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The Effect of Dark Leadership Perception on Quiet Quitting and The Mediating Role of Presenteeism: A Study on Healthcare Workers*

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting and the mediating role of presenteeism (failure to work engagement) among healthcare employees. While dark leadership has gained attention in recent literature as a critical leadership issue, previous research lacks empirical evidence examining the proposed model that integrates dark leadership perception with presenteeism and quiet quitting. Thus, this study bridges a critical gap in the literature by empirically demonstrating how dark leadership perception triggers quiet quitting through the mediating role of presenteeism. Using a sample of 560 healthcare workers from public hospitals in Izmir, Türkiye, data were collected by questionnaires and analyzed through SPSS 25.0 and AMOS. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The results reveal that dark leadership significantly increases both quiet quitting and presenteeism. Furthermore, presenteeism amplifies quiet quitting behaviors and fully mediates the relationship between dark leadership perception and quiet quitting. These findings contribute to the literature by introducing a novel perspective on how dark leadership behaviors propagate counterproductive employee outcomes through psychological disengagement. The study underscores the urgency of addressing dark leadership in healthcare settings to mitigate workforce attrition and productivity loss.

Key words: Dark Leadership, Presenteeism, Quiet Quitting, Healthcare Employee

JEL Code: M10, M12, L20, I10, D23

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1. Introduction

While leadership is often perceived as a positive process of guidance and administration, the term is not confined to its constructive dimensions. Leadership literature demonstrate that, alongside positive leadership approaches, negative leadership styles can also exert significant impacts on employees and organizations (Jabeen and Rahim, 2021; Davis, 2016; Başar, 2020; Işık and Kızıltuğ, 2022). Leadership style refers to the behavioral model a leader exhibits in interactions with employees, shaping how they manage organizational dynamics. In essence, leadership style reflects the nature of the relationship between leaders and their subordinates (Bhatti, 2012, p. 193).

The effects of leaders' positive or negative traits on organizational culture and employees have long been investigated in the literature. While positive leadership styles enhance motivation and performance, negative leadership styles are known to create adverse individual and organizational outcomes, fostering a negative work environment. Negative leadership behaviors are well-documented in the literature as leading to reduced job performance, negatively influencing organizational culture, altering organizational and ethical climates, discouraging innovative and creative behaviors, and leading employees towards psychological distress, job stress, depression, loss of psychological well-being, decreased organizational commitment, reduced job satisfaction, organizational cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and intention to leave the organization (Fernandez, 2008; Yao et al., 2014; Mathieu ve Babiak, 2015; Akhtar et al., 2022; Garrido, 2023; Mehraein et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2024). Among destructive leadership styles, dark leadership stands out for its adverse effects on individuals and organizational dynamics. Dark leaders often exhibit manipulative, authoritarian, and empathy-deficient behaviors, characterized by excessive control and psychological pressure on employees. Although dark leadership has received less attention compared to other leadership styles, its implications for employee well-being have gained prominence in recent years.

Upon reviewing the literature regarding the effects of dark leadership behaviors on employees, it is noteworthy that researches investigating the concepts of presenteeism and quiet quitting as employee behaviors are lacking. Presenteeism refers to employees attending work despite health-related problems, resulting in diminished productivity, while quiet quitting is characterized by employees maintaining minimal performance despite their physical presence at the workplace. In this context, the research model positions dark leadership behaviors as the independent variable and quiet quitting as the dependent variable. Presenteeism is considered as a mediating factor explaining the relationship between quiet quitting and dark leadership. Therefore, this study aims to address the following research questions:

1. Do employees exposed to dark leadership behaviors engage in quiet quitting?

2. Do dark leadership behaviors lead employees to experience presenteeism at the workplace?
3. Do employees' presenteeism behaviors increase their perceptions of quiet quitting?
4. Does presenteeism mediate the relationship between dark leadership and quiet quitting behaviors?

Based on these research questions, the following hypotheses have been tested:

H_1: Dark leadership behaviors positively affect employees' perceptions of quiet quitting.
H_2: Dark leadership behaviors increase employees' presenteeism perceptions.
H_3: Employees' presenteeism behaviors increase their perceptions of quiet quitting.
H_4: Presenteeism mediates the relationship between perceptions of dark leadership and quiet quitting.

The following contributions are expected through this research:

1. Re-evaluating leadership strategies in organizations and developing policies which aim to mitigate negative leadership behaviors, thereby guiding interventions by human resource management to enhance employee commitment and shape policies regarding employee health and well-being,
2. Providing a novel perspective on relatively under-researched effects of dark leadership on employees as an important contribution,
3. Focusing on the increasingly prevalent phenomena of quiet quitting and presenteeism, particularly in the post-pandemic era with altered working conditions, by clarifying their relationship with dark leadership.
4. Introducing a new approach to the literature by the proposed research model, as existing studies have typically examined these concepts separately.
5. Demonstrating how presenteeism shapes the variables' relationship in the research model, enabling organizations to develop comprehensive strategies to address performance and commitment issues, thereby contributing to the organizational behavior research.

Consequently, this research aims to provide theoretical contributions to the leadership and organizational behavior literature while also offering practical implications for business practices. Specifically, it is expected to serve as a valuable resource for understanding and minimizing the impacts of dark leadership on employees, presenting significant insights for managers, human resource professionals, and organizational leaders.

2. Literature Review

Dark Leadership and Its Dimensions

Researchers have emphasized that leaders' behavioral and personality traits interact to play a critical role in shaping negative leadership styles. These styles often emerge from a blend of the leader's personality characteristics, leading to various negative leadership typologies (Lašáková and Remišová, 2015, p.320). An examination of the literature reveals the following negative leadership styles:

Table 1. Negative Leadership Typologies

Research Topic	References
Early work on the dark side of leadership	Conger (1990)
Petty tyranny	Ashforth (1994)
Abusive leadership	Tepper (2000); Murari (2013); Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2016); Lyu et al. (2019); Simard and Parent-Lamarche (2022)
Toxic leadership	Lipman-Blumen (2010); Thoroughgood et al. (2011); Aubrey (2012); Green (2014); Mergen and Ozbilgin (2021)
Despotic leadership	Kayani et al. (2019); Jabeen and Rahim (2020); Raja et al. (2020); Albashiti et al. (2021); Zhou et al. (2021); Iqbal et al. (2022)
Authoritarian leadership	Duan et al. (2018); Shen et al. (2019); Wang et al. (2019); Asim et al. (2021); Chiang et al. (2021); Pizzolitto et al. (2023)
Machiavellian leadership	Belschak et al. (2018); Younus et al. (2020); Genau et al. (2021); Hammali and Nastiezaie (2022)
Narcissistic leadership	Clements and Washbush (1999); Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006); Takala (2010); Leary and Ashman (2018); Asrar-ul-Haq and Anjum (2020); Norouzinik et al. (2022)
Psychopathic leadership	Smith and Lilienfeld (2013); Mathieu and Babiak (2015); Boddy (2017); Hunt and Fitzgerald (2018); Landay et al. (2019); Tariq et al. (2021); Palmen et al. (2021)

Source: Author's Review

Certain personality traits of leaders that may generate adverse effects are associated with the dark triad, comprising three core negative personality types: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams, 2002, p.560; McCleskey, 2013, p. 35). The formation of dark triad personalities reflects a

dynamic interplay of genetic, environmental, familial, and socio-cultural influences. Consequently, a holistic approach evaluating both genetic and environmental factors is necessary to understand and mitigate the risks of individuals developing these detrimental traits.

Table 2. Dynamics Influencing the Dark Triad

Dark Triad	Environmental Factors	Socio-cultural Factors	Family/Parental Factors	Biological Factors	Genetic Factors
Machiavellian	✓	✓	✓		
Narcissist	✓			✓	✓
Psychopathic	✓				✓

Source: Vernon, 2008, p.451.

Dark Leadership

Dark leadership represents the negative and destructive dimension of leadership, encompassing manipulative, authoritarian, empathy-deficient, bullying, and coercive behaviors by leaders. While the literature does not provide a universally agreed-upon definition of dark leadership, it is broadly associated with outcomes such as pressuring employees, reducing motivation, undermining trust, and diminishing job satisfaction. Dark leadership not only poses a significant threat to employees but also triggers adverse consequences for organizations (Jabeen and Rahim, 2021, p.225).

Oppressive Behavior: Managers often demonstrate excessive self-importance. They may intentionally increase their subordinates' workloads. These managers can assign them demanding or difficult tasks. They often expect these tasks to be completed within unrealistic timespan. Additionally, such managers may ignore or deliberately overlook employees' ideas or contributions, effectively excluding or marginalizing them. These behaviors can demoralize employees, leading to increased job stress, burnout, loss of self-confidence, intention to leave the job, and various psychological issues.

Inauthentic Behavior: Managers may falsely accuse subordinates of actions or statements they did not perform or make, forging documents about them to shape the work environment in line with their own interests or preferences. Such behaviors can foster negative communication among employees, resulting in workplace conflicts. Inauthentic managerial behaviors can create an environment

of mistrust within the organization, reducing employee motivation and increasing turnover rates.

Bullying Behavior: Managers openly or privately engage in humiliating, belittling, or mocking actions towards their subordinates. They might resort to yelling or verbal aggression, exhibiting rude behaviors or verbal insults. Furthermore, they may employ unjust punishments and coercive behaviors as forms of intimidation (Başar, 2020, p.76). Generally, bullying behaviors can be categorized into five groups: Task-related difficulties, social isolation, personal or private life attacks, verbal threats, and physical threats (Einarsen, 1999, p.18). Bullying significantly impacts employees' psychological health, potentially resulting in burnout, stress, anxiety, and increased intention to leave the organization.

Dark leadership behaviors are generally categorized into four fundamental groups: Oppressive, narcissistic, inauthentic, and bullying (Başar et al., 2016, p. 70). Empirical studies on the effects of dark leadership reveal the following findings. Davis (2016) demonstrated that dark triad leadership behaviors cause well-being loss among employees and impair organizational performance. Wiguna et al. (2023) highlighted that dark leadership and leader-member exchange influence employee commitment, which in turn affects organizational performance. However, dark leadership itself does not directly impact organizational performance. Işık and Kızıltuğ (2022) observed that as employees' perception of dark leadership increases, their performance and job satisfaction decline. Karaçınar and Ozdemir (2022) identified a moderate positive correlation between dark leadership, favoritism, and presenteeism. They also reported a strong correlation between dark leadership and favoritism, with both significantly influencing presenteeism.

Machiavellian Leadership Behavior

Machiavellian leadership is characterized by manipulation, unethical behaviors, and strategic deception to achieve personal or organizational goals. Such leaders often exhibit poor and ineffective communication with subordinates and team members (Hammali and Nastiezaie, 2022, p.273). Manipulative skills are central to how Machiavellian leaders influence their subordinates and peers, often displaying morally deficient, cynical, and unprincipled behaviors (Younus et al., 2020, p.743). These leaders may exploit tools such as rewards, promotions, and punishments to control employees and advance their agendas (Liyanagamage et al., 2023, p.659).

Studies examining the effects of Machiavellian leadership on employees reveal the following findings. Gkorezis et al. (2015) found that Machiavellian leadership has both direct and indirect effects on employees' emotional exhaustion via organizational cynicism. Stradovnik and Stare (2018) suggested that Machiavellian leadership style influences both emotional exhaustion and organizational cynicism among employees. Younus et al. (2020) indicated that

Machiavellian leadership triggers counterproductive work behaviors, with perceptions of justice mediating this relationship. Raza (2021) found that Machiavellian leadership affects employee creativity and indirectly impacts entrepreneurial intentions. Hammali and Nastiezaie (2022) Machiavellian leadership directly increases workplace stress and negative organizational behaviors, as stress has positive and significant effect on negative organizational behaviors. Cai et al. (2024) showed that highly Machiavellian leaders elevate perceptions of abusive supervision among employess, leading to a rise in counterproductive work behaviors.

Narcissistic Leadership Behavior

Narcissistic leadership represents an excessively self-centered and self-admiring approach, where leaders' behaviors are rooted in the dominance of the self. For narcissistic leaders, the world revolves around their own axis, and all actions are designed to reinforce this perception. Consequently, they excessively glorify their successes while refusing to acknowledge failures or mistakes (Leary and Ashman, 2018, p.63). Narcissistic leaders exhibit a leadership style marked by a lack of humility (Norouzinik et al., 2022, p.3), high egos, and status-oriented approaches that negatively impact team dynamics (Asrar-ul-Haq and Anjum, 2020, p.2). These leaders face significant challenges in establishing healthy relationships with employees and team members, often displaying a lack of empathy and tendencies toward abusive interpersonal behaviors to satisfy personal desires (Takala, 2010, p.61).

Empirical studies on the effects of narcissistic leadership on employees reveal the following findings. Alhasnawi and Abbas (2021) suggest that narcissistic behaviors in leaders escalate workplace hostility by fostering organizational aggression and deviance. Yousif and Loukil (2022) state that narcissistic leadership adversely affects employee performance. Norouzinik et al. (2022) and Wang et al. (2022) found that employees working under narcissistic managers experience reduced job embeddedness, commitment, and innovative behaviors. Accordingto Asrar-ul-Haq and Anjum (2020) narcissistic leadership negatively impacts subordinates' job satisfaction and well-being while positively correlating with stress and turnover intentions.

Psychopathic Leadership Behavior

Psychopathic leadership, a phenomenon increasingly recognized in modern organizations, falls under the dark leadership typologies in management literature. Key traits include unfairness, lack of impartiality, negative judgments, and empathy deficits (Mathieu and Babiak, 2015, p.9). Psychopathic leaders exhibit emotionally detached, aggressive, and reckless behaviors aligned with their personality structure. A defining characteristic is their emotional detachment, fostering cold, selfish, and exploitative relationships with employees (Hunt and Fitzgerald, 2018, p.82). This absence of emotional connection eliminates remorse, guilt, or

accountability, often manifesting in hostile behaviors such as humiliation, harassment, and hypercriticism toward subordinates (Tariq et al., 2021, p.462).

Empirical studies on the effects of psychopathic leadership reveal the following findings. According to Tariq et al. (2021) psychopathic leadership drives employees toward behavioral silence, exacerbating work-family conflict and diminishing organizational citizenship behavior. Sandhu and Fatima (2021) found that psychopathic leaders induce workplace alienation, job phobia, and anxiety among employees. Hameed (2019) states that psychopathic leadership positively correlates with employee turnover intentions. Mathieu et al. (2014) suggests that psychopathic leadership style increases psychological distress and reduces job satisfaction.

Quiet Quitting

Quiet quitting has become a popular yet not a novel phenomenon in recent years. The term was first introduced by economist Mark Boldger during an economic conference in 2009 (Yıldız and Özmenekşe, 2022, p.16). However, its widespread recognition emerged in 2021 following a TikTok post by content creator Zaid Khan (TikTok, 2022). Khan's post rapidly disseminated the concept across social media platforms, framing "Quiet Quitting" as a trending behavior (Yıldız and Özmenekşe, 2022, p.16). The concept regained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, declared a global health crisis by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. The pandemic led significant shifts in work dynamics and reshaped employees' perceptions of work-life balance. Economic and social uncertainties stemming from COVID-19 compelled individuals to reevaluate their lifestyles and work practices (Lu et al., 2023, p.2).

Quiet quitting is a gradual, incremental process. It is characterized by passive behavioral patterns, such as employees avoiding overtime before or after their scheduled hours, refusing to take on additional responsibilities beyond their job descriptions, and exhibiting reduced willingness to participate in meetings (Metcalfe, 2023, p.2). Quiet quitting does not entail employees formally resigning but rather performing their duties without expending extra effort or exceeding baseline expectations (Hiltunen, 2023, p.6). Quiet quitting reflects a loss of organizational commitment, where employees disengage from career advancement aspirations and organizational goals, despite maintaining job performance. Employees cannot derive intrinsic motivation from traditional workplace rewards and critically perceive that they work in an environment where their efforts are unrecognized. Particularly, employees who sense disloyalty are prone to exhibit quiet quitting behavior (Brown et al., 2023, p.28).

The causes of quiet quitting are burnout, leadership approaches, loss of workplace trust, lack of motivation, prioritization of mental health over work, adverse working conditions, low employee satisfaction, and deficits in managerial trust and communication (Badilla et al, 2023, p.29; Pevec, 2023, p.142). To comprehensively understand quiet quitting behavior, both organizational factors

and individual-level subfactors must be considered. In this context, the individual drivers leading employees toward quiet quitting have been analyzed through a conceptual framework termed the "Quiet Quitting Pyramid". This pyramid hierarchically structures employees' emotions and perceptions toward the organization, leadership, and colleagues, providing a systematic lens to examine disengagement mechanisms (Yılmaz, 2024, p.1399).

A review of the literature indicates that positive leadership styles may reduce employees' tendency to quiet quitting (Joaquim, 2023, p.29). For instance, task-oriented leadership has been found to diminish quiet quitting behaviors when applied more frequently (Bakotić, 2023, p.43). Conversely, Xu et al. (2015) demonstrated that employees in organizations dominated by abusive supervision tend to exhibit emotional exhaustion and withdrawal behaviors, aligning with quiet quitting. Similarly, Potokar et al. (2023) concluded that negative leadership behaviors contribute to burnout and quiet quitting.

Presenteeism

Presenteeism is broadly defined as employees being physically present at work yet unable to perform at full capacity due to health issues or psychological distress (Johns, 2010, p.519; Turpin et al., 2004, p.1123). Additionally, employees working with illness are termed "present employees" (Silva-Costa et al., 2020, p.5). Empirical studies conducted in Denmark (Robertson et al., 2012, p.1344) and Germany (Dietz and Scheel, 2017, p.2) confirm that employees frequently attend work despite illness. The organizational consequence of presenteeism manifests as productivity loss, as evidenced by research across diverse contexts (Fernando et al., 2017; Goto et al., 2020, p.564; Yang et al., 2020, p.3).

Presenteeism primarily centers on the concept of "illness". Research in this context categorizes the health-related causes of presenteeism as acute illness/pain, chronic illness/pain, musculoskeletal disorders, negative health behaviors, and psychological factors (Koopman et al., 2002; Johns, 2010; Howard et al., 2012; Fernando et al., 2017). Persistent presenteeism may also lead to long-term absenteeism, as short-term illnesses can evolve into chronic conditions (Janssens et al., 2013, p.138; Won et al., 2022, p.9). Such work patterns exacerbate fatigue, weakness, emotional exhaustion (Vieira, 2018, p.13; Samalopanan, 2018, p.17; Chambers et al., 2017, p.19), and adversely affect mental and physical health (Lu et al., 2013, p.413). Stress and job-related strain linked to acute/chronic illnesses further act as indirect drivers of presenteeism (Furuichi et al., 2020; Callen et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2019). Additionally, employees face heightened risks due to reduced attention spans and increased mistake propensity (Sanderson and Cocker, 2013, p.173).

Psychosocial factors such as employees' individual expectations, reward-effort imbalances, working conditions, and employment types also drive presenteeism (Janssens et al., 2015, p. 335; Cho et al., 2016, p. 10). For instance,

employees engaged in shift work or those with weekly work hours exceeding 45 hours exhibit significantly higher tendencies toward presenteeism, indicating a direct causal relationship (Cho et al., 2016, p.5; Böckerman and Laukkanen, 2009, p.1011). Additionally, employees may subjectively compel themselves to engage in presenteeism. Perceived pressures from colleagues, leadership, or organizational norms—such as fear of judgment or job insecurity—often create an obligation to attend work despite illness (Bracewell et al., 2010, p.32; d'Errico et al., 2013, p.276).

Other critical factors include leadership and managerial behaviors. Negative leadership practices are known to affect employees both physiologically and psychologically, thereby diminishing individual performance and motivation (Zhou et al., 2016; Shan et al., 2022; Vänni et al., 2017). Studies demonstrate that leaders' behaviors significantly influence employees' workplace well-being, while interactive and transformational leadership styles can mitigate presenteeism (George et al., 2017, p.1). Leadership is a pivotal element for understanding organizational stress factors and is regarded as a key determinant capable of directly shaping employee engagement and organizational success.

Within this framework, presenteeism and quiet quitting as distinct yet interrelated concepts, emerge as critical workplace phenomena that affect employee motivation and productivity. Both presenteeism and quiet quitting are influenced by shared factors such as toxic workplace culture, leadership styles, and employee well-being. Notably, presenteeism may gradually lead employees toward quiet quitting. Employees exhibiting presenteeism due to physical or mental health issues cannot perform at full capacity, and prolonged exposure to such conditions may result in emotional exhaustion. Employees compelled to work while ill may lose organizational commitment and trust, shifting their focus solely to fulfilling basic responsibilities. In addition, employees exposed to negative leadership behaviors may exhibit quiet quitting as a response to perceived unhappiness and diminished well-being within the organization. This suggests that employees who disengage from work (presenteeism) are likely to transition into passive resistance (quiet quitting). To empirically examine whether the employee perception of dark leadership directly influences quiet quitting, presenteeism is considered as a mediating variable in this study.

3. Methodology

Research Model

The research model examines the mediating role of presenteeism in the relationship between dark leadership behaviors and quiet quitting among healthcare workers. In this model, independent and dependent variables are dark leadership and quiet quitting respectively, while the mediating variable is presenteeism.

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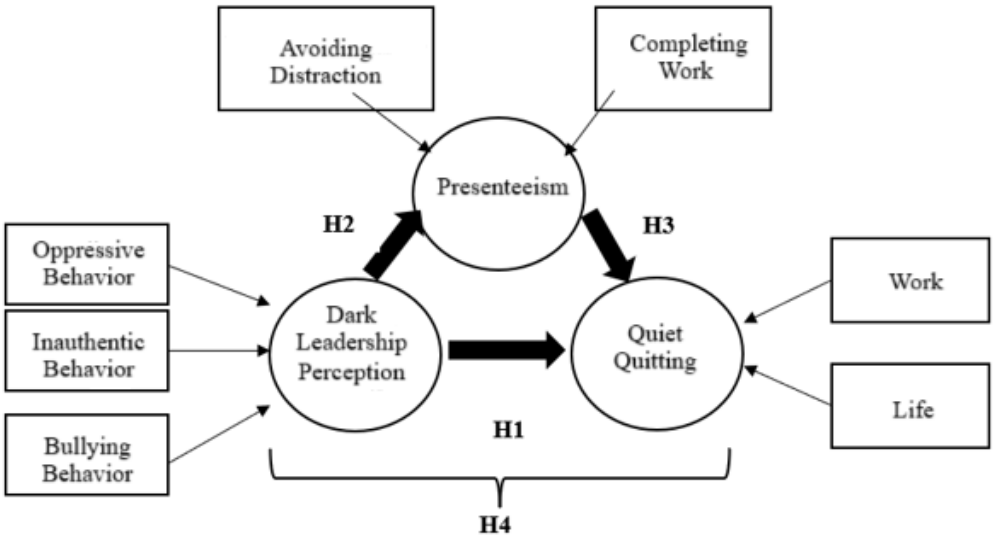
Figure 1. Research Model



Population and Sample

The study population involves healthcare workers in public institutions. According to the 2023 Health Statistics Yearbook Bulletin published by the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Health Information Systems (2024), total number of healthcare workers in Türkiye is approximately 1,413,921. Since it is known that the population size is 1,413,921 workers, a minimum sample size of 384 participants was determined to be sufficient at a 95% confidence level (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018, p.130). To ensure strong representational capacity and account for metropolitan dynamics, public hospitals in İzmir was selected as the study area.

The sample was selected from healthcare workers occupied in public healthcare services in İzmir. This choice was made due to the distinct dynamics present in public service roles compared to the private sector. In a negative workplace climate, issues such as appointments, transfers, relocations or resignation decisions cannot be made individually as in the private sector but are governed by relevant laws and regulations.

Considering occupational groups, burnout is more frequently observed among employees in professions requiring intense communication and emotional labor, particularly in fields such as teaching, banking, and healthcare, due to constant human interaction and high responsibility (Kazu and Yıldırım, 2021). Historically, the concept of burnout was first introduced in the 1970s by psychiatrist Freudenberger in a healthcare setting (Freudenberger, 1975). There is a direct or indirect relationship between employee burnout and leadership styles (Hetland et al., 2007; Zopiatis and Constanti, 2010; Telli et al., 2012). Specifically, working conditions and managerial styles set by supervisors can significantly predispose

employees to burnout syndrome. Employees occupied in professions requiring continuous human interaction should manage stress arising not only from job-related factors but also from their supervisors' attitudes, expectations, and leadership practices. On the other hand, reviewing national and international publications reveals studies examining the effects of the Dark Triad and dark leadership perceptions on employees (Hakimi, 2020; Üngör, 2021; Uğurlu, 2022; Yousif and Loukil, 2022; Cai et al., 2024). However, research specifically investigating the effects of dark leadership perceptions on healthcare workers remains scarce. Therefore, employees in public healthcare services were selected as the research sample for this study. Using the convenience sampling method proportionally based on the capacity of İzmir's 7 training and research hospitals, 560 participants were included in the final sample.

Data Collection

The research employed a survey methodology focusing healthcare workers in İzmir, Türkiye. Data collection utilized three validated scales: Dark Leadership Perception Scale developed by Başar (2020), the Quiet Quitting Scale by Avcı (2023), and the Presenteeism Scale originally developed by Koopman et al. (2002, p.17) which was later adapted into Turkish by Coşkun (2012). Responses from 560 participants were gathered using a 5-point Likert-type scales (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), with each score reflecting the intensity of respondents' perceptions.

Data Analysis

This study employed a quantitative research method, and data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0 for Windows (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The analyses included regression analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), reliability analysis, and descriptive statistical analysis. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were performed using AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) to test the hypotheses in the research model.

4. Findings

Based on the coding for the questionnaire, the data were entered into SPSS and checked for missing responses. Out of 560 questionnaires, 3 of them contained missing data and were therefore excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final dataset of 557 responses.

Table 3. Results of Reliability Analysis Following EFA

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Oppressive Behavior	0.897	6
Inauthentic Behavior	0.942	5

Bullying Behaviors	0.960	6
Dark Leadership Perception	0.963	17
Work	0.737	4
Life	0.748	4
Quiet Quitting	0.807	8
Avoiding Distraction	0.826	3
Completing Work	0.690	3
Presenteeism	0.717	6

Following EFA, 1 item pertaining to the "Life" factor of the quiet quitting shifted to the "Work" factor unlike the original scale. Reliability analysis indicate that all 3 scales are highly reliable. Reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70 confirm the strong internal consistency of these instruments.

Table 4. Findings Regarding EFA

Component	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Sample Adequacy	Barlett's Test
Dark Leadership Perception Scale			0.959	p=0.000
First Factor: Bullying Behaviors (6 item)	27.845	27.845		
Second Factor: Inauthentic Behaviors (5 item)	27.231	55.076		
Third Factor: Oppressive Behaviors (6 item)	23.043	78.12		
Quiet Quitting Scale			0.81	p=0.000
First Factor: Life (4 item)	30.574	30.574		
Second Factor: Work (4 item)	27.643	58.217		
Presenteeism Scale			0.732	p=0.000
First Factor: Avoiding Distraction (3 item)	39.732	39.732		
Second Factor: Completing Work (3 item)	30.712	70.444		

Table 4 shows that the factor analysis revealed three factors for Dark Leadership scale. The first factor explains 27.8% of the variance in the perception

of dark leadership, the second factor accounts for 27.2%, and the third factor explains 23.0%. These three factors account for 78.12% of the variance in dark leadership perception. Based on the principal component analysis, the Dark Leadership scale consists of three factors, with the first factor comprising 6 items, the second factor 5 items, and the third factor 6 items. Similarly, the factor analysis results for the Quiet Quitting scale indicated two factors. The first factor explains 30.5% of the variance in quiet quitting perception, while the second factor accounts for 27.6%. Together, these two factors explain a total of 58.2% of the variance. Notably, contrary to what is reported in the original scale, quiet quitting in this study comprises 4 items for both first and second factor. However, due to the seventh item clustering with a different factor, the structure of the Quiet Quitting scale was altered and second reliability analysis was employed. The results of the final reliability analysis are presented in Table 3. Furthermore, Table 4 shows that the factor analysis for the Presenteeism scale resulted in a two-factor structure. The first factor explains 39.7% of the variance in presenteeism, while the second factor accounts for 30.7%. Together, these two factors explain 70.4% of the total variance in presenteeism.

KMO value exceeding 0.60 indicates that the sample is adequate for factor analysis (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018, p.319). Table 4 shows that Dark Leadership Perception Scale yielded a KMO value of 0.959, with Bartlett's test of sphericity being significant (p=0.000). Similarly, the factor analysis for the Quiet Quitting Scale resulted in a KMO value of 0.810 and a significant Bartlett's test (p=0.000). For the Presenteeism Scale, the KMO value was found to be 0.732, with Bartlett's test also being significant (p=0.000). These results demonstrate that the sample is adequate for the EFA. According to the EFA, the factor structures of the scales are suitable for subsequent analyses.

Table 5. Model Fit Indices for Proposed Model

Indices	**Recommended Threshold Values**		**Pre-modification values**	**Post-modification values**
	Good fit	*Acceptable fit*		
χ^2 (CMIN)	p>0.05; Report if 100<n<200		χ^2=1854.3 p=0.00	χ^2=1111.2 p=0.00
CMIN/df	< 3	3< CMIN/df <5	4.683	3.858
RMSEA	< 0.05	< 0.08 or 0.08-0.1 moderate fit; 0.1< poor fit	0.081	0.072
SRMR	< 0.05	< 0.09	0.077	0.073
GFI	> 0.95	> 0.90	0.796	0.857
CFI	> 0.95	> 0.90	0.886	0.919
AGFI	> 0.95	> 0.80 or > 0.90	0.761	0.826
NFI	> 0.95	> 0.90	0.860	0.894

NNFI (TLI)	> 0.95	> 0.90	0.875	0.909
RFI	> 0.90		0.842	0.881
IFI	> 0.95	> 0.90	0.887	0.919
PNFI	>0.5		0.781	0.792
PCFI	>0.5		0.806	0.815

According to the model fit indices, the values for CMIN/df, RMSEA, and SRMR, as well as for CFI, AGFI, TLI, and IFI, reached acceptable levels after the modifications. Additionally, the GFI, NFI, and RFI indices closely approached their threshold values. Consequently, the findings of the structural model can be utilized in hypothesis testing. However, prior to conducting the hypothesis tests, common method bias was also examined to further improve the model. In the literature regarding model fit indices, the threshold values provided by studies such as Meyers et al. (2005), Gürbüz and Şahin (2018), Tabachnick and Fidell (2020), Bentler (1990), Hair et al. (2010), Byrne (2013), Chau (1997), and Bentler and Bonett (1980) were considered, and confirmed that the model fit is acceptable.

Table 6. CR, AVE and MSV Values of the Model

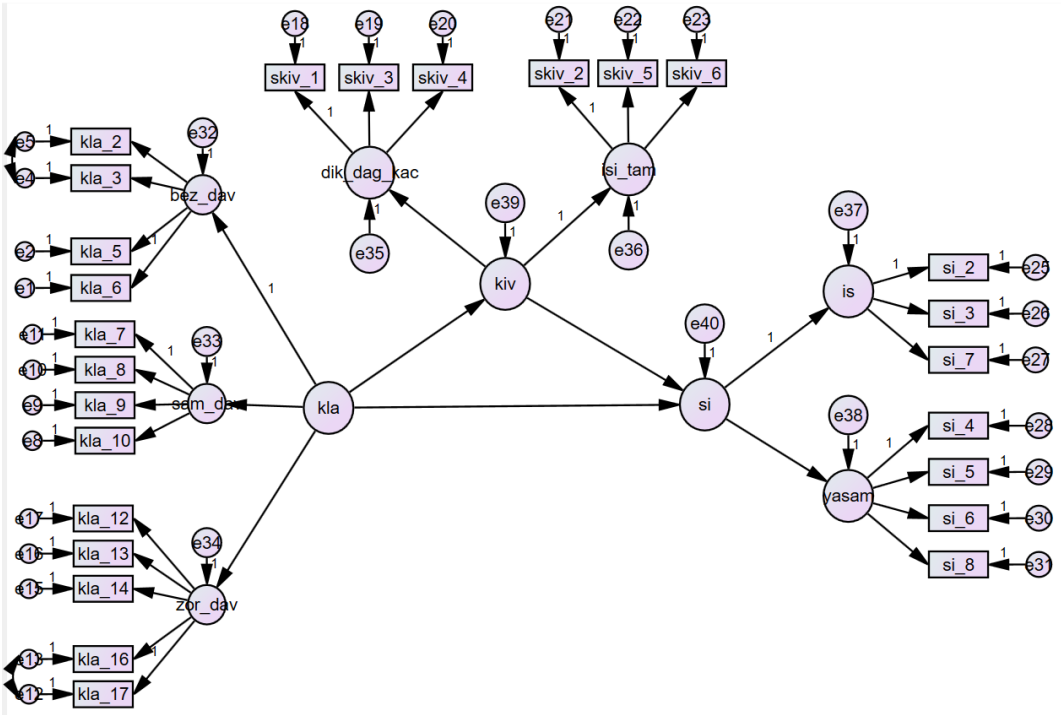
	n	**AVE**	**CR**	**MSV**
Oppressive Behavior	4	0.555	0.828	0.758
Inauthentic Behavior	4	0.792	0.938	0.758
Bullying Behavior	5	0.803	0.953	0.758
Avoiding Distraction	3	0.613	0.826	0.362
Completing Work	3	0.457	0.710	0.104
Work	3	0.548	0.782	0.469
Life	4	0.428	0.748	0.469

Table 6 shows that the reliability of the model is considered high since the CR values for all scales exceed 0.7. However, it was observed that AVE value for the "Completing Work" dimension of presenteeism and the "Life" dimension of quiet quitting are below 0.5. The presence of convergent validity issues in these two dimensions indicates that the observed variables within these latent constructs do not correlate well with each other. In other words, the latent factors are not adequately explained by their respective observed variables. Consequently, it is concluded that the "Completing Work" dimension does not sufficiently account for presenteeism, and similarly, the items related to the "Life" dimension do not adequately explain quiet quitting. Furthermore, the MSV values revealed that the AVE for the "Oppressive Behavior" in dark leadership and for "Life" in quiet quitting are lower than the corresponding MSV values, indicating a discriminant validity issue. This finding suggests that the variables "Oppressive Behavior" and "Life" are more highly correlated with variables outside of their designated latent constructs. In other words, dark leadership perception may be influenced more strongly by latent constructs not captured by the "Oppressive Behavior" dimension

and quiet quitting may be influenced more strongly by latent constructs not captured by the "Life" dimension.

Findings on Hypothesis Testing: For the hypothesis testing, the final structure of the model was considered. In total, five items that negatively affected the overall model fit were removed, and two covariance connections were established. Final measurement model involves 26 observed variables and 7 factors.

Figure 2. Model Diagram Obtained by CFA



Note: Abbreviations of variables in Figure 2 are shown as follow: Dark Leadership Perception (kla), Quiet Quitting (si), and Presenteeism (kiv), bez_dav: oppressive behavior, sam_dav: inauthentic behavior, zor_dav: bullying behavior, is: work, yasam: life, dik_dag_kac: avoiding distraction, isi_tam: completing work.

Following the removal of items from the model after CFA, mean scores and standard deviations for each scale and dimensions were calculated.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Scales

Scales	Mean	Standard Deviation
Oppressive Behavior	2.4748	1.08618
Inauthentic Behavior	1.7220	1.13550
Bullying Behavior	1.9494	1.17581
Dark Leadership Perception	2.0677	1.03881
Work	3.4802	1.04571
Life	4.0750	0.93816

Quiet Quitting	3.7517	0.89912
Avoiding Distraction	2.9000	1.12688
Completing Work	3.3493	0.95038
Presenteeism	3.1247	0.65527

Table 7 indicates that the perception of dark leadership with a mean score of 2.06±1.03 is below the average, whereas quiet quitting with a mean of 3.75±0.89 exceeds the average. The presenteeism scoring 3.12±0.65 is approximately at the average level. Within the dark leadership construct, inauthentic behaviors were perceived at the lowest level, while oppressive behaviors were notably higher compared to the other dimensions. In the case of quiet quitting, healthcare workers rated the life-related factors significantly higher than the work-related factors, suggesting a generally elevated tendency toward quiet quitting. Regarding presenteeism, healthcare workers demonstrated relatively strong performance in terms of work completion. However, their ability to avoid distractions was observed to be slightly below average. Overall, the level of presenteeism can be characterized as moderate.

Hypotheses H_1, H_2, H_3, and H_4 were evaluated to determine whether presenteeism functions as a mediator in the relationship between dark leadership perception and quiet quitting. The mediation analysis was employed in accordance with the four fundamental conditions proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986, p.1176).

Table 8. SEM Statistics for Hypothesis Testing

Paths	**Estimation**	**Standardized Estimation**	**Standard Error**	**Critical Value**	**p**
kla → si	0.190	0.407	0.044	4.326	***
kla → kiv	0.081	0.450	0.032	2.513	**0.012**
kiv → si	2.068	**0.876**	0.462	4.478	***
kla → kiv → si	**Estimation**	**Standardized Estimation**	**Standard Error**	**Critical Value**	**p**
kla → kiv	0.133	**0.547**	0.027	4.854	***
kiv → si	1.735	**0.746**	0.477	3.639	***
kla → si	0.040	**0.072**	0.062	0.652	**0.514**

Note: ***p<0.001

The regression analysis revealed that dark leadership perception has a statistically significant and positive effect on quiet quitting (p<0.001). Unstandardized regression coefficients was found to be 0.190. However, to determine the magnitude of the independent variable's effect on the dependent variable, standardized regression coefficients were considered. The effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting was moderate (β=0.407). These results demonstrate that perceptions of dark leadership have a statistically significant, moderate, and positive effect on quiet quitting. Consequently, H_1 is supported (H_1:

Dark leadership behaviors positively influence employees' perceptions of quiet quitting).

After confirming the first condition of the mediating role, the second condition — whether dark leadership perception has a significant effect on presenteeism — was tested. The analysis revealed that dark leadership perception exerts a statistically significant effect on presenteeism ($p<0.05$). As shown in the Table 8, the magnitude of this effect indicated by the standardized regression coefficient ($\beta=0.450$) is categorized as moderate. Thus, H_2 is supported (H_2: Dark leadership behaviors increase employees' perceptions of presenteeism).

After confirming the second condition, the third condition of the mediating role — whether pesenteeism has a significant effect on quiet quitting — was examined. The findings indicate that presenteeism significantly affects quiet quitting ($p<0.001$). The effect of presenteeism on quiet quitting was high ($\beta=0.876$). These results demonstrate that presenteeism has a statistically significant, strong, and positive effect on quiet quitting. Consequently, H_3 is supported (H_3: Employees' presenteeism positively influences the perceptions of quiet quitting).

After confirming the third condition, the fourth condition of the mediating role — whether presenteeism and dark leadership perception simultaneously have a significant effect on quiet quitting — was examined. The findings indicate that presenteeism has statistically significant, strong, and positive effect on quiet quitting ($p<0.001$; $\beta=0.746$). However, the effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting was found to be non-significant ($p>0.05$). In contrast to previous path (kla→si), the significant effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting disappeared when presentreeism was included in the model.

After presenteeism was included in the model, the estimation value of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting decreased from 0.407 to 0.072. Additionally, the effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting lost its statistical significance ($p=0.514$). However, to test the significance of this mediating effect, the bootstrap technique was employed. Standardized indirect effects are examined to test the significance of mediating effect with two-tailed significance, lower limit, and upper limit.

Table 9. Bootstrap Statistics for the Significance of Mediation Effect

Indirect Effect	**Lower Limit**	**Upper Limit**	**p**
KLA→KİV→Sİ	0.234	1.268	0.004

It was determined that presenteeism significantly and fully mediates the effect of dark leadership perception on quiet quitting ($p=0.004<0.05$). Consequently, H_4 was supported (H_4: Presenteeism mediates the relationship between the perception of dark leadership and quiet quitting). The standardized indirect effect coefficients ranged from a lower limit of 0.234 to an upper limit of 1.268.

Table 10. Outcomes of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Findings	Result
H_1: Dark leadership behaviors positively affect employees' perceptions of quiet quitting.	It was determined that perceptions of dark leadership significantly, moderately, and positively affect quiet quitting behaviors.	H_1 is accepted
H_2: Dark leadership behaviors increase employees' presenteeism perceptions.	It was determined that dark leadership behaviors significantly and moderately affect presenteeism.	H_2 is accepted
H_3: Employees' presenteeism behaviors increase their perceptions of quiet quitting.	It was determined that presenteeism significantly, strongly, and positively affects quiet quitting behaviors.	H_3 is accepted
H_4: Presenteeism mediates the relationship between perceptions of dark leadership and quiet quitting.	It was found that presenteeism plays a statistically significant mediating role in the relationship between perceptions of dark leadership and quiet quitting.	H_4 is accepted

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study aimed to introduce a novel perspective to the literature by examining the effects of dark leadership perception on employee behaviors. Accordingly, the research model was structured with dark leadership perception as the independent variable, quiet quitting as the dependent variable, and presenteeism as the mediating variable. The analysis provided empirical support for the hypothesized relationships (H_1, H_2, H_3, and H_4) in the model.

This study examined the effect of dark leadership behaviors on two distinct employee behaviors—presenteeism and quiet quitting—that influence employees' working lives. The findings revealed that dark leadership behaviors significantly affect both outcomes. Specifically, dark leadership was found to substantially elevate employees' perceptions of quiet quitting, suggesting that the coercive, narcissistic, irritating, and insincere behaviors exhibited by dark leaders may drive employees toward a state of quiet quitting. Such exposure appears to impair employees' emotional and cognitive engagement with their work, resulting in minimal contributions to productivity and an increased tendency toward withdrawal from work. A review of the literature indicates that increasingly recognized phenomenon of quiet quitting in organizational settings can be mitigated through the adoption of positive leadership practices (Joaquim et al., 2023; Manyaga, 2024; Hamad, 2024). In addition, dark leadership behaviors were also observed to influence other employee outcome—presenteeism. Employees who experience

dark leadership behaviors tend to exhibit higher levels of presenteeism. Leadership styles are recognized as critical determinants of employees' workplace perceptions, commitment, and performance. Negative leadership styles can diminish job satisfaction, leading employees to limit their efforts to the bare minimum required, a trend that not only affects individual productivity but may also result in significant cultural and operational losses for the organization. Prior studies have demonstrated that adverse leadership behaviors contribute to the manifestation of presenteeism among employees (Karaçınar and Ozdemir, 2022; Shan et al., 2022; Hinse and Mathieu, 2023; Muthuswamy and Li, 2023).

The results of this study revealed a relationship between presenteeism and quiet quitting, two distinct behavioral dynamics in employees. Specifically, when employees exhibit presenteeism, their quiet quitting within the organization tend to increase. This finding suggests two possible perspectives. First, the presenteeism may serve as a triggering factor in the emergence of quiet quitting, effectively acting as a driving factor. In other words, an employee's inability or unwillingness to fully engage with their work may further erode their organizational commitment, thereby reinforcing tendencies toward quiet quitting. Second, the combined presence of presenteeism and quiet quitting may indicate the emergence of a novel, composite behavioral model that constrains employee performance within the organizational context. Under proposed model, employees may fulfill their immediate job responsibilities, yet refrain from engaging in innovative or proactive efforts that could generate long-term value for the organization.

Within the research model, presenteeism serves as the mediating variable and plays a significant role in the relationship between dark leadership perception and quiet quitting by exhibiting a full mediation effect. This mediation indicates that dark leadership perception does not directly lead to quiet quitting. Rather, it first triggers presenteeism in healthcare workers, and as presenteeism behavior intensifies, quiet quitting subsequently emerges.

In this context, developing comprehensive strategies to prevent dark leadership behaviors within the organization is expected not only to resolve issues at the employee level but also to directly contribute to the organization's sustainable success. The following recommendations can be outlined for practitioners:

1. Prevention of dark leadership starts with selecting appropriate leaders. Proper selection processes can help to identify individuals with highly leadership potential yet possessing dark personality traits. Leadership selections should incorporate personality and psychometric tests, ensuring that leaders are assessed not only by technical skills but also behavioral and ethical values (Judge et al., 2002; Furnham et al., 2012).

2. Comprehensive leadership development programs can be implemented. Ethics and values-based training focusing on empathy, honesty, and transparency, emotional intelligence programs, mentorship, and coaching initiatives pairing experienced, positive leaders with emerging ones can enhance positive leadership skills (Day, 2000; Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Proactive monitoring tools including

early warning and feedback systems can be established to collect and analyze data on leadership behaviors. Algorithms and AI-supported analyses can be developed to detect these behaviors. Additionally, preventive measures such as regular employee satisfaction surveys and opportunities for employees to evaluate their leaders may have a key role in producing effective solutions.

3. A robust organizational culture encouraging ethical leadership can prevent the diffusion of dark leadership. Developing and reinforcing organizational norms and ensuring transparent and understandable decision-making processes can limit tendencies toward dark leadership. Creating open communication channels and a secure environment where employees can directly communicate with their leaders facilitates self-expression and positively enhances the organizational atmosphere (Sarros et al., 2002; Kargas ve Varoutas, 2015). Evaluation of employee success based not only on outcomes but also on processes can contribute significantly to fostering a positive culture. Additionally, sharing success stories of individuals demonstrating positive leadership with employees can integrate best practices into organizational culture. Establishing and regularly updating institutional ethical codes is also beneficial for organization policies.

4. Leaders who emphasize employee involvement can stimulate feelings of value and importance among their staff. Providing a reassuring and comfortable environment is known to encourage employees toward innovative and productive behaviors (Aeen et al., 2014). Platforms enabling employees to freely express their ideas should be developed to establish a psychologically safe workplace. This approach is believed to facilitate the listening and implementation of employees' ideas, preventing unilateral decision-making processes by leaders.

Recommendations for future research for scholars can be listed below:

1. Future studies can explore how cultural factors influence the perception and impacts of dark leadership, particularly focusing on variations among employees within the healthcare sector. Cultural contexts significantly shape leadership perceptions and employee responses. Therefore, examining cultural influences can help organizations develop tailored strategies (House et al., 2004). Understanding these cultural variations can enhance good management practices and improve organizational effectiveness.

2. Employing qualitative research methods alongside quantitative approaches would enrich the understanding of the dynamics and nuances associated with dark leadership behaviors. Qualitative research methods can capture complex and subtle aspects of leadership interactions that quantitative methods might overlook (Creswell and Poth, 2018). A mixed-method approach can provide deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions which leads to more comprehensive conclusions.

3. Investigating additional variables associated with dark leadership such as burnout, job satisfaction, employee performance, and productivity in healthcare settings could provide a comprehensive understanding of its organizational implications. Dark leadership behaviors have multifaceted impacts. Exploring additional variables can reveal indirect effects and broader organizational

consequences (Schyns and Schilling, 2013). This expanded approach can guide interventions and management practices more effectively.

4. Developing measurement instruments specific to assess the distinct effects of each leadership style within the Dark Triad on employees can offer novel perspectives and contribute to the literature. Current literature lacks detailed instruments for evaluating individual components of dark leadership, thus limiting precise analysis (Paulhus and Williams, 2002). New measurement instruments can enhance the accuracy of research findings.

In conclusion, positioning leadership behaviors at the center of organizational processes is a critical step for both individual and organizational development. Effective leadership practices enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction, thereby strengthening organizational commitment as well as directly contributing to the organization's long-term success. This approach not only increases individual performance but also positively influences strategic elements such as organizational culture, innovation capacity, and competitive advantage at the macro level. Strong leadership enables organizations to rapidly adapt to change, enhancing resilience during crises and establishing a solid foundation for sustainable growth. Making leadership processes a fundamental component of organizational structure promotes open communication, trust, and collaboration within the organization, while also empowering employees to allow personal development. Moreover, when supported by leadership development programs, feedback mechanisms, and mentoring systems, this leadership-centered approach can help organizations secure not only immediate success but also sustainable competitive advantages for the future.

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