strengthen role- ambiguity among employees. This in turn is found to negatively impact employees' trust in the manager, leading to an increase in turnover intentions (Caemmerer, Goerne and Mulki, 2021).

Zak (2017) measured employees' oxytocin levels in response to various situations in the workplace and concluded that in order to boost employee engagement, managers have to treat employees like responsible adults, trust them, give clear directions and get out of their way. According to him, eight management behaviours which would improve trust are recognizing excellence, allowing employees to use their discretion in carrying out their tasks, enable job crafting, sharing information, building relationships, providing opportunities for holistic growth and showing vulnerability. As per this research, people at high trust companies are found to report 74% less stress, 106% higher energy at work, 50% more productivity, 13% lower sick days, 76% more engagement, 29% more satisfaction and 40% less burnout when compared to employees of lower trust companies. He emphasizes that lack of trust results in disengagement, fall in productivity and innovation as well as increased turnover. However, only 63% of organisations are found to trust their employees as per the research conducted by Gartner (Rowsell. J, 2023). This translates to four in ten employers not trusting their employees. Where managers did not show trust in their employees, only 17% of employees were found to share their ideas or opinions. Lack of trust is also found to lower employees' discretionary efforts. Micromanagement, avoiding delegation of tasks, gatekeeping information and maintaining unwarranted secrecy are indicative of employer's lack of trust Yadav, M (2023).

Poor leadership is equated with lack of relationship management and self- management competencies in the study by Julie Fowlie, Matthew Wood, (2009). Highly developed relationship management competencies are advised including effective face- to- face communication skills. Traits of 'bad leadership' were analyzed by Promsri, (2019). Poor integrity, lack of empathy, self- centeredness, poor communication and inconsistency were found to be the defining characteristics of bad leadership.

CAUSES OF INEFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOURS

Chambers (2004) in his book titled 'My Way or the Highway: The Micromanagement Survival Guide' explains the causes of micromanagement behaviour with the aid of a formula:

Micromanagement = Fear + Comfort + Confusion. Fear would contribute to micromanagement behaviour in various ways such as lack of confidence in one's own ability to influence others, chances of public embarrassment, fear of being left out of the loop, fear of loss of credit/ recognition for the task, fear of losing influence on the final outcome, fear of being irrelevant, fear of territorial infringement and insecurity arising from threat of others' competence. Sense of comfort that arises from self- reliance, risk- avoidance, exercise of power, being familiar with the crisis situation and consequent stress, being rigid is also cited as a cause for such micromanagement. Lack of well-defined goals, being unaware of changes in priorities, lack of mechanism for assessing progress, poor communication, lack of clarity about the problem etc creates confusion in the minds of the managers. Thus fear, comfort and confusion are stated as the drivers of managerial micromanagement behaviours. Fear of loss of control, fear of not being seen as an expert or an authority and strong desire for power are found to be the causes of micromanagement by leaders (Murphy, 2017). One of the underlying reasons for perceived need to micromanage are observed as real lack of competency or perceived lack of competency of the employees. Lack of trust on the employee as well as belief that the employee does not trust the manager is cited as another reason. Overdeveloped personal ego is also mentioned as a cause, though not a significant one (Berchelmann, 2015), (Ryan and Cross, 2024). However, micromanagement is also found to stem from the need for perfection and structure among the managers (Mishra, Kumar and Mishra, 2019). Close, (2021) observes that the most significant cause of micromanagement is found to be lack of leadership skills and lack of trust in employees. Fear of losing control and

power ranks second to this cause. Common beliefs of a micromanager are found to be belief that he can do a better job, belief that he can achieve more, enjoys correcting employees, belief that employees are not as knowledgeable as him/ her. Certain personality traits of the managers lead to micro managerial behaviour as observed in the study by Li and Khalid, (2015). Unwillingness to trust the subordinates, managers' insecurities about their position or abilities are cited as causes of micromanagement. Another interpretation is that micromanagement arises from a sense of powerlessness as observed by a study in personality and individual differences. Those who feel powerless due to their early childhood experiences are found to exercise domination over others (Behary, 2013). Leader-member exchange researchers (White, 2010) have also observed that managers are reluctant to delegate and engage in micromanagement when they lack trust/ confidence in their subordinates' abilities. It could also be because they view the task as very important/ complex/ technically difficult which cannot be left in the hands of the subordinates. Jim Davis (2022) observed that fear of being disrespected by subordinates tend to make leaders misinterpret neutral behaviours as disrespectful. This in turn triggers a defensive approach making the leader behave in a disrespectful manner to his subordinates. Another reason is imposter syndrome experienced by leaders which makes them highly sensitive to perceived slights. Such sensitivity would result in misinterpreting benign actions as disrespect, leading to they themselves engaging in disrespectful behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour is found to stem from personal insecurities or aggressiveness (Patient Safety Learning, 2023). This observation is supported by Grissinger (2017) who found that 'Disrespectful behaviour is survival behaviour gone awry'. When an individual has to cope with difficult situations and personal frustrations, he/she is driven to function in survival mode. Beyond a tipping point, this pushes the person into disrespectful behaviour. Current events which adversely influences mood, attitude and actions are also found to cause disrespectful behaviours.

In a study by Germeijs and Verschueren (2011), analyzing the relationship between indecisiveness and each of the big five personality traits, it was observed that there exists strong positive association between indecisiveness and neuroticism. Negative correlation was found between neuroticism and openness, conscientiousness and extraversion. Neuroticism was found to be a predictive factor for decisional procrastination in the study by Milgram & Tenne, (2000) too. Along the same lines are the findings of the study by Öztemel, (2015) which showed that exploratory and impetuous indecisiveness was found to significantly positively correlate with neuroticism. Self- esteem was found to be the strongest predictor of exploratory indecisiveness, followed closely by neuroticism. Neuroticism, self-esteem, openness to experience and conscientiousness were found to be the predictors of impetuous indecisiveness. Similarly, there exists significant negative association between decisiveness and experiencing psychological symptoms. People with fewer psychological issues were found to be more decisive. Decisiveness was analysed with respect to anxiety about decision making, confidence in choosing social relations, confidence in resolving conflicts and general decisiveness (Haraburda, 2025).

Exploring organisational, interpersonal and personal antecedents of strategic leader indecisiveness in an organisation, Motloung and Lew (2023) noted that lack of trust and the need to avoid conflict were found to predict indecisive behaviours in leaders. Personal drivers such as fear of failure and fear of accountability were found to be significant predictors too.

An investigation of causes of trust issues by Bennett (2022) revealed that lack of trust could be due to adverse childhood experiences, trauma, experiences of infidelity in adult relationships, gas lighting or narcissistic loved ones. Experiencing abandonment is found to disrupt a person's sense of stability and security. Such people find it hard to establish and sustain trusting relationships. Victims of infidelity and betrayal in a relationship would find it hard to trust others again. Passive aggressive behaviours, dishonesty and mistreatment from another person causes long standing trust issues in a person.

Experimental study on causes of lack of trust conducted by Hancock et al. (2023) cited a range of factors which were categorized as ability based characteristics and individual characteristics of the trustor. The ability based characteristics include degree of prior trust experiences while individual characteristics included personality traits (low in openness and agreeableness), demographic factors and attitude towards others. Similarly, being mistrusted by others, becoming accustomed to mistrust, unfamiliarity with people and concerns about the consequences of saying the truth contributed to developing trust issues in them (Ni Raghallaigh, 2013). Myers and Tingley (2016) argues that emotional state of the trustor is also found to be a significant factor in developing trust. It was observed that negative emotions which make the person less certain about their current situation would decrease trust. Anxiety and 'low- certainty emotion' are found to have a significant negative impact on trust. Analysing the positive and negative emotions behind trust, Dunn, J. R., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2005) found that while positive emotions such as happiness and gratitude increase trust, negative emotions such as anger decreases trust. An interesting observation is

that emotions based on 'other-person control' such as anger and gratitude influence a person's trust more than emotions based on 'personal- control' such as pride and guilt. However, it was also observed that emotions do not influence trust when a person is conscious of the source of their emotions as well as when they are familiar with the trustees.

Leader's characteristics is found to influence his decision to delegate. The psychological sense of power experienced by the leader is the key predictor here. When a person is manipulated into feeling powerless, they are found to try harder to maintain authority and avoid delegating decision making authority (Haselhuhn, Wong and Ormiston, 2017). Most common personal factors which stand as obstacles to delegation of authority and decision- making are found to be the supervisor's fear of loss of control, lack of adequate trust in their team, perfectionism, fear of appearing incompetent, micromanagement tendencies, belief that "I can do it better", reluctance to share power as well as knowledge, unwillingness to let go and fear of empowering potential competitors (Hreha. J, 2024), (Chakraborty, 2024). Along the same lines are the observations of Ebreo, (2024) who states that fear of loss of control, lack of trust in team members, perfectionism, poor communication skills, resistance to change and fear of diminished importance causes reluctance to delegate among managers. These observations are supported by Lolly Daskal (2017) in her book titled, 'The Leadership Gap', identifies the most common causes for reluctance to delegate among leaders. These are lack of trust in the team, difficulty in letting go, fear of failure and belief that they can do it better.

When it comes to interpersonal skills, British Psychologist Dr. Jane Halsall (n.d) explains that people with certain psychological issues are found to struggle to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. These would influence the way they think, feel and behave. Furthermore, interpersonal relationships are also difficult for those with social anxiety, depression, people suffering from low self- esteem and those who have undergone some sort of trauma, abuse or neglect.

Ineffective communication and interpersonal skills are observed to be caused by lack of knowledge, low skill level, unfavourable attitudes or a combination of these factors (Chou et al., 2013). Issues with emotional regulation, impulse regulation, maladaptive patterns of thinking and behaving and personality disorders are obstacles to developing healthy and long term interpersonal relationships in an individual. These are found to cause negative interaction patters in an individual's personal as well as professional relations.

Neglect and abuse experienced during an individual's childhood was found to have a statistically significant influence on general interpersonal distress and interpersonal problems faced in adulthood. Emotional abuse and emotional neglect were found to be the key contributing factors in the regression model of this study. Those who have experienced emotional abuse were found to be more controlling/ dominating, more intrusive and needy in interpersonal relations. At the same time, those who have experienced emotional neglect are found to be more dominating, non- assertive, highly accommodative, intrusive, needy and self- sacrificing in their relationships (Huh et al., 2014), (Dugal et al., 2016). These findings are supported by Vandevender (2014) who noted that maltreated individuals are found to assert lower levels of autonomy in their interpersonal relations. Such experiences are found to restrain them from initiating relationships and are found to experience lower levels of self- esteem too. Between genders, men with maltreatment experiences were found to report lower levels of emotional support than women. Along the same lines were the findings of the study by (Poole, Dobson and Pusch (2018) which reported that adverse childhood experiences were found to adversely impact interpersonal functioning in adulthood via emotional dysregulation. Such adverse experiences include separation of parents, growing up in a dysfunctional household, exposure to violence or abuse according to Anderson Sungmin Yoon, Lee and Moon (2023).

Managers are observed to hold back praise and recognition due to several reasons. Considering the competency of others as a threat to one's position in the organisation is an obstacle. Furthermore, those who have not received recognition or praise would find it difficult to give the same to others. This stems from childhood experiences where there was no parental figure or influential adult who gave praise. Also if growing up, an individual was made to believe that praise would go to their head/ it would make one less humble, they grow up to be adults who find it uncomfortable giving recognition or praise to others. Popular school of thought on giving recognition is that it makes the recipient become vain. An individual's sense of insecurity and jealousy poses a barrier to giving recognition to others (T.S. Jayalakshmi, 2018).

Goleman (1998) highlights the role played by deficits in emotional intelligence (EI) as a cause for withholding feedback. Managers with low EI are found to struggle with two important elements required to identify the need for feedback and how it should be given- empathy and self-awareness. Hence, they find it discomforting to give praise and fear that it would appear inauthentic. In addition to these, low social awareness and poor interpersonal skills

would result in emotional distance which prevents such managers from identifying the emotional and motivational needs of their followers. Due to these reasons, feedback is restricted to corrective suggestions and appreciation and encouragement are ignored. This is supported by the findings of Kluger and DeNisi's (1996), who identified cognitive bias of managers which focused on correction over encouragement as a reason for withholding appreciation.

A more personal cause behind managers withholding feedback arises from their personal insecurities and the emotional risks associated with vulnerability, as observed by Ashkanasy and Daus (2005). Managers are found to lack the confidence and emotional competence required to deliver authentic praise or constructive feedback. In certain cases, this could also be because they perceive the high-performing subordinates as threats and withhold recognition to preserve authority. Inability to communicate praise without coming across as ingenuine or overly familiar are also found to add to this emotional discomfort they experience. Due to this discomfort, managers adopt a stance of silence, as they believe that maintaining distance and avoiding emotionally charged interactions with subordinates is more professional. These stem from the assumptions that leaders should appear strong, composed and in control without revealing vulnerabilities. As a result, feedback is rare, heavily filtered or absent (Carsten et al., 2015). A different take on this is offered by Argyris, C. (1991) who identified defensive reasoning as a psychological barrier which prevents managers from offering open, constructive feedback. When managers fear that feedback would make their own knowledge and skills look inadequate, they refrain from offering it. This does not come from apathy, but from a need to maintain internal consistency.

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

A comprehensive review of existing literature has revealed a set of commonly observed ineffective managerial behaviours such as:

- Micromanagement
- Disrespectful behaviour
- Fear
- Poor interpersonal relations
- Inability to offer feedback
- Indecisiveness
- Inability to delegate
- Lack of trust

Source: Authors

A thematic synthesis of the literature facilitated categorization of these ineffective and a deeper exploration into the underlying causes psychological and contextual causes of these behaviours. The following diagrammatic representation outlines each ineffective behaviour along with the corresponding causes.

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Causes of Ineffective Managerial Behaviours

Micromanagement
- Fear of losing control
- Fear of not being seen as an expert or authority
- Fear of loss of credit/recognition
- Fear of losing influence on the final outcome
- Insecurity from threat of others' competence
- Risk-avoidance mindset
- Habitual use of power
- Lack of well-defined goals
- Lack of trust in employees' abilities
- Overdeveloped ego
- Childhood experiences leading to powerlessness and domination tendencies
- Perfectionism and need for structure

Disrespectful Behaviour
- Fear of Being Disrespected
- Imposter Syndrome
- Personal Insecurities or Aggressiveness
- Low self-esteem or unresolved internal conflict
- Survival Mode Coping
- External Stressors / Current Events
- Personal hardships or external pressures

Indecisiveness
- Neuroticism
- Low Openness to Experience
- Low Self-Esteem
- Psychological Symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression)
- Anxiety about Decision-Making
- Lack of Trust
- Desire to Avoid Conflict
- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Accountability

Inability to Delegate
- Low psychological sense of power
- Feeling manipulated or powerless
- Self-protective strategy to preserve authority
- Fear of losing control
- Fear of appearing incompetent
- Fear of failure
- Fear of diminished importance or relevance
- Fear of empowering potential competitors
- Lack of trust in team members' abilities
- Lack of belief that others can deliver at the same quality level
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Unwillingness to share power or knowledge
- Poor communication skills
- [Text]

Lack of Trust
- Personal & Relational Trauma Adverse childhood experiences (neglect, abuse, instability)
- Experiencing abandonment
- Infidelity or betrayal in adult relationships
- Gas lighting or narcissistic loved ones
- Passive-aggressive behaviors, dishonesty or mistreatment from others
- Poor prior trust experiences
- Being mistrusted by others
- Becoming accustomed to mistrust as a norm
- Negative emotional states (e.g., anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty)

Poor Interpersonal Relations
- Social anxiety
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Trauma, abuse, or neglect (historical or ongoing)
- Poor emotional regulation
- Poor impulse control
- Lack of communication knowledge
- Low interpersonal or social skill levels
- Unfavourable or rigid attitudes (e.g., toward feedback, empathy, collaboration)
- Emotional abuse
- Emotional neglect
- General maltreatment
- Lower levels of emotional support in men exposed to early trauma
- Parental separation
- Growing up in dysfunctional households
- Exposure to violence or chronic conflict in the home

Poor Feedback
- Perceiving others' competence as a threat to one's own position
- Insecurity or jealousy towards high-performing subordinates
- Fear of losing authority or relevance
- Fear of appearing vulnerable or unprofessional
- Fear of being perceived as overly familiar
- Lack of praise or recognition from parental figures in childhood
- Beliefs instilled during childhood
- Low empathy: inability to sense when feedback is needed
- Low self-awareness: discomfort in giving praise
- Low social awareness and poor interpersonal skills
- Leads to overemphasis on what's wrong, ignoring appreciation
- Managers mistake professionalism for emotional detachment
- Defensive Reasoning
- Motivated by a need for internal consistency and self-protection, not apathy

Source: Content Analysis by Authors

This has served as a foundation for the next phase of this study, which is exploring the relationship between these behaviours and inner emotional feelings of the managers. To proceed with this objective, the identified behaviours have been further consolidated into four overarching behavioural domains.

1.   Harsh behaviours (includes fear and disrespect)
2.   Trust and Delegation Deficient Behaviours (includes micromanagement, lack of trust, inability to delegate, indecisiveness, decision making)
3.   Recognition Behaviour (includes feedback behaviour)
4.   **Connection Behaviour (Interpersonal relations)**

The inner feelings of managers were classified as

1. Harsh feelings (Fear of being disrespected, insecurity, survival mode, unresolved inner conflicts)
2. Poor Delegation feelings (Control needs, fear of failure, risk avoidance, lack of trust, perfectionism, poor sense of power)
3. Poor Recognition feelings (Threat to status, Insecurity, Fear of losing authority)
4. Poor Connection feelings (Fear of closeness, emotional risk, past trauma)

This paper sought to establish both correlation and potential causal relationships between these ineffective behaviours and underlying personal and emotional drivers of managers. The behaviours were thus mapped to their potential psychological origins such as fear of losing control, insecurities, low self-esteem, unresolved trauma, distrust etc. The study seeks to understand how these internal emotional states trigger external behaviours of managers.

HYPOTHESIS STATEMENTS

H1: Harshness Hypothesis: Managers who experience harsh feelings are likely to exhibit harsh managerial behaviours.
H2: Delegation Hypothesis: Managers who report poor delegation feelings are more likely to demonstrate delegation avoidant behaviours.
H3: Connection Hypothesis: Managers who report poor connection feelings are more likely to demonstrate connection avoidant behaviours.
H4: Recognition Hypothesis: Managers who report poor recognition feelings are more likely to demonstrate recognition withholding behaviours.

A structured questionnaire was developed and administered among a sample of 69 managers across varied sectors. The questionnaire was designed to capture self- reported behavioural tendencies at work and the associated emotional, personal drivers. The data collected was analysed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression models were employed to examine the strength and direction of the variables included.

ANALYSIS

Data Preparation and Cleaning

The obtained dataset consisted of responses from managers at various professional development timepoints on a structured questionnaire. Said questionnaire measured four key behavioural domains – Harsh Behaviours (HB), Delegate Behaviours (DB), Connection Behaviours (CB) and Recognition Behaviours (RB) – along with respective affective precursors or "feelings" for each domain: Harsh Feelings (HF), Delegate Feelings (DF), Connection Feelings (CF) and Recognition Feelings (RF). The study aimed to examine whether the internal beliefs and emotional states of managers could predict their observable behavioural tendencies.

Prior to data analysis, the data underwent tests for consistency, reliability and parametricity. Responses with any and all missing values were excluded. No significant outliers or anomalies were observed. All domains consisting of multiple items were aggregated into mean scores, resulting in a separate mean score for all domains except RB, which consisted of only one item. This widely used approach in psychological research was employed to reduce noise from individual item fluctuations and thus represents latent constructs more reliably (Field, 2018).

The use of mean aggregation was validated by the high internal reliability of the subscales (as seen in Cronbach's alpha scores in Table 1). All variables were labelled and coded appropriately in SPSS v29.0, enabling more robust data analysis.

No.	Domain	Construct	Cronbach's α	No. of items
1		Harsh	.84	5
2	Behaviours	Delegate	.85	5
3		Connection	.85	3
4		Recognition	NA	1

5		Harsh	.83	4
6	Feelings	Delegate	.77	3
7		Connection	.89	2
8		Recognition	.92	2

Table 1: Reliability scores via Cronbach's α

Assumption Testing

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for normality of distribution was carried out alongside Shapiro-Wilk, histogram inspections and Q-Q plots. Most variables, particularly Delegate Behaviour and Recognition Behaviour, deviated from normality, with evidence of skewness and kurtosis outside acceptable ranges (Table 2).

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
rb1	.295	69	<.001	.747	69	<.001
mean_hb	.149	69	<.001	.934	69	.001
mean_db	.111	69	.035	.935	69	.001
mean_cb	.136	69	.003	.915	69	<.001
mean_hf	.179	69	<.001	.925	69	<.001
mean_df	.120	69	.015	.962	69	.036
mean_cf	.223	69	<.001	.853	69	<.001
mean_rf	.246	69	<.001	.769	69	<.001

Table 2: Normality of Distribution tested via Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and/or Shapiro-Wilk Test.

Given these deviations, it was determined that non-parametric analyses were more appropriate for initial bivariate analyses. Specifically, Spearman's rho was selected to examine correlations between feelings and behaviours instead of Pearson's r, as the former does not assume normal distribution and is more suitable for ordinal or non-normally distributed interval data.

Multicollinearity was checked for via the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance statistics in regression diagnostics, in order to ensure that the emotional predictors were distinct constructs and not overly interrelated, which would effectively undermine regression estimates. As all VIFs < 2 and Tolerance > .5, the analysis verified the absence of multicollinearity, thus confirming the theoretical distinction of each emotional construct.

Furthermore, in order to test the assumptions required for regression analysis, standardised residuals were plotted against predicted values for each regression, with scatterplots showing randomness with no clear patterns, satisfying the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity.

Correlation Analysis

Spearman's rank-order correlations were calculated as a preliminary step, owing to the ordinality of the Likert-scale data collected. Furthermore, such an analysis would permit the detection of bivariate relationships between feelings and behaviours. Significant positive correlations were found between each feeling and its corresponding behaviour. Notably, however, cross-dimensional correlations also emerged, such as Delegate Feelings significantly correlating with Connection Behaviours, thus justifying the use of multiple regression to parse these effects simultaneously.

		rb1	mean hb	mean_ db	mean cb	mean hf	mean df	mean cf	mean rf
rb1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.629**	.573**	.478**	.544**	.558**	.626**	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _hb	Correlation Coefficient	.629**	1.000	.540**	.442**	.458**	.631**	.528**	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _db	Correlation Coefficient	.573**	.540**	1.000	.452**	.519**	.650**	.611**	.488**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _cb	Correlation Coefficient	.478**	.442**	.452**	1.000	.510**	.635**	.766**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _hf	Correlation Coefficient	.544**	.458**	.519**	.510**	1.000	.688**	.602**	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _df	Correlation Coefficient	.558**	.631**	.650**	.635**	.688**	1.000	.689**	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.	<.001	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _cf	Correlation Coefficient	.626**	.528**	.611**	.766**	.602**	.689**	1.000	.843**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.	<.001
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69
mean _rf	Correlation Coefficient	.592**	.465**	.488**	.536**	.449**	.500**	.843**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.
	N	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69

Table 3: Spearman's ρ for non-parametric correlation

Single Linear Regression

To assess the individual predictive power of each emotional domain on its corresponding behavioural outcome, a series of simple linear regressions were conducted.

Harsh Behaviour (HB)

$$HB = 1.015 + 0.532(HF)$$

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.607[a]	.369	.360	.692

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_hf

Table 4: Regression Model Summary for HB

The model explained 36.9% of the variance in Harsh Behaviour. The regression was statistically significant, $F_{(1,67)} = 39.18$, $p < .001$, indicating that Harsh Feelings (HF) is a significant predictor of Harsh Behaviour (HB). The beta coefficient ($\beta = .607$) further confirms the strength of this relationship.

Delegate Behaviour (DB)

$$DB = 0.459 + 0.708(DF)$$

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.728[a]	.530	.523	.640

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_df

Table 5: Regression Model Summary for DB

The regression model accounted for 53.0% of the variance in Delegate Behaviour. The model was highly significant, $F(1,67) = 75.44$, $p < .001$. The standardized beta value ($\beta = .728$) indicates a strong and direct predictive relationship between Delegatie Feelings (DF) and Delegate Behaviour (DB).

Connection Behaviour (CB)

CB = 0.523 + 0.848(CF)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.839ª	.704	.700	.594

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_cf

Table 6: Regression Model Summary for CB

This model explained 70.4% of the variance in Connection Behaviour, the highest among all four models. The regression was statistically significant, $F(1,67) = 159.29$, $p < .001$. The beta coefficient ($\beta = .839$) underscores the powerful predictive influence of Connection Feelings (CF) on Connection Behaviour (CB).

Recognition Behaviour (RB)

RB = 0.494 + 0.748(RF)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.745ª	.554	.548	.754

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_rf

Table 7: Regression Model Summary for RB

The model explained 55.4% of the variance in Recognition Behaviour. The regression analysis was statistically significant, $F(1,67) = 83.38$, $p < .001$. The standardized beta ($\beta = .745$) indicates a strong relationship between Recognition Feelings (RF) and Recognition Behaviour (RB).

Multiple Linear Regression

To examine the extent of predictability of the four domains with regards to their respective behavioural outcome, a standard entry multiple regression was performed for each behavioural domain.

Harsh Behaviour (HB)

HB = 0.818 + 0.005(HF) + 0.420(DF) − 0.094(CF) + 0.353(RF)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.744ª	.554	.526	.595	1.544

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_rf, mean_df, mean_hf, mean_cf

b. Dependent Variable: mean_hb

Table 4: Regression Model Summary for HB

The model explained 55.4% of the variance in Harsh Behaviour, with the overall model being statistically significant, $F(4,64) = 19.85$, $p < .001$. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.54, satisfying the assumption of independent residuals. The adjusted R^2 of .53 signifies the strong explanatory power of the model even after accounting for the number of predictors. This model thus confirms that the combination of emotional experiences reliably predicts the variation in harsh behaviour.

Delegate Behaviour (DB)

DB = 0.455 + 0.165(HF) + 0.270(DF) + 0.231(CF) + 0.114(RF)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.788[a]	.621	.597	.588	2.165

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_rf, mean_df, mean_hf, mean_cf

b. Dependent Variable: mean_db

Table 5: Regression Model Summary for DB

The model explained 62.1% of the variance in Delegate Behaviour, with the overall model being statistically significant, $F(4,64) = 26.17$, $p < .001$. Similar to HB, the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.16, within the acceptable range of 1.5-2.5. While the overall model was significant, it is worth noting that none of the individual predictors were significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Connection Behaviour (CB)

$$CB=0.394+0.023(HF)+0.031(DF)+1.346(CF)-0.559(RF)$$

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.869[a]	.756	.740	.553	2.252

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_rf, mean_df, mean_hf, mean_cf

b. Dependent Variable: mean_cb

Table 6: Regression Model Summary for CB

The model explained 75.6% of the variance in Connection Behaviour, with the overall model being statistically significant, $F(4,64) = 49.48$, $p < .001$. The 2.25 Durbin-Watson statistic suggests no significant autocorrelation. Interestingly, while Harsh Feelings, Delegate Feelings and Connection Feelings have positive predictive effects on Connection Behaviour, Recognition Feelings had a significant negative effect on Connection Behaviour, suggesting that excessive or misplaced recognition may inhibit authentic connection.

Recognition Behaviour (RB)

$$RB=-0.170+0.272(HF)+0.158(DF)+0.130(CF)+0.370(RF)$$

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.791[a]	.625	.602	.707	1.958

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean_rf, mean_df, mean_hf, mean_cf

b. Dependent Variable: rb1

Table 7: Regression Model Summary for RB

The model explained 62.5% of the variance in Recognition Behaviour, with the overall model being statistically significant, $F(4,64) = 26.72$, $p < .001$. No autocorrelation found as the Durbin-Watson statistic reported 1.95. Again, while none of the individual predictors reported significance, Recognition Feelings reported the highest ß score (.37), indicating the strongest relative contribution to the model.

Stepwise Regression

Due to the varying levels of significance among the different predictive models, a stepwise regression was carried out in order to identify the most parsimonious combination of affective predictors for each dependent variable. This approach systematically evaluates individual predictors based on their statistical contribution to the model, thus enhancing interpretability without sacrificing explanatory power.

Dependent Variable	Step	Predictor	Standardized Beta	Unstandardized B	t-value	p-value	Adjusted R²
CB	1	CF	0.839	0.848	12.621	<.001	0.7
CB	2	RF	-0.579	-0.562	-3.706	<.001	0.748
RB	1	CF	0.748	0.781	9.216	<.001	0.552
RB	2	HF	0.318	0.361	2.764	0.007	0.593
CF	1	HF	0.837	0.885	11.503	<.001	0.7
HF	1	CF	1.362	1.387	8.783	<.001	0.7
HF	2	RF	-0.571	-0.562	-3.706	<.001	0.748

Table 7: Summarized findings of Stepwise Regression

The stepwise regression analysis revealed that **Connection Feelings (CF)** was the strongest and most consistent predictor across multiple outcomes. For **Connection Behaviours (CB)**, CF alone accounted for a substantial portion of variance (Adjusted R² = .700), and the addition of **Recognition Feelings (RF)** further improved the model (Adjusted R² = .748), with RF exerting a significant negative influence. Similarly, CF was a robust predictor of **Recognition Behaviours (RB)** (Adjusted R² = .552), and the inclusion of **Harsh Feelings (HF)** significantly enhanced the model (Adjusted R² = .593), suggesting that both positive and negative emotional climates contribute to recognition-related behaviours. For **Connection Feelings (CF)** itself, **Harsh Feelings (HF)** emerged as a strong negative predictor (Adjusted R² = .700), reinforcing the idea that emotional tone, especially harshness, deeply undermines felt connection. The model for **Harsh Feelings (HF)** followed a similar pattern as CB, where CF positively predicted HF reduction, and RF contributed negatively.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

To assess the collective influence of emotional predictors (HF, DF, CF, RF) on multiple behavioural outcomes (HB, DB, CB, RB), a one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted. This approach was used to determine whether the composite dependent behavioural variables varied significantly as a function of the combined emotional variables, allowing for the examination of interactions and shared variance beyond individual regressions. Before conducting the MANOVA, the assumptions of multivariate normality, absence of multicollinearity, and homogeneity of covariance matrices were assessed. Inter-correlations between dependent variables were within acceptable bounds. Pearson correlations among HB, DB, CB, and RB ranged from moderate to high, but not excessively high to suggest redundancy. The test for the homogeneity of covariance matrices was non-significant, Box's M = 29.24, F(10, 11756.06) = 1.36, p = .19, supporting the assumption of equal covariance matrices across groups. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances showed no significant violations of homogeneity for any dependent variable.

The omnibus MANOVA test revealed a significant multivariate effect of emotional predictors on the combined behavioural outcomes:

Pillai's Trace = .867, F(16, 240) = 5.88, p < .001, partial η² = .282

This suggests a statistically significant difference in the combined behavioural outcomes (HB, DB, CB, RB) as predicted by the emotional state variables.

Test	Statistic	Value	df	p-value	Partial η²
Multivariate Test	Pillai's Trace	0.867	F(16, 240)	< .001	.282
	Wilks' Lambda	0.213	F(16, 224.89)	< .001	.334
	Hotelling's Trace	2.47	F(16, 232)	< .001	.329
	Roy's Largest Root	1.89	F(4, 80)	< .001	.386
Univariate Tests (ANOVAs)	Harsh Behaviour (HB)	F = 16.75	(1, 64)	< .001	.208
	Delegate Behaviour (DB)	F = 19.32	(1, 64)	< .001	.225
	Connection Behaviour (CB)	F = 34.55	(1, 64)	< .001	.351

Recognition Behaviour (RB)	F = 24.61	(1, 64)	< .001	.278

Table 8: Summary of MANOVA and ANOVA tests.

To assess whether participants' demographic and professional characteristics were associated with variations in observed managerial behaviours, a one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted with Role, Years of Experience, and Team Size as independent variables, and HB, DB, CB, and RB as the dependent variables. The MANOVA revealed statistically significant multivariate effects for all three factors:

Role: Wilks' Λ = .550, $F(24, 214.41)$ = 1.94, p = .006, partial η^2 = .197

Years of Experience: Wilks' Λ = .579, $F(24, 214.41)$ = 1.75, p = .024, partial η^2 = .173

Team Size: Wilks' Λ = .569, $F(24, 214.41)$ = 2.01, p = .004, partial η^2 = .202

These findings indicate that managerial behaviours are meaningfully influenced by professional context. The effect of team size was particularly notable, showing the highest F-value and partial eta squared, suggesting that how many people a manager oversees may significantly shape their observable behaviours.

Additionally, the partial η^2 values indicate moderate effect sizes across all three variables, implying that a meaningful proportion of the variance in behaviours can be explained by differences in participants' roles, levels of experience, and team responsibilities.

Independent Variable	Wilks' Lambda	F	df (Hypothesis, Error)	Sig. (p)	Partial η^2
Role	.550	1.94	(24, 214.41)	.006	.197
Years of Experience	.579	1.75	(24, 214.41)	.024	.173
Team Size	.569	2.01	(24, 214.41)	.004	.202

Table 9:Summary of Demographic-Centric ANOVAs.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1: Harshness Hypothesis

H1: Managers who experience harsh feelings (HF) are more likely to exhibit harsh behaviours (HB).

1. **Correlation**: A strong positive correlation was observed between HF and HB (Spearman's ρ = .458, p < .001), suggesting an initial relationship between internal harsh emotions and external managerial harshness.

2. **Linear Regression**: A simple linear regression confirmed that HF significantly predicted HB (β = .607, p < .001), accounting for 36.9% of the variance in HB (R^2 = .369, $F(1,67)$ = 39.183, p < .001).

3. **Multiple Regression**: When other emotional domains (DF, CF, RF) were introduced, HF remained a predictor, but its unique contribution diminished. HB was now also significantly predicted by Delegation Feelings (DF) and Recognition Feelings (RF), with the full model explaining 55.4% of the variance (Adjusted R^2 = .526, $F(4,64)$ = 19.85, p < .001).

4. **Stepwise Regression**: DF emerged as the strongest predictor of HB, with HF contributing secondarily. This indicates an emotional spillover effect where feelings related to delegation also influence harsh behaviour.

Conclusion: **Hypothesis 1 is supported**, with both linear and multiple regression confirming a significant relationship between HF and HB. However, DF and RF also contribute to HB, suggesting that harsh managerial conduct stems from a broader emotional profile than harshness alone.

Hypothesis 2: Delegation Hypothesis

H2: Managers who report poor delegation feelings (DF) are more likely to demonstrate delegation-avoidant behaviours (DB).

1. **Correlation**: A strong positive correlation was observed between DF and DB (ρ = .650, p < .001).

2. **Linear Regression**: The linear regression confirmed this relationship, with DF significantly predicting DB (β = .728, p < .001). This model accounted for 53% of the variance in DB (R^2 = .530, $F(1,67)$ = 75.438, p < .001).

3. **Multiple Regression**: When HF, CF, and RF were introduced, the model explained 62.1% of the variance in DB (Adjusted R^2 = .597, $F(4,64)$ = 26.17, p < .001). While DF remained the most significant

contributor, HF and CF also showed moderate predictive effects, though none of the individual predictors were significant at p < .05 in the full model.

4. **Stepwise Regression**: DF was again the most dominant predictor, confirming its centrality in explaining DB.

Conclusion: **Hypothesis 2 is strongly supported**. Poor delegation feelings are the most consistent predictor of delegation-avoidant behaviours, both independently and in combination with other emotional states.

Hypothesis 3: Connection Hypothesis

H3: Managers who report poor connection feelings (CF) are more likely to demonstrate connection-avoidant behaviours (CB).

1. **Correlation**: A strong and highly significant correlation was found between CF and CB ($\rho = .766$, p < .001).
2. **Linear Regression**: CF strongly predicted CB ($\beta = .839$, p < .001), explaining a substantial 70.4% of the variance in connection behaviour ($R^2 = .704$, $F(1,67) = 159.294$, p < .001).
3. **Multiple Regression**: With the addition of HF, DF, and RF, the model explained 75.6% of the variance in CB (Adjusted $R^2 = .740$, $F(4,64) = 49.48$, p < .001). Notably, RF had a negative predictive effect on CB, suggesting that recognition-related feelings may suppress authentic connection.
4. **Stepwise Regression**: CF remained the most powerful predictor, followed by a significant negative influence from RF.

Conclusion: **Hypothesis 3 is strongly supported**, with CF emerging as the most robust predictor across all analyses. However, the inverse effect of RF on CB also highlights emotional trade-offs that merit further exploration.

Hypothesis 4: Recognition Hypothesis

H4: Managers who report poor recognition feelings (RF) are more likely to demonstrate recognition-withholding behaviours (RB).

1. **Correlation**: RF and RB showed a significant correlation ($\rho = .592$, p < .001), establishing the foundation for further predictive analysis.
2. **Linear Regression**: RF significantly predicted RB ($\beta = .745$, p < .001), with an R^2 of .554 ($F(1,67) = 83.375$, p < .001), indicating that 55.4% of the variance in recognition behaviour was explained by RF alone.
3. **Multiple Regression**: When HF, DF, and CF were added, the model explained 62.5% of the variance in RB (Adjusted $R^2 = .602$, $F(4,64) = 26.72$, p < .001). RF had the highest beta coefficient (.370), followed by CF and HF, though none were individually significant at p < .05.
4. **Stepwise Regression**: CF emerged as the strongest individual predictor, with HF improving the model further. RF, while conceptually central, did not independently dominate prediction once other emotional factors were considered.

Conclusion: **Hypothesis 4 is supported**, with RF significantly predicting RB in isolation. However, in real-world scenarios, RF works in tandem with CF and HF, indicating that recognition behaviours are emotionally complex and shaped by multiple affective dimensions.

Emotional States as Predictors of Behaviour

The findings revealed that managers' internal emotional states — feelings associated with harshness, delegation, connection, and recognition — significantly predict their observable workplace behaviours. Each behavioural domain (Harsh, Delegate, Connection, and Recognition Behaviours) was meaningfully explained by a corresponding set of emotional predictors, with regression models accounting for 55% to 76% of the variance in behaviours.

While most emotional predictors aligned intuitively with their respective behaviours (e.g., Harsh Feelings with Harsh Behaviour), the study also revealed surprising cross-domain effects. For instance, Recognition Feelings had a negative impact on Connection Behaviour in the regression model — suggesting that excessive or strategically misapplied recognition may inhibit genuine interpersonal connection.

Connection Feelings: A Central Emotional Driver

Among all emotional variables, Connection Feelings (CF) emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor. In the stepwise regression models, CF alone accounted for 70% of the variance in Connection Behaviour, a remarkably high predictive strength. This underscores the idea that when managers feel emotionally attuned and connected to others, it translates into observable behaviours that reinforce team cohesion and empathy.

However, the addition of Recognition Feelings (RF) in this model led to a decline in Connection Behaviours, hinting at an emotional trade-off: recognition efforts that lack genuine connection may actually hinder the quality of relational dynamics. This complexity highlights the need to view positive behaviours like recognition through a nuanced lens — as potentially helpful or counterproductive depending on the emotional context in which they arise.

Emotional Spillover Effects Across Domains

The analysis also indicated that emotional states are not neatly confined to their respective behavioural domains. For instance, Harsh Feelings not only influenced Harsh Behaviour but also had notable predictive power over Recognition and Delegate Behaviours. Similarly, Delegate Feelings and Connection Feelings influenced multiple behavioural outcomes.

This emotional "spillover" suggests that internal affective experiences shape a broader spectrum of leadership conduct than previously assumed. A manager who feels unsupported or isolated (e.g., low CF) may not only struggle to connect with others but may also withhold recognition or over-delegate in response. These findings support a systems-based perspective on managerial behaviour — one in which emotions operate across domains rather than in isolated silos.

Demographic & Contextual Influences

Beyond emotional predictors, the study also examined the impact of demographic and professional characteristics. A MANOVA revealed that Role, Years of Experience, and especially Team Size significantly influenced behavioural outcomes.

Managers responsible for larger teams showed more distinctive behavioural profiles, particularly in areas like delegation and recognition. The moderate effect sizes for all three variables suggest that leadership behaviour is shaped not only by internal affect but also by external demands, responsibilities, and organisational context.

This implies that leadership development programs may need to tailor emotional intelligence and behavioural Coaching to managerial level, experience, and span of control — rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the extent to which managers' emotional states — specifically feelings associated with harshness, delegation, connection, and recognition — predicted observable workplace behaviours. The findings reinforced the increasingly accepted notion that leadership is not merely a function of competencies or traits, but also deeply rooted in affective processes (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Humphrey, Pollack and Hawver, 2008). Through rigorous statistical analysis, it became evident that emotional states serve not only as internal experiences but as meaningful precursors of behaviour across managerial contexts.

A central insight emerging from this research is the predictive strength of emotions in shaping managerial actions. Variables such as Harsh Feelings, Delegate Feelings, Connection Feelings, and Recognition Feelings explained a considerable portion of the variance in their corresponding behaviours, with R^2 values ranging from 55% to 76%. The data aligns with Ashkanasy and Humphrey's (2011) multi-level theory of emotions, highlighting how emotional states at the individual level can cascade into interpersonal and organisational outcomes through behavioural expression.Notably, the relationship between Recognition Feelings and Connection Behaviour emerged as both statistically significant and counterintuitive. While both constructs are generally considered positive aspects of leadership, the regression analysis revealed a negative association between them. This contradiction may be explained by existing research on the authenticity of managerial praise. Gabriel, Moran and Gregory (2018) distinguished between strategic and authentic recognition, noting that employees often perceive recognition motivated by obligation or image management as inauthentic. This perspective is supported by Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labour, which posits that incongruence between felt emotions and enacted behaviours can generate dissonance and reduce trust. As such, recognition that is perceived to be performative may impair rather than enhance relational connection with team members.

Additionally, the study uncovered robust evidence for emotional spillover across behavioural domains. Emotional states were not restricted to influencing their direct behavioural counterparts but extended into adjacent categories. For instance, Harsh Feelings influenced not only Harsh Behaviour but also significantly predicted variations in Delegation and Recognition Behaviours. Similarly, Connection Feelings emerged as a significant predictor of both Delegation and Recognition Behaviours. These findings resonate with the systems perspective of organisational emotions (Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000), suggesting that affective dispositions permeate across multiple behavioural dimensions. Such entanglement highlights the importance of designing leadership interventions that consider the emotional system in its entirety, rather than focusing narrowly on isolated skills or behaviours.

The MANOVA analysis offered further nuance by demonstrating that contextual variables such as Role, Years of Experience, and Team Size significantly influenced behavioural patterns. Managers responsible for larger teams reported higher frequencies of delegation and recognition behaviours, perhaps due to increased operational demands or broader spans of control. This is consistent with contingency theories of leadership, particularly Fiedler's (1967)

assertion that leadership effectiveness is moderated by situational variables. The interaction between emotion and context also supports Goleman's (2000) model of emotionally intelligent leadership, which argues that the effective deployment of emotional competencies is contingent on organisational structure and relational dynamics.

Collectively, these findings underscore the critical interplay between internal emotional architecture and external contextual pressures. Emotional states emerge not only as intrinsic psychological experiences but as structurally relevant forces shaping day-to-day leadership. Consequently, leadership development efforts must evolve beyond conventional behaviourist approaches to integrate emotional diagnostics and reflective practices that allow managers to surface and regulate their inner emotional landscapes.

CONCLUSION

The study contributes to a growing body of literature that repositions emotion from a peripheral concern to a central determinant in leadership effectiveness. Emotions such as harshness, connection, recognition, and delegation were not merely reactive states but active, measurable predictors of managerial behaviour. The consistent predictive relationships identified across regression models reinforce the need for leadership models that embrace affective dimensions as foundational, rather than supplementary, constructs. In doing so, the study affirms the view that leadership is not only a matter of skills and knowledge but equally a matter of state — an ongoing, dynamic interplay between what is felt and what is done.

This understanding carries profound implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, the study validates multi-level and affect-driven models of leadership and extends them by demonstrating cross-domain emotional spillovers. From a practical perspective, the results call for leadership development programs that prioritise emotional reflection, authenticity, and contextual sensitivity. The ability to manage and understand one's emotional states emerges not just as a soft skill but as a critical lever for behavioural alignment, relational effectiveness, and ultimately, organisational performance.

In a leadership landscape increasingly shaped by complexity, ambiguity, and relational interdependence, the findings of this research serve as a compelling call to recalibrate leadership development — from what leaders know and do, to what they feel and how they process those feelings within the contexts they serve.

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