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Balancing Act: Navigating Employee Autonomy and Neglect

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Abstract

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This qualitative study uncovered nuanced perceptions on this issue using a grounded theory methodology and semi-structured interviews with leaders. The findings suggest the importance of regular check-ins with employees, deprioritizing external factors that influence or detract from leaders' attention, and the concept that autonomy could be an illusion in high-stress environments. A proposed model emerged to guide leaders in balancing these elements. In sum, this research underscores the intertwined nature of employee autonomy and perceived neglect from a leadership perspective in contemporary work settings.

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Lekshmy Sankar

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Chapter One: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Leadership in the workplace has gained significant attention in academia and the public consciousness, as evidenced by a plethora of articles, books, podcasts, and training programs that revolve around the subject (Badura et al., 2022; Prokopeak, 2018). A recent Forbes article highlighted that nearly 95% of learning organizations plan to increase or maintain their current investment in leadership development, according to data from the Chief Learning Officer Business Intelligence Board. This spoke to the massive scale of spending on leadership training and development, with TrainingIndustry.com estimating it to be a $366 billion global industry in 2019 (Training Industry, 2021; Westfall, 2019)—the continued prioritization and growth of budgets for leadership development point to its perceived value. Different leadership perspectives can serve varying organizational needs, which made it challenging to determine what universally distinguishes a good leader from a poor leader across various contexts.

This study investigated the nuanced area of leader perception by exploring the distinctions between leaders who exercised autonomy and those who exhibited neglect towards their subordinates. It examined whether these constructs may represent two sides of the same coin. Extensive research on leadership has highlighted that no leadership style appeals to every employee. Some employees viewed their manager as a great leader,

while others perceived them as neglectful (Regan, 2022). The study also examined the need for a new leadership approach incorporating the best of both perceptions.

This study examined the intricate relationship between leaders who practiced employee autonomy and those who exhibited neglect towards their subordinates, as viewed from a leader's perspective. Leaders are often praised for exercising autonomy, while others are criticized and portrayed negatively for neglecting employees. However, the reality may not be as binary, with leaders employing varying degrees of autonomy and neglect based on circumstances. Leaders may provide autonomy that could be perceived by some employees as neglectful, highlighting the complexity of balancing these constructs. Consequently, this research addressed the question, "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing employee autonomy to remote workers without being perceived as neglecting them?"

The research question extended beyond identifying distinctions between employee autonomy and leader neglect towards subordinates. It sought to investigate how leaders could adeptly navigate both elements to enhance employee performance and satisfaction, with a particular focus on remote work environments. This exploration included an analysis of the mechanisms and contextual influences that shaped the equilibrium between autonomy and perceived neglect. The research question, "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing employee autonomy to remote workers without being perceived as neglecting them," delved into the actionable aspects of leadership practices to achieve favorable outcomes such as employee development and

retention. Incorporating relevant findings in this literature stream, such as the 2021 study by Boskovic, which revealed that 43% of remote workers felt neglected by their leaders, a figure noticeably higher than the 27% of in-office workers who reported similar feelings (Boskovic, 2021). This research question underscored the urgency and significance of addressing these disparities through informed leadership strategies.

Before this study, there was no specific term to describe situations where leaders neglected their employees. Most existing research has concentrated on scenarios where employees neglected their job responsibilities rather than examining instances of leaders neglecting their subordinates. To fill this gap, this study proposed the term 'Leader Neglect towards Subordinates' (LNS) to categorize cases in which leaders failed to provide adequate support to their team members. The study's methodology inquired about leader neglect using terms such as disinterest, inattentiveness, or indifference towards an employee to understand how leaders neglect their subordinates.

The study addressed the significant gap in current research by examining leaders' perspectives on two constructs: employee autonomy and LNS. Utilizing an inductive and grounded theory research methodology with semi-structured interviews, leaders in the consulting industry with remote employees were interviewed to grasp their perspectives and the factors influencing their leadership style (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Currently, there is limited understanding of the intent behind a leader either neglecting an employee or providing autonomy (Breaugh, 1999; Farrell, 1983;

Hirschman, 1970; Mawritz et al., 2014; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Ye & Kankanhalli, 2018).

While employees' opinions on leadership techniques offered valuable insights into their experiences and preferences, it was equally essential to understand leaders' perspectives and the feasibility of implementing those techniques. Understanding both viewpoints could help develop more effective leadership practices that accommodate the diverse needs of employees, thereby contributing to organizational growth and success. For this reason, this study utilized a qualitative method to explore the narratives behind leaders' and employees' perspectives, aiming to comprehensively understand the interplay between employee autonomy and LNS.

The study encompassed a bounding condition consisting of professional workers in the consulting industry with remote employees to address the research question effectively. An underlying assumption of this study was that employees inherently sought job satisfaction, indicating that individuals genuinely aspired to find happiness in their work, which was recognized as a fundamental psychological need (Mendis & Silvia, 2017). However, while examining employee autonomy and LNS, one challenge encountered is that individuals possess diverse psychological conditions. These variations could influence their experiences and outcomes associated with these constructs. For instance, an employee with a higher stress tolerance might have perceived a leader's behavior differently from someone with a lower stress tolerance.

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Additionally, this study considered the impact of generational and cultural differences on employee autonomy and neglect, considering factors such as job complexity and leader demographics (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). The study acknowledged that attitudes towards employee autonomy and LNS might have been generational, with high-tenure leaders potentially holding more nuanced views on neglect. Furthermore, considering job complexity, including mentally challenging jobs, provided insights into how leaders guide their employees.

The research question was designed to explore leaders' self-perceptions of providing autonomy or neglect, focusing on their thought process and context-specific to remote employees. This study was unique in that it was the first to examine employees and LNS from the leader's perspective.

The research was expected to uncover the key factors influencing how leaders aimed to balance autonomy and neglect, such as clear communication of expectations, structured check-ins, and perspective-taking skills. Additionally, it was anticipated to highlight the contextual factors and individual differences that made maintaining equilibrium uniquely challenging with remote work arrangements.

The conclusion discussed recommendations for organizational policies, leadership training programs, and additional tools to assist leaders in judiciously leveraging autonomy while mitigating neglect. It provided an initial model outlining actionable steps leaders could implement for their teams based on the findings related to communication frequency, setting expectations, and leadership development. Further testing and

refinement were proposed to expand model generalizability across different industries and organizational types.

The study provided valuable insights into effective leadership by examining employee autonomy and LNS from a leader's perspective, as opposed to previous research that primarily focused on the employee viewpoint. It elucidated these two constructs' antecedents, moderators, mediators, and outcomes contributing to developing a nomological network within organizational settings (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Ye & Kankanhalli, 2018). This included factors influencing employee neglect and autonomy and their potential consequences for employees and organizations.

A vital aspect of the study highlighted the cultural and geographical differences in research prioritization, with employee autonomy being more extensively studied in Eastern cultures. In contrast, employee neglect received greater attention in Western countries. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the study extended academic research by providing insights into the reasons behind leaders' neglectful behavior towards employees, examining whether it was a conscious decision or stemmed from a lack of knowledge.

This study's practical contribution empowers organizations to implement compelling leadership insights by assessing leader perceptions, thereby developing tailored leadership strategies that accommodate employees' diverse needs, particularly in remote work situations (Allen et al., 2015; Bailey & Kurland, 2002). It investigated leaders' attitudes and circumstances surrounding employee experiences of neglect or

autonomy. This understanding will assist organizations in adopting leadership strategies that account for factors driving employee neglect or autonomy, which was especially relevant in managing remote employees. Furthermore, the study recognized the differences in attitudes towards employee neglect and autonomy across generations, enhancing the understanding of how various demographics tackled leadership challenges.

The dissertation was organized to explore the balance between employee autonomy and LNS, emphasizing the leader's perspective, which needs to be more present in existing research. Chapter 1 introduced the topic, setting the stage for understanding the fine line between autonomy and neglect from a leader's standpoint. Chapter 2 presented a literature review focusing on employee autonomy and LNS. The review not only consolidated existing knowledge but also set the foundation for the study by emphasizing the need for new insights into leadership practices that nurtured autonomy without veering into neglect. Chapter 3 described the research methods used in this study, detailing the approach taken to gather and analyze the data. Chapter 4 reports the findings from the interviews, providing a detailed analysis of the data collected. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with practical recommendations for practitioners and academics, drawing on the research findings to propose strategies for improving leadership practices. This last chapter synthesizes the insights from the study and outlines implications for future research, aiming to contribute to more effective leadership strategies.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This chapter presented a literature review of autonomy and LNS in the context of the research question, "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing employee autonomy to remote workers without being perceived as neglecting them?". Existing literature predominantly focused on employee perspectives, often overlooking leaders' behaviors and their underlying intentions. Exploring and incorporating the leaders' perspectives was essential to understand these concepts and address the research question comprehensively. Examining both perspectives illuminated the complex dynamics between autonomy, neglect, and remote work environment and enabled organizations to develop more targeted strategies for enhancing employee retention, satisfaction, and overall growth.

The chapter examined existing literature and highlighted gaps in understanding from the leaders' perspective. LNS could be viewed as another side of employee autonomy in that it allows subordinates to have a high level of independence and freedom in their work (Nnamaganda, 2019). When leaders neglected their subordinates, they gave employees the autonomy to make decisions and manage their work as they saw fit. This autonomy could be perceived positively as it cultivated a sense of self-determination and self-efficacy among subordinates (Gagné & Deci, 2005). However, it was also important to acknowledge the negative consequences of this autonomy. When subordinates have

excessive freedom or lack proper guidance or support from their leaders, it could result in deviations from organizational goals and decreased performance (Federici, 2013; Johari et al., 2018; Reis et al., 2018).

To explore this dichotomy, the chapter first dives into the background of LNS. Next, the literature review is focused on employee autonomy. Then, it reviews the connection between literature streams from employee autonomy and LNS while examining it from a leader's perspective. Lastly, the chapter sets the stage for future research that delves deeper into the complexities of leader behavior and provides actionable insights for both academic research and organizational practitioners.

Exploring Leadership Neglect towards Subordinates: A Background

Although the term LNS was newly introduced in this dissertation and thus not extensively covered in existing literature, there was considerable research exploring various factors contributing to job neglect from employees' perspective. Research on workplace relationships revealed that workplace neglect was initially introduced because of job dissatisfaction. However, its exploration had been overshadowed by more extensively studied constructs such as abusive and laissez-faire leadership.

Organizational behavior literature defines *neglect* as "passively allowing conditions to deteriorate through reduced interest or effort, chronic lateness or absences, using company time for personal business, or increased error rate" (Rusbult et al., 1988, p. 601). This definition could be viewed through the lens of employee autonomy. At the

same time, leaders might have believed they were granting autonomy by providing freedom and independence, but this hands-off approach could unintentionally morph into neglect. Early works positioned neglect as passive workplace deviance, distinct from active behaviors like incivility or theft (Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970; Rusbult et al., 1988). This suggested that neglect could arise not from malicious intent but from a misinterpretation of autonomy. For example, a leader providing excessive freedom without adequate guidance or support could create a vacuum where neglect can take root.

Scholars such as Mawritz et al. (2014) have refined the concept of neglect, describing it as psychological withdrawal, which highlights the emotional detachment experienced by employees who feel abandoned or unsupported by their leaders. This withdrawal could manifest as reduced effort, declining performance, and, ultimately, deteriorating the work environment (Hassan et al., 2013). This illustrated the importance of the connection to employee autonomy. When leaders misinterpret autonomy as complete independence, they might have failed to provide the necessary resources and support for the employees to thrive, resulting in feelings and behaviors indicative of neglect, such as reduced interest, effort, and engagement.

Based on this literature and related constructs, this review proposed a definition for LNS: *a leader passively deteriorating the relationship with the employee through reduced interest or effort.* LNS behavior included a lack of communication, inadequate guidance and feedback, and neglecting employee contributions. Over time, such neglect

could damage the leader-subordinate relationship, impacting motivation, job satisfaction, and performance.

Investigating LNS was crucial due to its potential to significantly impact employees (Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970; Mawritz et al., 2014). This was especially important in a remote work environment, where neglect could exacerbate feelings of isolation and disconnection between leaders and subordinates (Boskovic, 2021). A 2021 study by Boskovic found that 43% of remote workers reported feeling neglected by their leaders, a significant increase compared to the 27% of in-office workers who reported experiencing similar feelings. The study also found that this feeling resulted in employee job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and reduced job performance. Another study in 2023 found that leader engagement was a critical factor in employee turnover among remote workers (Saurage-Altenloh et al., 2023). This was particularly important now because of the commonality of remote work. For example, according to a 2022 survey by Owl Labs, the number of employees who chose to work remotely in 2022 increased by 24% compared to 2021 (Owl Labs & Global Workplace Analytics, 2022), while another survey by Upwork found that 22% of the US workforce will be remote by 2025 (Haan, 2023). However, LNS remained overshadowed in the literature, often indirectly explored through related constructs. Directly examining LNS and analyzing its connections would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how it shaped workplace dynamics.

The history of neglect research presented here outlined the fundamental theories and constructs that have emerged over time as precursors or related concepts to LNS. The

theories and constructs presented, including laissez-faire leadership, demonstrated the evolution of understanding neglect in the workplace. By acknowledging and examining these connections, researchers could expand their investigation of LNS and gain a deeper understanding of its dynamics and implications within the organizational context.

Examining Theories in Leadership Neglect towards Subordinates (LNS)

Although no specific research directly addressed LNS, some ancillary constructs touch on LNS. These papers addressed three categories of theories and models, which were addressed below in terms of how they connected to LNS. The first category focused on employees neglecting their jobs due to various factors, such as stress induced by their leaders. The second category addressed theories with a sliver of LNS but was ripe for further investigation. For example, incivility behavior extended the concept of neglect a step further than uncivil behavior. The last category was the crux of LNS research: laissez-faire leadership, where an employee had an absentee leader. What was particularly intriguing about laissez-faire leadership is that it revealed the adverse aspects of neglect and its potential positive dimensions.

Interestingly, this duality connected to the broader concept of employee autonomy, which similarly exhibited positive and negative outcomes. This dual nature observed in both laissez-faire leadership and employee autonomy highlighted the complexities of these constructs. It emphasized the need for a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between autonomy and neglect. This balanced perspective could enrich academic research and guide organizational practices, ultimately fostering

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optimal leadership styles and creating workplace environments supportive of employee well-being.

Employee Neglect

Existing neglect research had primarily emphasized situations where employees neglected their job responsibilities and withdrew psychologically from work, exhibiting behaviors such as reduced effort, chronic absenteeism, or passive deviation (Hirschman, 1970; Mawritz et al., 2014). However, there had been relatively little exploration of the leader's potential role in prompting or enabling such employee neglect. This study aimed to fill this gap by exploring how leaders might have inadvertently neglected their employees through disinterest, insufficient communication and support, inadequate guidance, and overlooking or discounting the contributions of the employees they supervise. Leadership behaviors like laissez-faire or incivility may contribute to adverse employee outcomes such as reduced productivity, innovation, increased stress, and job dissatisfaction (Skogstad et al., 2014; van Breukelen et al., 2006). This research aimed to clarify the concept of neglect by examining it as both a set of specific behaviors exhibited by leaders and a subjective perception by employees regarding their feelings and attitudes. This dual perspective could facilitate a more nuanced understanding and identification of a leader's role in the context of employee neglect.

Conservation of resources (COR) theory examined how stress impacted behavior based on the premise that individuals sought to obtain and protect resources they valued (Hobfoll, 1989, 2011; McLarty et al., 2021). Within leader neglect research, COR theory

spotlighted how supervisors could contribute to resource loss, creating a climate that hindered growth and evoked fear of further deprivation (LePine et al., 2005). Studies revealed that supervisor behaviors prompted resource loss, causing employees to neglect responsibilities like arriving on time, attendance, and task completion tasks (McLarty et al., 2021; Williams & Anderson, 1991). This demonstrated how leaders significantly shaped withdrawal behaviors through actions. Essentially, leaders prompted compensatory resource conservation responses by depriving employees of resources needed to function optimally via neglect. Thus, if resources were improperly taken in the form of neglect, employees instinctively withdrew effort and engagement to conserve their remaining capital. Overall, the COR lens underscored leaders' formidable role in directing employees' resource allocation through neglective versus supportive behaviors.

Likewise, psychological contract theory examines relational bonds between leaders and employees (Tomprou et al., 2015). The fulfillment of the psychological contract, as perceived by the employee, determined its outcome. This perception influenced various factors, including job satisfaction, employee attitude, commitment, and the intention to quit (Akhtar et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2003; Suazo et al., 2005; Zhao et al., 2007). The contract was broken into two causes: 1. they were reneging when the organization broke a promise on purpose or due to unforeseen circumstances, and 2. incongruence occurred when the organization and its employees had two different understandings regarding what the employee was promised (Suazo et al., 2005; Turnley & Felman, 1999). The researchers then connected the psychological contract theory to the Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect (EVLN) model (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012;

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Turnley & Felman, 1999). The research pointed to how fulfilling perceived leader

obligations impacted attitudes like job satisfaction and commitment, whereas unfulfilled

contracts may have enabled neglectful behaviors. By understanding leaders' formidable

role in directing employees' experiences of neglect, one could better address the

antecedents and impacts of employee neglect through an enhanced leadership lens.

Ancillary Theories to LNS

While no research directly examined LNS, several adjacent theories provided a

foundation for future research. These ancillary theories fell into three categories:

employee neglect behaviors, partially related constructs like incivility, and social

exchange perspectives that revealed leaders' influential role in shaping employee attitudes

and behaviors.

First, theories like the job insecurity model (Cheng & Chan, 2008) and

discontinuance syndrome (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984) mainly emphasized outcomes

of employees neglecting responsibilities, withdrawing effort, and experiencing

diminished workplace well-being. The job insecurity model was defined as a concern

about the continued existence of a job (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002;

Witte, 2010). Job insecurity has been researched in correlation with adverse employee

outcomes in turnover, organizational citizenship, and even decreased health (Cheng &

Chan, 2008; Probst, 2008; Reisel et al., 2014; Staufenbiel & König, 2010; Sverke &

Hellgren, 2002). A model from 1984 termed dis-involvement syndrome discussed how

employees who were insecure about their jobs felt less motivated to solve work-related

problems outside of their job scope (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). This research

discussed how job insecurity could cause employees to withdraw, decreasing job

commitment and satisfaction. The negative consequences of job insecurity were like the

results found on employee neglect, which led to the question of whether job insecurity

could be a moderator between employee neglect and job satisfaction and commitment.

While the job insecurity model did not directly account for how leader behaviors prompt

employee neglect, it was plausible that subordinates perceiving or experiencing leader

neglect towards them consequently developed heightened job insecurity. In this manner,

leader neglect behaviors could potentially serve as an antecedent that gave rise to

perceptions of job insecurity among employees over time.

Second, workplace incivility reflected low-intensity deviance violating mutual

respect expectations (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), with LNS categorized as one

potential form (Holmvall & Sobhani, 2020). Research on incivility outcomes like

turnover and dissatisfaction further reinforced the detrimental impacts leaders' neglectful

behaviors might have exerted. Uncivil behaviors were characteristically rude and

discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457).

This definition paralleled the assumption that neglect was uncivil, suggesting that

ignoring or disregarding an employee violated the social expectation of mutual respect.

Examples included doubting employees' judgment, speaking over them, making

demeaning remarks, or neglecting them entirely, which signaled that their skills or

opinions were irrelevant (Cortina et al., 2013; Holmvall & Sobhani, 2020). This

parallelism strengthened the connection between LNS and incivility. Research on incivility primarily explored its adverse effects on job commitment, turnover, and well-being (Schilpzand et al., 2016). The staggering statistics reinforced the significance of understanding incivility; 98% of employees reported experiencing it, with 50% experiencing it weekly, costing organizations $14,000 per employee annually due to project delays and work distractions (Porath & Pearson, 2009, 2013).

However, despite extensive research on the impacts, the 'why' behind workplace incivility remained largely unaddressed. For example, why did a leader neglect an employee? One could develop more effective interventions and foster a productive workplace by delving into the motivations behind uncivil behaviors.

Finally, social exchange (Blau, 1964), social cognitive (Bandura, 1977), and empowerment (Kanter, 1979) perspectives underscored leaders' formidable role in directing employees' experiences, behaviors, and resource acquisition. While direct LNS links required further research, these theories implied that employees might have reciprocated or acquired leaders' neglectful tendencies over time through observation, modeling, and sense deprivation.

Kanter's theory of structural empowerment emphasized promoting workplace empowerment (e.g., developing knowledge and skills), which resulted in organizational commitment (Kanter, 1979). This could also include support from leadership, such as feedback and guidance to the employees. When there was a solid relationship between the leader and the employee, the employee felt psychologically empowered, meaning

increased competence, self-determination, and impact (Peachey, 2004; Spreitzer et al., 1999). Kanter (1977) argued that formal power was created through flexible and visible jobs aligned with organizational goals, while informal power was derived through interpersonal networks between employees and supervisors (Kanter, 1979; Turnley & Felman, 1999). Having adequate support through casual or informal routes allowed employees to thrive. Although there was no specific researched connection between an employee feeling neglected and Kanter's theory of structural empowerment, one could argue that if the positive were true for employees to feel empowered, it would stand to reason those employees would feel neglected if there was no formal or informal support. Since it was not proven, it was ripe for future research, such as the dark side of empowerment.

Bandura (1977), in his social-cognitive theory, argued that people's behaviors were learned through observation and modeling from others (Greenbaum et al., 2012). The theory suggested that employees were more likely to model their behavior or attitude after someone else if it gave them more value or credit in the organization (Bandura, 1977). Social influence from one's colleagues or supervisors influences employee behavior and how they construct their reality. This could be done through rewards, promotions, or good work assignments (Greenbaum et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2009). Mayer et al. (2009) examined how negative influences from leadership (e.g., psychological contract violation) could trigger negative employee behavior changes such as job withdrawal. This topic was further explored by researchers Greenbaum et al. (2012), who discovered that subordinates role-model their supervisors by adopting the

leader's bottom-line mentality. Although it has not been explored yet, one could infer from the literature on the negative influences of the social-cognitive theory that a leader significantly impacts an employee's behavior and attitude. For example, if an employee feels neglected, it could be caused by a leader's influence. Theoretically, whether a leader intentionally or unintentionally neglects an employee could impact the employee's behavior.

Social exchange theory argues that there is a social exchange relationship between supervisors and employees, so when the leader has a positive relationship with their employee (i.e., leader-member exchange (LMX)), the relationship will motivate employee task performance (McLarty et al., 2021). In the same way, if the supervisor did not invest in a positive relationship with their employee (i.e., neglecting the employee), the effect was a supervisor-induced stressor on the employee (K. L. Scott et al., 2013). The nature of these social exchanges could vary; it could be based on actual or anticipated benefits from a social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964). One common theme was the importance of the supervisor's role in employee performance (van Breukelen et al., 2006). The norm of this reciprocity suggested that favorable treatment was responded to with positive conduct, and adverse treatment ended in negative behavior. The researchers Scott et al. (2013) delved deeper into the adverse treatment to understand the circumstances where employees felt excluded. The research found that when the perceived employee was a weak exchange partner, the supervisor would view them as less valuable and display workplace incivility (K. L. Scott et al., 2013). Other studies have found that individuals who did not engage in reciprocal exchange and thus

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did not create a mutually beneficial relationship were targets of exclusionary actions (Gouldner, 1960; Helm et al., 1971; K. L. Scott et al., 2013). Although this has yet to be researched, one could hypothesize that supervisors may engage in exclusionary actions such as leader neglect if the social exchange is unbalanced based on previous research on adverse treatment.

Overall, these additional frameworks could not fully explain the emergence or impacts of LNS without considering the leader's contributory role within supervisor-employee dyads. Current scholarship might have underestimated LNS drivers and effects by overlooking leaders' influence. These theories provided vital starting points for launching novel LNS research to address this gap.

Understanding Laissez-Faire Leadership

Lastly, the theory directly connecting LNS was Laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leadership, initially defined by researchers Lewin, Lippitt, and White in 1939, represented a style of passive leadership where the leader "avoided decision-making and supervisory responsibility" (Hartog et al., 1997, p. 21; Lewin et al., 1939). While research argued that laissez-faire leadership was negatively associated with subordinates' attitudes and performance (Avolio & Bass, 1995; T. A. Judge & Piccolo, 2004), limited studies suggested that it could be a deliberate decision made by a leader when working with highly skilled and self-motivated subordinates and in situations where a strong foundation of trust existed in the supervisory relationship (Caza, 2011; I. Yang, 2015).

The Dark Side of LNS

This section evaluated the role of neglect in laissez-faire leadership and its impact on employee outcomes while also exploring the potential benefits of such leadership. Additionally, it aimed to understand the underlying intentions and contextual conditions contributing to the emergence of laissez-faire leadership.

The role of neglect was evident in the concept of laissez-faire leadership, characterized by leaders actively avoiding, neglecting, and failing to assist when subordinates sought guidance, displaying a lack of involvement (Aasland et al., 2010; Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass, 1985; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Kelloway et al., 2000; Skogstad et al., 2014; Véronique & Vandenberghe, 2020). Neglectful behavior, such as failing to provide feedback and assistance, undermined subordinates' structure and sense of purpose(Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Consequently, this hindered the subordinates' ability to thrive and advance in their careers (Ågotnes et al., 2018; Bernhard & O'Driscoll, 2011; Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Dasborough, 2006; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Schilling, 2009; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Véronique & Vandenberghe, 2020), impaired efficient communication and problem-solving (Aasland et al., 2010; Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Kanwal et al., 2019; Schilling, 2009; Skogstad et al., 2014), and contributed to negative emotions such as resentment, despair, underappreciation, and frustration (Dasborough, 2006; Kelloway et al., 2000; Skogstad et al., 2014; Trépanier et al., 2019).

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Neglectful leadership could have detrimental effects on subordinates' self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of belonging (Jahanzeb et al., 2018). In essence, the laissez-faire leadership style was significantly more common in organizations than other prevalent leadership styles; in fact, it was seven times more prevalent (Aasland et al., 2010). It can be regarded as a manifestation of neglect, rejection, and alienation towards subordinates (Ågotnes et al., 2018; Dasborough, 2006; Jahanzeb et al., 2018; Kanwal et al., 2019; Skogstad et al., 2007; Usman et al., 2020; Véronique & Vandenberghe, 2020).

However, it is essential to recognize that leaders who neglect subordinates might not have had easily identifiable intentions (Robinson et al., 2012). The reasons behind neglect could be complex, and further investigation and understanding were needed to comprehend leaders' underlying intentions. Some of the studies mentioned above were older, which presented an opportunity to explore the implications of leadership styles in the current work environment characterized by remote work after the COVID-19 pandemic (Boskovic, 2021; Pattnaik & Jena, 2020). With increased remote work, leaders might have unintentionally neglected their subordinates, raising the need to understand better how this leadership style emerged in contemporary settings. Increasing research on LNS helped address the gaps and provided insights into its impact on employee performance in today's work environment.

The Bright Side of LNS

The laissez-faire leadership style allowed leaders to give subordinates high autonomy (Gagné, 2003). This could positively affect subordinates as it cultivates a sense

of self-determination and self-efficacy (J. Chen & Yang, 2021). Subordinates felt empowered, believing they had a choice in how they handled their work (Spreitzer, 2017). This sense of autonomy was necessary, as most people had a basic psychological need for autonomy, contributing to their motivation and job performance (Humphrey et al., 2007; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; D. Wang & Liu, 2021).

Laissez-faire leaders supported their subordinates' need for autonomy, creating an environment that encouraged psychological empowerment, self-leadership, and entrepreneurial spirit (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Theodosiou & Katsikea, 2007; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). They recognized the importance of allowing their subordinates to have control over their work and provided them with the freedom to make decisions and take initiative (Baard et al., 2004; D. Wang & Liu, 2021). Research suggested that autonomy within this leadership style could foster innovation and creativity (Ryan & Tipu, 2013; Y. Zhang et al., 2022). Due to the conflicting research regarding the role of neglect and autonomy associated with laissez-faire leadership, it was essential to consider the contextual conditions in which laissez-faire leadership was implemented (Antonakis, 2001).

These three categories of theoretical frameworks provided an initial exploration into the dynamics of LNS. However, they largely bypassed discussions on leaders' underlying intentions and the conditions under which neglect occurred. Recognizing the need for a more nuanced understanding, this dissertation proposed future research that delved deeper into how different leadership styles, behaviors, or contractual understandings directly contributed to instances of employee neglect. This nuanced

exploration was critical in unraveling the interplay between leadership actions and employee perceptions of neglect. Figure 1 was developed to represent a nomological network crafted for this research to organize and present these relations systematically. The figure mapped out what LNS research had identified as antecedents, moderators, mediators, and outcomes of employee neglect, providing a framework for future research into the intricate relationship between leadership practices and the phenomenon of neglect.

Figure 1: LNS Nomological Network

Distinguishing between laissez-faire leadership and neglectful leadership in the context of employee autonomy necessitated a nuanced understanding. Laissez-faire leadership allows employees to make decisions and manage tasks with minimal oversight. This leadership style presumed that employee autonomy inherently motivated employees and fostered innovation and self-direction. In contrast, neglectful leadership needed intentional empowerment and was marked by the leaders' lack of support, guidance, and communication. The manifestation of autonomy under laissez-faire leadership and neglectful leadership thus diverged. In a laissez-faire environment, autonomy was offered as a trust in employees' abilities and a strategic choice to encourage problem-solving. However, without support structures and leader engagement,

this autonomy could drift into neglect, leaving employees feeling isolated and uncertain about their contributions. Therefore, while both leadership styles might superficially promote autonomy, the underlying dynamics and outcomes differed.

Investigating Theories in Employee Autonomy

The research for employee autonomy can be traced back to the burgeoning field of organizational psychology in the 1970s. Pioneering researchers like Hackman and Oldman (1976) recognized that employees desired more than just a paycheck; they sought ownership, control, and the freedom to make decisions about their work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Humphrey et al., 2007). This intrinsic motivation fueled by autonomy was viewed as the key to unlocking great engagement, creativity, and a sense of purpose in the workplace (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Theurer et al., 2018; A. C. Wang & Cheng, 2010; D. Wang & Liu, 2021). The concept of autonomy evolved beyond a simple notion of freedom. Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) defined it using three distinct dimensions:

    A. Job schedule autonomy: the freedom to determine one's work schedule, fostering flexibility and work-life balance.

    B. Decision-making autonomy: the power to choose tasks, set goals, and decide how to achieve them, empowering employees and boosting innovation.

    C. Work-method autonomy: the ability to select the methods and procedures used to complete tasks, encouraging individual creativity and problem-

solving (Breaugh, 1999; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Ye & Kankanhalli, 2018).

The bulk of research on employee autonomy primarily emphasized its advantageous impacts, with studies such as those by Theurer et al. (2018) and A.C. Wang and Cheng (2010) linking it to improved job performance, heightened job satisfaction, and more substantial organizational commitment. This body of work associated employee autonomy with an amplified sense of self-determination, enabling employees to engage their intrinsic motivation and unleash their full potential (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

While employee autonomy is beneficial, it comes with specific challenges. The paradoxical leadership theory, championed by Ishaq et al. (2021), recognized that too much autonomy could result in employee confusion, a lack of clear direction, and potential dips in performance. This theory emphasized the importance of adopting a leadership approach that simultaneously empowered employees and gave them the needed guidance. The interplay between autonomy and guidance was deemed essential, with the theory advocating for leaders to skillfully navigate the space between granting autonomy and offering the right support to ensure employees felt empowered and adequately directed (Choi et al., 2020).

The research on employee autonomy has continued to shape the modern workplace. Exploring the combination of LNS and employee autonomy and their combined impact on organizational effectiveness remained a crucial area of exploration. By delving deeper into these relationships, strategies could be developed to maximize the

benefits of autonomy while mitigating its potential drawbacks. The pursuit held immense potential for academia and practicum, especially in the future of remote work.

Research on employee autonomy was far more comprehensive than that on LNS. This section categorized content into three main areas: firstly, theories emphasizing the positive consequences of employee autonomy; secondly, theories focusing on the negative consequences of employee autonomy; and finally, an in-depth analysis of paradoxical leadership theory. This last category offered a more comprehensive viewpoint, capturing both the negative and positive aspects of employee autonomy and providing a balanced understanding of the concept.

The Benefits of Employee Autonomy

Research overwhelmingly focused on positive outcomes for organizations stemming from employee autonomy. Employee autonomy cultivated innovation, creativity, satisfaction, commitment, and performance by enabling employees to tap into their intrinsic motivation and talents (Briggs & Makice, 2012; Brock, 2003; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Parker et al., 2001). For instance, employee autonomy served as a vital mechanism through which ethical leaders elicited helpful behaviors from employees (Kalshoven et al., 2013). Leaders signaled care and trust by allowing autonomy, which followers reciprocated through goodwill. Likewise, employee autonomy facilitates innovation by empowering risk-taking, initiative, and idea generation (Aryee et al., 2012; Ohly & Fritz, 2010). It also buffered change-related stress (Battistelli et al., 2013).

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A growing body of research explored the relationship between desirable employee behavior and ethical leadership (Lin et al., 2016). In much of this research, job autonomy moderated the relationship between the leaders and employees (Kalshoven & Boon, 2012). Providing high job autonomy was seen as ethical leaders caring more about the employees. Moreover, in turn, employees were more inclined to help others. In sum, high job autonomy resulted in employees reciprocating their ethical leader's behavior by helping others (Kalshoven et al., 2013; Lau & Cobb, 2010). The research linked leaders' use of autonomy to employee incentives.

Research overwhelmingly demonstrated autonomy's benefits, including increased innovation, satisfaction, and commitment (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Autonomy unlocked employees' potential by accommodating intrinsic needs, yielding multifaceted individual and organizational improvements—however, research largely overlooked autonomy's potential downsides. While autonomy signaled trust, inadequate structure risked confusion and goal deviation (Ishaq et al., 2021). Likewise, creativity may have suffered if highly autonomous climates lacked integration (Miron-Spektor & Beenen, 2015). Existing work propagated a one-sided view, implying that autonomy universally enhanced outcomes. However, as the vitamin model suggested, too much autonomy could backfire without balance (Warr, 2007). By concentrating solely on positive impacts, prevailing research conveyed an increasingly false binary. Thus, further exploration is needed to characterize the circumstances prompting autonomy to crossover into detrimental territory. Understanding precisely when and why autonomy-fueled

neglect would refine theoretical assumptions while producing insights to optimize autonomy's documentable advantages.

Innovation and creativity were considered essential for organizational effectiveness (Oldham & Cummings, 2017; Yuan & Woodman, 2017), which explained why the antecedents of employee innovation work behavior and creativity were widely researched (S. G. Scott & Bruce, 2017; Shalley et al., 2017). Autonomy could buffer the negative effect of organizational change (Battistelli et al., 2013) and help employees feel excited about change (Hornung & Rousseau, 2016). Research has shown a connection between job autonomy and innovative behavior (Fortuin et al., 2021; Zacher & Wilden, 2014), demonstrating how autonomy could lead to daily idea generation and personal initiative (Ohly & Fritz, 2010). Research has also shown a link between autonomy, engagement, and innovation (Aryee et al., 2012; Chang et al., 2013; de Spiegelaere et al., 2014) with connections to intrinsic motivation, positive relationships, psychological resilience, and personal initiative (Orth & Volmer, 2017). Would employee neglect show opposite results if autonomy was linked to innovation and creativity?

The job demands-control model further demonstrated the benefits of employee autonomy. At the same time, high demands paired with low control prompted psychological strain, and greater autonomy protected employee well-being despite work intensity. The model provided a framework showing the psychological strain caused by demand (e.g., workload) and control (e.g., autonomy) (Karasek, 1979). Other researchers explored the theory introduced by Karasek (1979) to understand the effects of high

demand but low control, such as its impact on mental health (Han et al., 2018; Häusser et al., 2010; Sohn et al., 2016). A meta-analysis study by researcher Bonde (2008), which synthesized data from 63,000 employees across 16 longitudinal studies, discovered a strong correlation between high job demands paired with low control and the emergence of depressive symptoms (Bonde, 2008). The analysis highlighted the significant impact that workplace conditions could have on mental health over time. Some research suggested that gender might moderate the relationship between demand and control (Han et al., 2018; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). In summary, when there is a high workload but low job autonomy, it could lead to psychological strain. An interesting future topic for research would be whether gender plays a factor in determining control characteristics.

Labor process theory examines maximizing employee output by granting autonomy. Historically, close supervision and control tactics have been aimed at coercing effort, viewing workers as replaceable inputs (Mir & Mir, 2005; Smith, 1994). However, research revealed autonomy's profitability, finding self-managed employees elevated financial performance and productivity (Arthur, 2017; Berg et al., 2000). Essentially, autonomy provided returns in labor and loyalty. Crucially, research concentrated almost solely on employee reactions to autonomy as a reward. However, before leaders could optimize autonomy, they had to navigate granting appropriate independence levels while maintaining coordination (Spivack & Milosevic, 2018). Unfortunately, leaders' perspectives on doling autonomy remain unaddressed, representing a significant barrier to theoretical and practical progress. By focusing squarely on recipient responses, prevailing work propagated an imbalanced view. Expanding investigations to capture

leaders' outlooks and decision drivers would offer vital missing links. Insight into leaders' reasoning provided keys to unlocking enhanced autonomy deployment while avoiding detachment (Arthur, 2017; Berg et al., 2000; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Huselid, 2017; Spivack & Milosevic, 2018; Wood & Menezes, 1998). Thus, future research could emphasize leader vantage points to catalyze advancements from both scientific and applied standpoints.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) research focused on the relationship between leaders and followers and how that relationship changed over time (Z. Chen et al., 2012; Dhar, 2016; Sears & Hackett, 2011). Studies found that having a nourishing exchange between leaders and followers could lead to increased job performance, faster method adoption, and a faster pace of task sequence. The benefits included increased job autonomy (Dhar, 2016) because it built trust, ownership, and job responsibility (Langfred & Moye, 2004).

Self-determination theory explains how motivation is crucial to employee performance and well-being (Deci et al., 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2017). The theory provided a distinction between autonomous motivation (e.g., intrinsic motivation) and controlled motivation (e.g., external motivation) (Gagné & Deci, 2005). It concurred that job characteristics promoted autonomous motivation (Gagné et al., 1997). However, it was enhanced even more when coupled with constructive feedback; an interpersonal leadership style and supportive feedback could influence autonomous motivation (Deci et al., 1989; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Depending on the organization, it could foster more

autonomous or controlled motivation with its employees, so it was important to research to understand the boundaries of each. For example, research showed that autonomous work motivation could lead to less burnout, increased work satisfaction, lower turnover, and decreased emotional exhaustion (Deci & Ryan, 2017; Forest et al., 2014; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Research on Situational Leadership Theory has found that autonomy contributes to positive employee well-being. For instance, employees who performed tasks autonomously felt free to pursue their valued interests (Cai et al., 2018; D. Liu et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2018; S. G. Scott & Bruce, 2017). Situational Leadership Theory suggests that job characteristics could determine the effects of leadership on employee well-being (Cai et al., 2018; Kalshoven & Boon, 2012). Research showed that job autonomy moderated the relationship between employee well-being and leadership behavior. In other words, with job autonomy, employees feel more responsible for their outcomes because they are agents with the latitude to manage their work tasks (Cai et al., 2018; Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Social exchange theory (SET) helped understand the relationship between leaders and members (Blau, 1964; Kuvaas et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011) by showing how employees reciprocated when leaders interacted. For example, if a leader encourages the employee, the follower will respond positively (Dhar, 2016; Mayer et al., 2009). In other words, an employee felt a sense of responsibility to reciprocate positive behavior with positive behavior. Research using SET in the lens of job autonomy found that when

employees believed they were being empowered (e.g., given more autonomy), they needed to exceed their responsibilities by sharing their ideas and thoughts with colleagues or their leaders (Elsetouhi et al., 2018).

Social information processing (SIP) theory argues that an employee's behavior and attitude are governed by organizational social cues (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). When employees faced a choice, they would take cues from the leader (Boekhorst, 2015). Concerning job autonomy, research delved into how leaders provided social signals (e.g., work expectations, values, and tasks) through job autonomy, which influenced employees to develop a sense of control (Kalshoven & Boon, 2012; Shafique et al., 2020; Tourigny et al., 2019). A leader providing employees with a positive perception of job autonomy should psychologically empower them (X. Liu et al., 2021; Spreitzer, 2017). The opposite could also be true in theory. For instance, there might be situations where a leader strategically neglected the employee as an empowering tactic to encourage the subordinate to take ownership of their actions and make positive changes.

The theory of Independent-Mindedness predicted that employees preferred supervisors who allowed them to express and affirm their self-concepts. The researchers Gorden and Infante (1987) posited that employees should be able to provide and take criticisms in a joint effort with their managers because it created a dialectic exchange that was more psychological and social versus contractual (Gorden & Infante, 1987). Essentially, it pointed to the belief that employees wanted to share their opinions even if they could be considered contradictory to their manager (Gorden & Infante, 1987;

Kassing, 1997). The theory is interesting because it connects job autonomy with psychological freedom.

Work design theory assumes that specific jobs, tasks, role characteristics, and psychological states (e.g., intrinsic motivation) result in individual, group, and organizational outcomes (Theurer et al., 2018). This meant that there was a correlation between employee characteristics and administrative tasks. Several studies have shown a positive relationship between work design features (e.g., autonomy) and innovation at work (Amabile, 1988; Amabile et al., 2004; W. Q. Judge et al., 2009; Ramamoorthy et al., 2005).

Research overwhelmingly spotlighted employee autonomy's multifaceted positive impacts, benefiting employees and organizations. By accommodating intrinsic needs and talents, employee autonomy cultivated innovation, buffered strain, and bridged the alignment between individual and organizational goals, unlocking performance, commitment, and well-being.

The Drawbacks of Employee Autonomy

While research overwhelmingly emphasized the positives of employee autonomy, a handful of studies revealed its potential dark sides. The vitamin model introduced an intriguing metaphor; just as excessive vitamins could harm health, too much employee autonomy could undermine outcomes (Warr, 2007). This theory suggested that employee autonomy retained only positive impacts up to moderate levels. Beyond that, increasing

autonomy could fuel detrimental characteristics like burnout, strained supervisor relations, and task insecurity (Jaworek et al., 2010; Warr, 1990, 2007). Mapping the tipping point between productive and counterproductive employee autonomy was vital.

Some empirical research revealed an inverted U-shaped non-linear relationship between employee autonomy and job satisfaction (Baltes et al., 2002)—initially, more autonomy elevated satisfaction and well-being. However, additional autonomy was associated with declining satisfaction beyond an optimal range. Some studies even identified a connection between high job autonomy and burnout using this model (Baltes et al., 2002; Jaworek et al., 2010; Mäkikangas et al., 2007). This theory brought a unique, contrasting perspective to the understanding of job autonomy by challenging its predominantly positive effects.

Determining the boundary conditions that dictated when autonomy crossed from beneficial to harmful remained an open question. Research could delineate best practices for leveraging employee autonomy while avoiding pitfalls by examining the contingent factors and contextual nuances surrounding this shift.

While dominant trends emphasized the positives, the vitamin metaphor and early research insights into inverted U-shaped effects highlighted employee autonomy's potential underside. This cautioned against unilateral, unchecked increases in independence, directing research toward a deeper investigation of balancing acts.

Delving into Paradoxical Leadership Theory

Paradoxical leadership style theory could be regarded as the most comprehensive theory within autonomy research, as it extensively explores both the positive and negative aspects of job autonomy. This section focused on an in-depth analysis of the paradoxical leadership style.

The theory described leader behavior that might have seemed paradoxical but met workplace demands over time (Y. Zhang et al., 2022). Paradoxical leadership behavior (PLB) theory arose from the premise that leaders were entrusted with the responsibility of skillfully navigating opposing demands and priorities from multifarious stakeholders while fostering a cohesive direction within their teams (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Brewer, 1991; Deci et al., 2011; McClelland, 1965; Y. Zhang & Liu, 2022). PLB was a leadership style that aimed to address these conflicting demands by employing interconnected behaviors that simultaneously catered to the needs of stakeholders and team members(Y. Zhang et al., 2014; Y. Zhang & Han, 2019; Y. Zhang & Liu, 2022). In other words, leaders had to adopt paradoxical behavior.

The research explored the contradictory leader behavior in five parts: combining self-centeredness with other-centeredness, maintaining distance while being close, treating employees the same but also allowing individualism, enforcing work tasks while allowing flexibility, and maintaining control while allowing autonomy (Y. Zhang et al., 2022). Within the lens of this theory, the research contributed to how autonomy could be a problem in the workplace. For example, when employees had more autonomy, it

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allowed them to express themselves more. However, it did not eliminate the possibility of being punished for expressing themselves or their innovative thinking, reducing the likelihood of creativity (Kark & Carmeli, 2009; Xiao et al., 2015). Rather than focusing solely on formal authority or power within a given organization, paradoxical leaders emphasized integrating behaviors. This involved blending self-interest and concern for others in their leadership style, enforcing task completion while allowing for flexibility, and maintaining decision control while promoting autonomy. Additionally, paradoxical leaders balanced the leader-subordinate relationship by maintaining distance and closeness, treating subordinates uniformly while encouraging individualization (Shao et al., 2019; Y. Zhang et al., 2014; Y. Zhang & Liu, 2022).

Research in this space focused on how excessive job autonomy could lead employees to make mistakes and even deal with unethical behaviors (Baucus et al., 2007). Employees not subject to the leader's control could deviate from organizational goals. In summary, job autonomy needed limitations, such as goal clarity, to reduce job-related uncertainty (Fürstenberg et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Y. Yang et al., 2021). This theory and its research deviated from prior research because it delved into job autonomy's negative aspects and limitations.

The Bright Side of Employee Autonomy

The paradoxical leaders recognized the importance of balancing conflicting demands and priorities while fostering a cohesive team direction. One way they achieved this was by promoting autonomy among their subordinates. Paradoxical leaders

understood that giving subordinates autonomy or freedom to make decisions within their roles could increase their sense of independence and competence. By encouraging autonomy, these leaders expected their subordinates to effectively handle unexpected situations and make timely decisions, which cultivated a sense of self-direction and ownership autonomy (Feng et al., 2018; Minbaeva, 2008; Shin & Zhou, 2017; Y. Zhang & Liu, 2022).

However, it was essential to acknowledge that the paradoxical leadership style may have had a potential downside to subordinate autonomy in expressing innovative ideas. While autonomy could encourage self-expression, there might have been a fear of negative consequences for expressing unconventional or innovative ideas. This fear could have hindered creativity and innovation in the workplace. Thus, even though paradoxical leaders promoted autonomy, there was a need to balance it with potentially clear expectations and high standards for outcomes (Shao et al., 2019). While autonomy could empower subordinates and enhance their creativity, it should also be accompanied by an environment that supports their ability to express and implement innovative ideas (Feng et al., 2018; Shao et al., 2019; Zhang & Han, 2019).

The Dark Side of Employee Autonomy

Neglecting to provide guidance and support within a paradoxical leadership style could hinder subordinates' ability to navigate the contradictory elements of creativity, such as breaking assumptions and rules while adhering to boundaries and constraints (Guilford, 1957; Miron-Spektor & Beenen, 2015). Neglecting to address these tensions

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could hinder subordinate creativity, as indicated by the ambidexterity theory (Bledow et al., 2009, 2021; Rosing et al., 2011). Within the paradoxical leadership style, leaders had to meet structural and organizational demands for order while considering follower demands for autonomy (Y. Zhang et al., 2022). However, neglecting to synergize and integrate these aspects within a more extensive system could hinder the creative process. Neglect in maintaining a balance between autonomy and control could negatively impact creativity, as both can have paradoxical relationships with creative outcomes (Caniëls & Rietzschel, 2015; Roskes, 2015). Therefore, it was crucial for leadership research to underscore the significance of understanding how these subordinate outcomes depend on various factors within the context of a paradoxical leadership style, addressing the role of neglect in fostering subordinate creativity (Fineman, 2006).

Although employee autonomy unlocked significant benefits, its associated challenges underscored the necessity of a nuanced approach. The three categories of theories and constructs discussed provided insight into the multifaceted concept of employee autonomy. Future research integrating LNS with employee autonomy could offer valuable perspectives on navigating the delicate balance between autonomy and neglect. Figure 2 was developed as a visual representation, or nomological network, for this research area based on the current research work, which outlined the antecedents, moderators, mediators, and the effects of employee autonomy. The figure was crafted to guide future inquiries and map the intricate relationships that defined the research landscape on employee autonomy.

Figure 2: Employee Autonomy Nomological Network

A Leader's Point of View on LNS and Employee Autonomy

Despite extensive research on employee neglect and autonomy, there was a lack of insight into leaders regarding these constructs (Boskovic, 2021; Skogstad et al., 2014). The underlying intentions and thought processes shaping leaders' autonomy-provision and neglect tendencies were poorly understood (Antonakis, 2001; Antonakis et al., 2003). Nevertheless, these motivations and rationales were important for mitigating neglect and leveraging organizational employee autonomy constructively.

While employee autonomy was well-documented, leaders' perspectives on the potential consequences of their behavior remained under-researched. Leaders acknowledged the value of autonomy but might have yet to fully understand how their autonomy could be perceived as neglect, impacting employee job experiences and outcomes (Federici, 2013; Reis et al., 2018).

Adopting a leader's lens would illuminate the 'black box' of leader intention, shaping LNS and employee autonomy. This research held meaningful implications for constructing leadership interventions and best practices tailored to leadership development and training.

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Relationship between LNS and Employee Autonomy in Remote Work

The intricate dynamics between remote work, LNS, and employee autonomy introduced distinct challenges, such as feelings of isolation, diminished guidance from leaders, and heightened demands impacting employees' well-being and productivity (Lange & Kayser, 2022; Perry et al., 2018). The motivation for concentrating on the remote work environment stemmed from its accelerated adoption and its unique circumstances. In remote work settings, the physical separation between leaders and their teams amplified the importance of effectively managing LNS and autonomy. On one side, the absence of physical presence in remote work could intensify the adverse effects of LNS, such as increased work-related stress and health issues, when leaders fail to provide sufficient support or effectively carry out their supervisory roles from a distance (Perry et al., 2018). Conversely, granting high levels of employee autonomy in remote settings, coupled with appropriate stress management practices, could significantly enhance job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being, chiefly due to the opportunities for a better work-life balance offered (Boskovic, 2021). This focus on the remote work environment was driven by the need to understand and address these nuanced challenges to foster a healthy and productive work culture in an increasingly digital and dispersed world (Lange & Kayser, 2022; Perry et al., 2018).

Implementing a balanced approach that addressed the negative consequences of LNS, such as increased stress, and promoted positive aspects of employee autonomy, such as work-life balance, was critical for devising effective strategies to enhance employee retention, satisfaction, and growth within remote work contexts (Boskovic,

2021; Lange & Kayser, 2022). Maintaining this balance requires understanding the underlying dynamics between LNS and employee, as well as their antecedents, moderators, mediators, and outcomes within the remote work environment, to tailor organizational processes that suit the ever-changing landscape of modern work arrangements (Lange & Kayser, 2022; Perry et al., 2018). Thus, organizations could effectively navigate the challenges and benefits associated with remote work by acknowledging and addressing the complexities surrounding LNS and employee autonomy in a remote work setting.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an extensive literature review of employee autonomy and LNS, focusing on the crucial role of leaders in shaping employees' experiences (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). A significant facet of this review involved understanding the definitions of LNS and employee autonomy. Notably, laissez-faire leadership was a crucial aspect related to LNS, with both positive and negative effects on job performance (Antonakis, 2001; Cemaloğlu et al., 2012; Dotse & Asumeng, 2014; T. A. Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Sorenson, 2000; Yammarino et al., 1993). In recent years, research has begun to explore the boundaries of employee autonomy, examining potential negative consequences such as conflicts with organizational goals (Y. Yang et al., 2021).

Summary

Despite the vast literature on employee autonomy, there was a relative dearth of
exploration regarding the role of leadership in the relationship between autonomy and
feelings of neglect. There was a pronounced interest in employee autonomy, which was
researched more than 50 times over LNS. Employee autonomy was also explored more in
Eastern cultures, whereas LNS focused primarily on Western countries. The current
review highlighted the importance of understanding leaders' significant impact on
employees' autonomy and neglect experiences. Moreover, the review emphasized the
need to investigate the leaders' underlying intentions, an essential yet understudied aspect
of this relationship.

Existing literature on LNS mainly explored research themes such as employee
voice, incivility, and disengagement (T. A. Judge et al., 2004; T. A. Judge & Piccolo,
2004; Yammarino et al., 1993). Numerous studies on LNS have revealed that neglect was
primarily associated with adverse outcomes, including burnout, disengagement,
absenteeism, adverse mental health, job dissatisfaction, and disloyalty (T. A. Judge et al.,
2004; T. A. Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Yammarino et al., 1993).

Conversely, research on employee autonomy has concentrated on creativity,
innovation, and job performance (Coelho et al., 2011; Oldham & Cummings, 2017).
Employee autonomy was typically characterized as the freedom or independence
provided to employees in their job tasks. As such, fostering a culture of autonomy was

crucial for creativity and innovation, as employees might feel empowered and inspired to think creatively (Coelho et al., 2011; Oldham & Cummings, 2017).

Notably, employee creativity was linked to developing novel ideas, procedures, products, and services (Coelho et al., 2011). This connection between creativity and autonomy prompted research on the antecedents of creativity, particularly in the context of job autonomy. The literature on creativity underscored the importance of intrinsic motivation, which refers to the employees being internally driven to engage in tasks (Coelho et al., 2011; Oldham & Cummings, 2017; Shalley et al., 2004). Intrinsic motivation was proposed to play a crucial role in promoting risk-taking and exploring diverse ideas among employees, particularly in environments characterized by high levels of job autonomy.

Remote work has become an increasingly prevalent trend, and its impact on employees' experiences of autonomy and neglect could significantly affect their job satisfaction, performance, and well-being. Remote work might exacerbate communication barriers and increase isolation (Boskovic, 2021; Kelloway et al., 2003; Roth, 2000). Therefore, understanding the role of leadership in shaping these experiences was crucial to addressing the possible negative consequences.

The literature review revealed that both laissez-faire and paradoxical leadership styles might result in similar outcomes related to LNS and autonomy but through different pathways and underlying intentions (Ishaq et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2014; Lundmark et al., 2022; Skogstad et al., 2014; Tosunoglu, 2016; X. Zhang & Zhou, 2014;

Y. Zhang et al., 2022). While neglect in laissez-faire leadership arose from a lack of involvement, paradoxical leadership might lead to neglect due to a potential fear of expressing ideas within an autonomous environment. On the other hand, the passive nature of laissez-faire leadership inadvertently granted subordinates a high degree of autonomy, as subordinates were left to make their own decisions without guidance from their leaders (Y. Yang et al., 2021). Paradoxical leadership intentionally promotes autonomy among subordinates, allowing them to make decisions in their roles and increasing their sense of independence and competence (Ishaq et al., 2021; Y. Zhang et al., 2014). This highlighted the importance of understanding the leaders' underlying intentions regarding LNS and autonomy, which remained understudied.

Future Research

Future research should explore various aspects of LNS and employee autonomy within organizations to fill these gaps. Potential research directions could involve examining the leaders' perspective on employee autonomy and neglect. Additionally, further studies could explore other outcomes linked to employee autonomy, such as gender moderation. Finally, gaining insight into the pressures motivating leaders to treat employees with neglect or autonomy could be beneficial for understanding organizational dynamics.

The review emphasized the importance of this research by exploring employee autonomy and LNS within various organizational contexts. It utilized a rigorous methodology to mitigate bias through exhaustive literature searches and providing an

audit trail of the conclusions. The findings identified were synthesized across multiple disciplines, including business, medicine, psychology, and religion, showcasing the potential for interdisciplinary research in this area. Addressing these identified research gaps was essential for enhancing theoretical and practical knowledge, ultimately contributing to more effective leadership practices in increasingly diverse and dynamic organizational settings. In this literature review, the research question, "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing employee autonomy to remote workers without being perceived as neglecting them?" was addressed by examining the current state of knowledge and identifying potential areas for exploration.

Gaining the leader's viewpoint was essential for scientific and practical progress. Expansive employee autonomy research overwhelmingly spotlighted employee perceptions, functionally overlooking half of this dyadic relationship. This one-sided focus constrained theoretical development and stifled leadership support efficacy. By explicitly addressing this empirical blind spot through qualitative techniques, this research can meaningfully advance interdisciplinary understandings while providing leaders with scientifically grounded, tailored guidance.

This chapter mapped out the current research literature on employee autonomy and LNS by examining theories related to these constructs. Addressing the identified research gaps, particularly in understanding leaders' underlying intentions and the relationships between LNS, employee autonomy, and remote work, was crucial for advancing theoretical and practical knowledge. For example, the difference between

intent or avoidance might differentiate employee autonomy from LNS. Pursuing these

directions in future research holds the potential to improve leadership practices within

diverse and evolving organizational environments.

Overall, this research held immense value for multiple stakeholders in equipping

leadership and unlocking employee potential. The lack of insight into leaders'

perspectives represented a timely, impactful gap warranting dedicated research.

Accordingly, the next chapter details this study's methodology for addressing the gap

through semi-structured interviews with the leaders. This research sought to unpack

complete autonomy-neglect dynamics by directly accessing leaders' outlooks and

constructing a platform to equip leaders with tailored, scientifically grounded guidance.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

In Chapter 3, the study delved into the research methods employed, focusing on investigating the research question: "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing employee autonomy to remote workers without being perceived as neglecting them?". Building on the foundation provided in Chapter 2, which reviewed the research streams relevant to the question, emphasizing employee autonomy and LNS, this chapter explored the question through the lens of leaders' perspectives using interviews.

Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach allowed for an opportunity to understand the underlying intentions behind leaders' actions. This approach aimed to fill a gap in the pre-existing literature. It offered a more comprehensive understanding of balancing employee autonomy and neglect within leadership practices.

Sample Population

The research question was addressed through an inductive, qualitative study examining the leaders' perspectives on employee autonomy and LNS within the consulting field. These leaders managed in-person and remote employees, with remote employees located within the same state and in different states or countries. The rationale

behind selecting this sample population was grounded in the accessibility of leaders experienced in remote environments and managing remote employees, which was relevant for exploring the research question in-depth and with academic rigor.

Additionally, the study investigated whether the leaders had met these remote employees in person and if their interaction was solely through remote means. The research solely focused on understanding a leader's perspective, as the employee perspective, as seen in Chapter 2, has been extensively covered. However, it would be valuable to interview followers and leaders in future research, as recent literature suggested an interactive relational view between followers and leaders (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Data Collection

This research aimed to construct a theoretical framework from scratch, uncovering the motivations behind leaders' decisions to neglect or grant autonomy to their employees. Employing grounded theory as its methodological cornerstone, the study utilized a semi-structured interview protocol, facilitating in-person and video discussions. The study specifically targeted the consulting industry due to its significant adoption of remote work, which introduced unique dynamics into leader-employee interactions and thus heightened the relevance of examining autonomy and neglect within this context (Radov, 2022).

The statistics found in the consulting industry show that it is predominantly male (65.9%) and white (64.8%), with an average age of 43 years old (*Management*

Consultant Demographics and Statistics: Number of Management Consultants in the US, 2024). In Big Four consulting firms, 35-40% of partners are listed as below the age of 45, indicating a shift towards younger leaders compared to the average age of 57 for C-suite executives at Fortune 100 companies (*Fortune 100 C-Suite Executives Getting Older and Older*, 2024; *The New Big 4 Partners' Average Age between 33 and 35. Here Are Some Facts.*, 2024). The industry is results-driven, which can pressure consultants to deliver strong performance on each contract (*The Pros and Cons of Consulting*, 2023).

The interviewer leveraged her position as a fellow leader within a 'Big 4' consulting firm to recruit participants. She posted a message in a Microsoft Teams chat that included all partners, managing partners, and directors within this large consulting firm's cybersecurity and IT advisory team. She asked those interested in participating in her PhD research study to contact her directly. She intentionally did not mention the study's specifics to avoid biasing the sample. Over 35 C-suite leaders (partners) responded.

Twenty-one leaders within this industry were interviewed. This sample size was chosen to ensure the depth and complexity of the qualitative data collected and was considered sufficient to reach data saturation, aligning with qualitative research standards outlined by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). These standards suggested that saturation often occurred within the first 12 interviews, with minimal new information gained after 20-30 interviews (Guest et al., 2006).

It is important to note that the sample consisted of partners or C-suite leaders, who are not typical employees, which is a contextual limitation of the study. Each interview lasted an average of 45 minutes, with 5 minutes dedicated to introductions and informed consent procedures, followed by 40 minutes for participants to respond to 9 predetermined interview questions. This structured approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of leaders' perspectives on autonomy and neglect, providing invaluable insights for developing effective leadership strategies in the remote work context of the consulting industry.

Study Population

Before the scheduled interview, the participants were provided with the exempt research information sheet approved by the IRB. This informed the participants of their rights to participate in the voluntary interview and described the study to prepare them for the interview.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of 9 questions derived from the literature review in Chapter 2 of this paper. Four questions focused on LNS, and five centered on employee autonomy. An example of an employee autonomy question was, "How much autonomy do you provide your team members – why do you say that?". The remaining questions on LNS assessed contexts surrounding neglect and leader intentions. For instance, one question asked, "Have you ever felt like you have neglected your

employees? Why? Was it a conscious choice?". The complete interview protocol can be found in Appendix A.

Sample and Interview Data

A total of 21 interviews were conducted with leaders in the consulting industry who oversee both remote and in-person employees. The sample was predominantly white and male, reflecting the demographic composition of the consulting industry's leadership (*Management Consultant Demographics and Statistics: Number of Management Consultants in the US*, 2024). The sample consisted of 86% males and 14% females. The racial and ethnic composition was 71% Caucasian and 29% Asian. The participants had an average age of 42, an average of 20 years of professional experience, and an average of 13 years in management positions.

The interviews varied from 35 to 60 minutes, with an average length of 45 minutes. Video interviews were recorded via Zoom, producing video, audio, and automated transcripts. In-person interviews were recorded using a portable audio device.

To ensure accuracy, the interviewer took backup notes during each interview in case of technical difficulties. Transcription was carried out using an automated service, with researchers subsequently reviewing the transcripts. Participants were assigned anonymous ID numbers, and identifying details were removed from transcripts before data analysis. All data, recordings, and transcripts were securely stored on encrypted drives.

Data Analysis

The data analysis utilized grounded theory and the Gioia methodology for qualitative research (Gioia et al., 2012). Interview transcripts, generated by an automated transcription service, were imported into NVivo software for open coding, marking the initial step in developing the first-order concepts. These concepts aimed to encapsulate and mirror the informants' experiences relating to autonomy, neglect, and leadership behaviors.

NVivo was utilized to code interview excerpts, with approximately 200+ coded passages. These open codes were then condensed to eliminate redundancies and form a coherent set of approximately 20-30 first-order codes. For instance, an example of a first-order code was "Trust-based autonomy." A detailed record of the coded data was provided in Appendix A and Appendix B, with codes arranged numerically by aggregate dimension.

Following the assembly of the first-order concepts, these were grouped into approximately 5-10 second-order analytic themes, providing a scholarly interpretation of the data. Comparative and axial coding analyses were used to derive these second-order themes. An illustrative theme was "Structures for Autonomy Provision."

Eventually, the second-order themes were conceptualized into 3-5 aggregate dimensions, categorized as abstract dimensions. An illustrative dimension was "Leader Techniques for Balance." The final data structure, illustrated in Appendix B, summarized

the grounded theory's first-order codes, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions. An initial model delineating key factors emerged from this comprehensive analytical process. A second coder was then used to verify the first-order concepts, themes, and dimensions, ensuring an accurate interpretation of the data.

Grounded Theory

The emerging theory would be based on existing literature and new qualitative data. An iterative approach to theoretical sampling was employed until the analysis reached saturation when gathering additional data failed to uncover further novel insights (Weed, 2005). The researcher maintained theoretical sensitivity, setting aside preconceived notions about potential findings to objectively derive themes from participants' narratives (Glaser et al., 2018). Interviewing involved 21 leaders; however, the sample size would be determined by reaching saturation rather than a predefined number. Once data collection yielded no additional perspectives, theoretical saturation was assumed, enabling final synthesis (Glaser et al., 2018; Henwood et al., 1996).

Data Validation

Additional steps were taken to validate the qualitative findings. Preliminary results were reviewed with the dissertation chair and committee members to ensure the credibility of data interpretation. Interviews were recorded via Zoom and face-to-face audio devices to enable realistic evaluation by the researcher and the researcher during analysis. The recordings also provided an audit trail but remained confidential on the researcher's university shared drive.

Given the researcher's familiarity with some participants through shared organizational membership, specific measures were implemented to ensure volunteers understood that this study was unrelated to their employment. The use of anonymous identity numbers prevented identification beyond the research team. A secondary coder was also engaged to validate the themes and remove known biases.

Several strategies promoted dependability. The interview protocol included scripted pauses to assess the relevance of questions based on the responses. Purposive sampling of leaders from multiple departments was employed to mitigate selection bias and enhance transferability. Lastly, an interview codebook with structured coding procedures was utilized to ensure consistency in analyzing the heterogeneous sample.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

This chapter provided a detailed narrative of the dissertation's findings, organized around emergent themes and dimensions derived from the data. The findings drew on interviews conducted with leaders in the consulting industry, reflecting on their perspectives on autonomy and neglect. The findings delineated in Appendix B were preceded by a narrative description of second-order themes, their constituent first-order concepts, and the resultant aggregate dimensions in Appendix C. The section concluded with a theoretical model based on the identified themes and the four dimensions. These dimensions are reconciling aspirations and realities, navigating context and innovations, understanding and mitigating neglect, and perceived autonomy in a high-pressure environment. The numbers following the quotes listed below correspond directly to the first-order concepts in Appendix B.

Dimension One: Reconciling Aspirations and Realities

This dimension captured the complexities inherent in leadership roles, focusing specifically on the contrast between leaders' aspirations and actual practices and the crucial role of validation in the leadership process. It comprises second-order themes such as Leader Validation vs. Autonomy, Discrepancy in Leadership Self-Perception, and Aspirations vs. Transactional Realities. Each of these themes is described below.

The three themes that emerged from the informant's reports closely aligned with key elements in the literature on employee autonomy. Leadership validation versus

autonomy described the intricate balance leaders needed to strike between empowering employees and providing them with necessary validation and support. Autonomy represented the desire to foster an environment where employees felt trusted to make decisions and take actions aligned with organizational goals (Brock, 2003). Research on the dynamics of autonomy in the workplace predicted higher levels of innovation, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Modise, 2023). Many informants granted autonomy while ensuring they did not drift into neglect. The aggregate dimension label of 'Reconciling Aspirations with Reality' emerged from the unanimous sentiment among interviewed leaders regarding their perception as good leaders. This self-perception influenced their leadership style, particularly in granting autonomy or, in some cases, engaging in what could be perceived as neglect. In order words, these leaders consciously decided to neglect their subordinates. Leaders seemed to justify these approaches as being aligned with effective leadership because they viewed their actions through their perceived leadership adequacy.

Theme 1: Leadership Validation Versus Autonomy

This theme examined the crucial roles of leaders in validating team members' decisions, juxtaposed with the notion of autonomy. It suggested that contrary to merely granting autonomy, a significant aspect of leadership involved providing validation and support, ensuring team members felt their contributions were valued and acknowledged. This validation was fundamental to fostering a supportive environment, even as leaders navigated the balance between autonomy and neglect. Almost without exception, every participant echoed the sentiment that leadership was not just about delegating tasks but

actively guiding the process and outcomes. Statements such as "I try to lead in terms of directing towards outcomes, as opposed to mere outputs. […] I want both the individuals I'm leading and the team as a whole to continue to have the room, the space, and the culture of thought authority to grow." (5); "I try to be very direct. Like, the joke is, you always know where you stand with me. Because I tell you, right? Because how else are you going to know?" (7); "I have to help guide autonomy, or it gets confusing." (8); and "Validating my team and supporting is what I should be doing as a leader." (10) were typical reflections expressed by all the participants. The informants' diversity was evident in their leadership styles, yet all ensured their team members felt supported and guided. This might have been the leader's way of preventing feelings of neglect among employees. By embracing this balance, leaders underscored the importance of validating employee's efforts and highlighting the role of support and guidance rather than just setting tasks.

Theme 2: Discrepancy in Leadership Self-Perception

There was also consistency among the informants regarding how they all saw themselves as good leaders. Interestingly, when asked if they perceived themselves as good leaders, every informant answered "yes" without hesitation. However, they most hesitated when asked if their team members would agree. The informants perceived themselves as effective, which might not always align with their team members' perceptions. For example, "Am I a good leader? Am I a bad leader? Do they like me? Which [if] they liked me or not, I don't really care as long as we get the job done." (24); "they would see me as empowering; I think they would see me as a partner, who provides

hopefully, great experience and knowledge." (25); and "I strive to be approachable and supportive, but I wonder if my drive for results makes them feel pressured" (27). Different experiences also played a role in shaping how leaders perceived their effectiveness. This response, "I have always seen myself as someone who leads by example, but I have had feedback that sometimes I need to be more vocal" (30), represented a moment of reflection for leaders. This theme delved into the potential gap between how leaders viewed their effectiveness and how they were perceived by their teams, highlighting the importance of self-awareness and feedback mechanisms in bridging this discrepancy and enhancing leadership practices. By reviewing these viewpoints, it became evident that while leaders may have confidence in their abilities, there was an opportunity for growth in receiving honest feedback from their teams. This feedback could potentially help align perceptions, leading to improved team dynamics.

Theme 3: Aspirations Versus Transactional Realities

Another common theme was how many leaders aspired to transformative leadership but employed more transactional methods due to practical challenges. When asked about their leadership styles, the response was, "I aim for transformational leadership, fostering innovation and growth" (38); "I endeavor to inspire and motivate, but tight deadlines sometimes demand a more directive approach" (40); and "I am very controlling when it comes to my projects and my clients because the team's performance and in direct relation on my reputation to the client" (43). Achieving a balance between aspirational leadership and transactional necessities was the pinnacle of effective leadership for many informants. But what motivated these informants? The participants

consistently responded with a "desire to see my team grow and excel" (46), "the need to meet client expectations efficiently" (49), and "the aspiration to build a legacy of impactful leadership" (45). This theme explored the internal conflict leaders faced in aligning their actions with their aspirations, underscoring the journey toward integrating guiding principles into day-to-day leadership tasks. The challenge lay in inspiring and empowering employees while navigating the constraints of project deadlines and client expectations. Leaders yearned to transcend their roles' transactional aspects, aiming to provide actual employee autonomy. However, the exigencies of their roles often necessitated a pragmatic approach, compelling them to adopt methods that may not fully encapsulate their leadership aspirations.

Dimension one underscored the inherent complexity within leadership roles, highlighting the nuanced dance between granting autonomy and providing support through validation. Leaders, through their introspective accounts, illustrated a conscious effort to bridge the gap between their leadership style aspirations and the grounded realities of day-to-day tasks. By navigating the dichotomy of aspirations versus the transactional reality, the dimension showed a collective need for ongoing self-reflection and open dialogue with their employees. Ultimately, dimension one captured the essence of evolving leadership and set the stage for a leadership dynamic that granted autonomy but was also pragmatic.

Dimension Two: Navigating Context and Innovation

This dimension articulated how effective autonomy within teams was shaped by contextual needs, the drive for innovation, tenure, and the foundational elements of trust.

This aggregate dimension explored how autonomy was dynamically applied based on the evolving needs of projects and team members. The second-order theme of 'Contextual Flexibility in Autonomy' resulted from the interview data, describing how leaders adjusted granting autonomy to employees based on the specific demands of projects, trust, tenure, and the individual's capabilities. The other second-order theme that made up this dimension was 'Autonomy as a Catalyst for Innovation,' induced by the informant's references and comments on how autonomy empowered team members to explore innovative solutions and take risks.

Theme 1: Contextual Flexibility in Autonomy

The effectiveness of employee autonomy was contingent upon the specific demands of projects, client needs, established trust with the employee, and individual roles, requiring leaders to adapt the level of autonomy granted. This influence was seen in responses, "It's not based on years of experience or the title of an individual but on whether the trust has been built, right. So, I think I am someone who likes to give many opportunities." (8);

"The ideal state is autonomy. However, autonomy functions as a trust mechanism. Then, trust becomes a function of your record of capability, performance outcomes, and all those things. So, for me, it's a pattern that's not necessarily linear […] I believe autonomous team members, or whatever it is, are where you want to aim." (11);

"I don't care what time they come in or what time they go to the gym or if they hang out with people, no restriction. I know I can trust them. The work is going to be done,

and they have that visibility and flexibility to come and tell me, 'From three o'clock to six o'clock, I have some personal engagement. I don't care, but I will make sure that work is getting done." (12);

"There is no perfect recipe for managing day-to-day and prioritizing people; it almost becomes who's the loudest on that given day. Who needs your support more than others? Who can wait a little extra for the support because you know that their deadline is not necessarily immediate." (13);

and "Autonomy is highly dependent on the specific demands of a project, client needs, and individual roles, necessitating a leadership approach sensitive to these varying circumstances." (16). This theme emphasized the necessity of established trust and prior experience with the employee as prerequisites for granting autonomy.

Theme 2: Autonomy as a Catalyst for Innovation

Providing employees the autonomy to approach their work could unlock creative potential, encourage them to take risks, and lead to innovative solutions. The responses from informants were illustrative of this dynamic:

"They're in their natural element when they get to decide […] there's a frequency that goes out and hits a tuning fork, which might resonate in a way that comes back. It's when I know they are leaning beyond the risk that they understand or when people with experience I respect […] affirm, 'I get where you're going.' But, you know, there are things you didn't know about; here's the risk around that. That's pulling back, right? Not everyone is afforded that latitude." (46);

"…they have the freedom to articulate their thoughts. Those are moments that I've observed working well for me." (47);

"If you have […] someone who's personally motivated, then, most likely, regardless of how good their ideas are, when you tell them an outcome, you're going to get the spark of thought of how to do it. And that's exactly what you want on your team; in my opinion, you want the innovative person, the engineer, the creator, who's motivated, and whatever you're trying to accomplish. […] because again, if it's your idea, you're going to go for it, right, you're really going to put your heart and soul into things because it's your idea, then you gotta watch out there is that people don't fall in love with their own ideas" (51);

"If you don't offer substantial method autonomy, innovation will be stifled. So, I've realized that if you don't allow the team to work in their way or encourage them to explore various methods, it results in diminished innovation and a lack of thought leadership." (52);

and "…across my career, I've truly seen that when people are given a long leash, if you will, and provided with the opportunity and empowerment, […] that's when we harvest the best ideas." (54).

This theme accentuated the significance of method autonomy and the empowerment of employees with the choice of how to accomplish tasks, which, in turn, fostered innovation and deepened their engagement with the tasks at hand.

Dimension two explored how autonomy was not static but dynamically interplayed, influenced by project demands, the development of trust, and the individual's

capabilities. The themes of 'Contextual Flexibility in Autonomy' and 'Autonomy as a Catalyst for Innovation' showed how the informants tuned the level of autonomy based on multiple factors, which could make the environment conducive to creativity and innovation. Ultimately, this dimension showed the pivotal role of leaders harnessing the potential of autonomy as a tool.

Dimension Three: Understanding and Mitigating Neglect

The three second-order themes comprising this aggregate dimension explored the multifaceted aspects of neglect in leadership, focusing on the conditions leading to neglect and the strategies leaders employed to mitigate its effects. Variations within this dimension included the themes of 'Workload and External Pressures as Precursors to Neglect,' 'Mitigating Neglect through Personal Connections,' and 'Specialized Skills and Risk of Isolation.'

Theme 1: Workload and External Pressures as Precursors to Neglect

The challenge of balancing workload and external pressures was a significant factor that could lead to potential neglect. A leader's workload and external pressures could inadvertently reduce employee engagement, making employees perceive this as neglect. This effect may be even more prominent in a remote work environment, where the lack of face-to-face interactions can exacerbate feelings of isolation among employees. This issue was seen in the responses:

"So, the last few weeks were incredibly busy for me, and I connect with my counselees every couple of weeks or so. The last time I connected with them [...], we

talked about them having access to this tool [...], And I had it in my mind to help secure that access, right? But until yesterday, it hadn't crossed my mind. I was so busy that it kept slipping." (5);

"…facing an overwhelming situation with my parent, grappling with a personal challenge […] it was hard for me to be there for the team." (8);

"And I find some folks may find me as someone who doesn't give enough direction, right, and basically just kind of give them high-level pointers and then disappear. Some people may find that a little frustrating. Some may find it motivating." (10);

and "More so in two ways, one, that I'm either too busy and don't have the time to help with it, or it's a piece of work that I really don't care about." (11).

This theme examined the need for leaders to manage their workload effectively to prevent employees from perceiving their leadership style as neglectful. While the leaders may not have intentionally neglected their employees, they acknowledged that their heavy workload and external pressures could inadvertently lead to reduced engagement with their team members. Some leaders recognized that their employees might perceive their behavior as neglectful, even if that was not their intention.

Theme 2: Mitigating Neglect through Personal Connections

Despite potential work-related neglect, informants prioritized maintaining personal connections with their employees as a crucial strategy to mitigate feelings of neglect. For example, 'Every month, we have a standing meeting with my counselee, where we just talk about what is happening in their life' (27). Another informant

mentioned, "It's very common for me to ping people in the middle of the day just to say, hey, how's it going?" (28). This theme underscored how leaders believed that demonstrating care for individuals beyond their work contributions aided in fostering interpersonal relationships, viewing it to counteract neglectful behavior regarding work tasks.

Theme 3: Specialized Skills and Risk of Isolation

Leaders felt that when they had employees with highly specialized skills, they might make a conscious choice to neglect them because they thought that they, as leaders, did not have a lot to contribute. It became evident that tailored support based on the individual employee was necessary. Responses from these informants reflected the behavior of isolating highly technical employees. One informant noted,

"For me, I work with specialists [...], and there are certain decisions they are capable of taking by themselves and leading. And if at all there is a mistake, there is no need to do a course correction or step in. They know their responsibilities, act the same way, and move further along the goal" (64).

Another noted, "I work with people who know what they are doing, so they are under the radar […] I don't need to bother them" (65).

This theme stressed the importance of integrating specialized talents into the broader team dynamic, ensuring that these valued team members did not feel isolated or underutilized.

Dimension three focused on the nature of neglect in leadership, exploring the conditions contributing to its occurrence and the strategies leaders can employ to mitigate its effects. Neglect, in the context of this study, refers to a leader's unintentional or passive disengagement from their employees, often resulting from external pressures, heavy workloads, or a lack of awareness of their team members' unique needs. This dimension illuminated the significant influence of external factors on leaders' ability to effectively engage with their employees, highlighting the need for leaders to prioritize their interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, the findings revealed that employees with highly specialized or technical skills might face a different form of neglect, stemming from leaders' assumptions that these individuals require less support or guidance. This insight underscores the importance of leaders adopting an adaptable approach to engaging with their team members and tailoring their support to each employee.

This dimension emphasizes the critical role of self-awareness and proactive strategies in preventing the perception of neglect among employees. Leaders need to navigate the complex interplay between external pressures, interpersonal relationships, and the diverse needs of their team members for an engaging work environment.

Dimension Four: Perceived Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments

This dimension examined the nuanced reality of employee autonomy in a fast-paced, high-demand work setting, challenging the conventional understanding of employee autonomy as a straightforward granting of decision-making power.

Theme 1: Illusion of Autonomy Amidst Workload Pressures

As the data analysis for the interviews concluded, it became more apparent that perceived autonomy might not equate to actual autonomy. Responses from one of the informants reflected these behaviors that led to a realization of the entire concept of autonomy:

"If you give someone autonomy in an area where they don't have the ability to make a choice, you're not giving them autonomy at all." (12); "…because other things are going to be made for them, then you just have to kind of draw a line in the sand and play the game that other priorities were playing." (13);

"If you don't make your requirement or your task hot, you know, with consequences, you know, with some kind of deadline and urgency, then you're kidding yourself; if you think you're giving them autonomy, you're not, it's just, they're just going to plug that into the equation of what they have to do next, and they don't ever make it." (14);

"If you are motivated, then you are not trying to minimize your energy; you're going to do extra stuff. You want to learn, and you have the desire to create something new. If you're not into it, you're just going to try to use the resources you already have, minimize your work, and get onto something you're motivated to fight about." (11);

and "There's another limit to autonomy; there are certain areas where people just don't have choices, and we don't have full autonomy in our lives." (39).

The theme delved into the paradoxical nature of autonomy in environments characterized by heavy workloads and pressing deadlines. The informant posited that autonomy might often be more of a perceived state than an actuality, with team members

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navigating an illusion of choice within their tasks. Despite ostensibly having the freedom to manage their work, the relentless pace and volume of tasks guided priorities, limiting genuine autonomy. The informant emphasized that autonomy was not about the absence of choice but the limited bandwidth to exercise it meaningfully as employees default to tackling the most immediate or pressing tasks first. The theme underscored the importance of recognizing this illusion by managing workloads and setting realistic expectations that allowed for genuine autonomy.

The data illuminated that leaders' perceptions of effective leadership differ significantly. The responses from informants have unraveled a complex understanding of autonomy, which ranged from "providing them with the opportunity to innovate while still meeting client expectations" (7) to "change how you give autonomy based on trust" (5). Central themes identified included the critical role of validating and supporting employees over simply granting autonomy, the contextual basis of autonomy, and challenging the notion of autonomy as an illusion.

One of the objectives of this study was to dissect the intricate balance between autonomy and perceived neglect. Initially, it was thought neglect could stem from leaders' busy schedules and external pressures based on the literature review. This thought was substantiated through discussions about how external pressures could sometimes force leaders into positions where neglecting their employees became an unintended consequence. From the data collected, four aggregate dimensions emerged, presenting a logical sequence that formed the backbone of a model illustrating the complex interplay between autonomy, validation, contextual flexibility, and the strategic

importance of sometimes allowing neglect to spur innovation and creativity. These dimensions together forged a holistic view of leadership, autonomy, and neglect, emphasizing the adaptability required in granting autonomy, the deliberate choice of neglect to encourage innovation and the importance of strategic alignment for nurturing engaged teams.

The insights from the narrative descriptions of second-order themes and interviews revealed the nuanced equilibrium leaders had to maintain. This equilibrium was about balancing tasks and involved a deeper understanding of leadership aspirations and the situational context.

The forthcoming and final chapter will delve into the implications of these findings, discussing the proposed model's ramifications, suggesting avenues for future research, and concluding with a synthesis of the study's contributions to the broader discourse on leadership, autonomy, and neglect.

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Chapter Five: Discussion, Recommendations, Limitations, and Conclusions

Chapter five discusses the study's findings, limitations, implications, and future research recommendations. This chapter synthesizes the insights from the qualitative analysis, connecting them to the existing body of knowledge and the study's research question: "What do leaders perceive as effective strategies for providing autonomy to remote employees without being perceived as neglecting them?" The chapter introduces the Model of Autonomy and Neglect Leadership, a framework that encapsulates the inputs into leader decision-making and how they flow into ideal employee outcomes. The model serves as a foundation for exploring the research question.

Discussion

By examining each dimension and its associated propositions, the chapter unravels the complexities of reconciling leaders' aspirations with practical realities, navigating the balance between contextual demands and innovation, understanding and mitigating neglect, and proactively evaluating the authenticity of autonomy in high-pressure environments. By contextualizing these findings within the landscape of theories in leadership, the study contributes to advancing knowledge in the field.

Model of Autonomy and Neglect Leadership

Echoing the foundational work by Glover, Friedman, and Jones (2002) on adaptive leadership for organizational change, this model illustrated the intricate balance

between leaders' aspirations, team needs, and environmental demands (Glover et al., 2002). Appendix D showcased the adapted model. Beginning on the left side of the figure was 'Reconciling Aspirations and Realities,' a dimension that considered the leaders' self-perception and aspirational goals that supported effective leadership practices. Next, 'Navigating Context and Innovation' emerged as a critical factor that moderated the relationship between a leader's contextual style and the emergence of innovation within teams. It prepared the organization through context flexibility for 'Understanding and Mitigating Neglect,' emphasizing the importance of tailored engagement and support to address potential perceived neglect. A 'Proactive Evaluation of Autonomy' was subsequently exercised using contextual awareness. This awareness could be in the form of feedback mechanisms that allowed for continuous improvement through 'Perceived Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments.' This segment scrutinized the authenticity of granted autonomy. The model was designed to enhance team cohesion and provide a supportive environment, increasing organizational resilience. Lastly, 'Contextual Flexibility' resulted from this dynamic interplay, allowing the organization to adapt and thrive. The framework would help foster a culture of creativity, a fertile ground for innovation. The following sections describe each component in more detail. They provided a series of propositions supporting this novel model, which builds upon existing leadership theories while introducing new dimensions relevant to the challenges of a remote work environment. By bridging the gap between traditional leadership models and emergent realities of remote work, this model offers a fresh perspective on how

leadership can be effective while navigating the complexities of modern work environments.

Dimension 1: Reconciling Aspirations and Realities

Individuals who were successful as leaders exhibited common behavioral and perceptual characteristics. First, they had a strong self-perception of being effective leaders. Second, this self-perception involved both aspirational goals of transformative leadership, which differed from the reality of transactional methodologies. It is noteworthy, however, that there could be a discrepancy between how leaders viewed their effectiveness and how their teams perceived them. Interviewing the team members to confirm this perception was beyond the scope of this study. The validation provided leaders with a mechanism to bridge this gap. For example, by actively validating their team's efforts, leaders tried to foster a supportive environment that mirrored their self-perception as good leaders. The third defining characteristic was that the leaders were motivated to see their team grow and excel. There was also an underlying theme of balancing individual aspirations with the transactional realities of leadership by being pragmatic in the leader's approach. Fourth, there was another underlying theme of adaptability, with leaders adjusting their approach, such as granting autonomy based on the evolving needs of their teams and projects. The actual impact of these characteristics on organizational outcomes was beyond the scope of this study. The data, however, indicated a nuanced approach to leadership that involved adapting their leadership style, such as providing validation as the team needs, leading to the following proposition:

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Proposition #1

Leaders who adeptly reconciled their aspirational ideals with practical realities actively validated their team's efforts, and demonstrated adaptability in their leadership approach were likely to enhance their self-perceived effectiveness.

This proposition shows why it is important for leaders to regularly self-reflect and seek feedback from their team members, peers, and superiors through comprehensive assessments like 360-degree evaluations. By gathering various perspectives, leaders can better understand their leadership effectiveness and identify how they can improve.

Dimension 2: Navigating Context and Innovation

Numerous sayings, such as "Flexibility is the key to stability," are often attributed to the famous American basketball coach, John Wooden. This saying applied to dimension two, where it was found that leaders attempted to tailor the level of autonomy based on the evolving needs of their teams and projects. As stated in the interview data, contextual flexibility in granting autonomy was more realistic than a one-size-fits-all approach to autonomy, as it might not adequately address the capabilities of team members. Surprisingly, the interview data revealed that innovation was not solely a result of unrestrained autonomy but was based on the leader's ability to adjust their leadership style based on specific context, including project demands and the employee's experience and trust built on prior experience with the leader. Another advantage of contextual flexibility in autonomy was the "creative freedom within boundaries" that empowered employees to explore innovative solutions while aligning with organizational goals.

Proposition #2

Leaders who implemented contextual flexibility in granting autonomy – carefully adjusting their approach based on project demands, individual capabilities, and established trust – could enhance innovation and stimulate the generation of creative ideas from the employee.

Dimension 3: Understanding and Mitigating Neglect

The data underscored a leadership opportunity: the proactive identification and addressing of challenges associated with perceived neglect. Based on the interviews, a critical aspect involved leaders ensuring they did not inadvertently neglect their employees due to personal challenges or external pressures. Regular check-ins with employees emerged as a strategy for preventing and addressing feelings of neglect. Simultaneously, it was recognized that employees with highly specialized skills might have experienced a different form of neglect, stemming from a mistaken belief by leaders that such employees required less direction or support. This insight highlighted the importance of a nuanced and adaptable leadership approach. Effectively mitigating neglect did not merely involve a uniform increase in engagement but required leaders to tailor their engagement strategy based on each employee's unique needs and skill sets.

Proposition #3

Leaders who cultivated personalized engagement, such as tailored support that recognized each team member's unique contributions and needs, could effectively mitigate the challenges of perceived neglect. This approach required understanding each

employee's role and contributions regardless of their level of specialization and prioritizing employees amidst personal challenges or external pressures.

Dimension 4: Perceived Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments

The interview highlighted an interesting challenge within high-pressure work settings: the illusion of autonomy. Leaders might have assumed that providing employees with autonomy inherently empowered them. However, if the employee was in a high-demand environment, what was perceived as autonomy by leaders might not have translated into actual autonomy for the employee. The pressure to deliver under tight deadlines could paradoxically limit autonomy, as employees might have prioritized immediate task completion over creative problem-solving. This pointed to the need for leaders to discern whether the autonomy provided was authentic or merely a façade limited by the exigencies of the work environment.

Proposition #4

To effectively flourish creativity in high-pressure environments, leaders need to ensure that the autonomy granted is genuine and substantive rather than an illusion masked by external pressures. This involved a proactive approach where leaders gauged the workload on an employee's plate and provided guidance needed to navigate tasks.

Exploring leadership dynamics within the autonomy and neglect leadership model illuminated the complex interplay between leader aspirations and team perceptions from the leader's point of view. The model's outcome prepared the organization for more nuanced leadership practices that effectively balance autonomy while mitigating perceived neglect. Existing research had overlooked the nuanced challenges leaders faced

in granting autonomy without being perceived as neglectful, especially in a remote work environment. Much of the existing research had been from the employees' point of view, making the leader's perspective in this research study particularly valuable. The data revealed that leaders who struggled with ensuring autonomy did not devolve into neglect, especially in high-pressure settings or with highly specialized employees. Leaders grappled with the challenge of providing autonomy while maintaining a level of engagement that prevented employees from feeling neglected.

The four propositions derived from this study align with and extend existing research on leadership effectiveness, employee autonomy, and the challenges of remote work while emphasizing the leader's perspective. For example, proposition #1's emphasis on reconciling aspirational ideals with practical realities echoes the findings of adaptive leadership theory. Similarly, proposition #2's focus on contextual flexibility in granting autonomy resonates with the principles of situational leadership and the importance of trust in leader-member exchange theory, underscoring the leader's responsibility in adapting their approach based on the situation and the employee's needs.

As provided in Chapter 2, the literature presented a fragmented view of leadership that either overemphasized the role of employee autonomy or ignored its potential pitfalls, often neglecting the leader's perspective. In contrast, this research highlighted the importance of contextual flexibility and the proactive mitigation of neglect from the leader's point of view. The autonomy and neglect leadership model was introduced as a framework that bridged these gaps, placing the leader's experiences and decision-making process at the center. A prevailing theme was that tailored engagement strategies

determined by the leader were crucial in effectively managing the balance between autonomy and neglect in remote work settings.

Recommendations

The study provided insights into the challenges of modern leadership, particularly in navigating employee autonomy and perceived neglect within remote work environments. While these findings contributed to the understanding of leadership in contemporary settings, it is essential also to note the study's limitations, which paved the way for future research opportunities. The recommendations outlined below suggested considerations for expanding the research scope and applicability.

Firstly, there was a need to expand the sample size and diversity. The limited sample size of 21 informants and focus on leaders from a single large organization could raise questions about the generalizability of the findings. The informants all had remote employees and worked in the consulting industry. Future research could benefit from including a broader array of participants from various organizations, industries, hybrid employees, only in-person employees, and locations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of leadership strategies related to employee autonomy and leader neglect of subordinates across various work settings.

Secondly, the potential for cross-sectoral applications warranted exploration. Although this study zeroed in on the consulting industry, examining how the autonomy and neglect leadership model applied in different sectors could reveal unique challenges. Future research might explore the relevance of this research's findings in industries such

as healthcare and education, where remote work dynamics and organizational cultures vary.

The need for an in-depth exploration of underrepresented groups was also highlighted. The sample's underrepresentation in terms of gender and racial or ethnic backgrounds underscored the importance of future research into how different demographic factors influenced leadership approaches. It would help shed light on the barriers for underrepresented groups in industry leadership roles.

Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of leadership strategies on employee autonomy and LNS. Observing changes over time could help ascertain the sustainability of specific practices.

The study's findings suggest that proactive and clear communication from leaders can significantly mitigate the challenges, underlining the importance of establishing open communication channels and setting clear expectations.

Furthermore, exploring other variables influencing leadership experiences in remote work environments was recommended. Beyond employee autonomy and LNS, factors like communication styles, conflict resolution techniques, and technological facilitation could play a role. Investigating trust-building could add depth to the understanding of these leadership practices.

Lastly, exploring innovative leadership models tailored to the challenges of remote work is a fruitful area for future research. Models such as servant leadership and absentee leadership could offer fresh perspectives on improving employee autonomy and perceived neglect within remote teams.

By addressing these recommendations, future research has the potential to build on this research's findings, developing nuanced and effective leadership strategies that meet the modern remote workforce.

Limitations

The study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The researcher held a leadership position within the organization and is a woman of South Asian descent. This unique background may have influenced the responses provided by the participants. The leaders interviewed might have responded differently to other types of interviewers, potentially affecting the depth and content of the data collected. Additionally, the fact that all participants volunteered to be interviewed could introduce a self-selection bias, as those who chose to participate may share specific motivations that differ from those who did not volunteer. This bias could limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of leaders in the consulting industry. The research was also limited to leaders within the consulting industry who had both remote and in-person employees. Another limitation was that the study only included a leader's perspective. Furthermore, the researcher's biases and experiences as a member of the organization may have inadvertently influenced the data collection and analysis process despite efforts to maintain objectivity and reflexivity throughout the study. To mitigate these limitations, future research could involve a more diverse group of interviewers, employ random sampling techniques to reduce self-selection bias, and include researchers from outside the organization and the consulting industry to minimize potential insider bias.

Implications to Practitioners

The study's insights into leaders' perspectives on employee autonomy and perceived neglect provided valuable implications for practitioners, particularly those involved in leadership development programs, shaping organizational culture, and formulating remote work policies. By delving into how leaders strived to maintain a balance between granting autonomy and avoiding perceptions of neglect, this research provided actionable guidance for organizations to bolster leadership effectiveness in remote settings. Several implications for practitioners emerged in this study.

Organizations should focus on designing programs that address the complexities of balancing autonomy without risking perceptions of neglect in remote work contexts. This entails equipping leaders with the necessary tools to identify and address perceived neglect through role-playing scenarios, case studies, and simulations reflective of the challenges faced in real-world leadership situations.

The research showed how regular check-ins could help avert feelings of neglect. To this end, organizations encouraged communication training, empathetic listening, and responsiveness. These regular check-ins could ensure that employees felt valued and connected to the leader.

Tailored engagement based on the individual could resonate well with specialized and highly technical employees. This suggested that leaders adopt a flexible approach and use their insights to adjust the level of autonomy provided.

Adapting organizational policies based on this research's findings could promote improved leadership approaches. For example, policies emphasizing the significance of

establishing clear expectations for both leaders and employees regarding autonomy could be beneficial. Implementing mechanisms for feedback from employees could help these policies evolve in tandem.

This study helped organizations with insights into cultivating effective leadership strategies that optimally balanced employee autonomy while minimizing the risk of perceived neglect. By reviewing these implications, practitioners could pioneer a more inclusive culture in a remote work environment.

Implications to Academia

This study enhanced academic discourse by adopting an approach that considered both leader and employee perspectives on employee autonomy and perceived neglect. It contributed to bridging the gap between these two critical viewpoints and broadened understanding of leadership strategies, especially within remote work environments. The research had multiple noteworthy implications for academia.

First, it contributed to expanding leadership theory by integrating leaders' perspectives on employee autonomy and LNS. This approach challenged and complemented existing theories primarily focused on the employee's viewpoint. It provided a better understanding of leadership behaviors and their implications, particularly in remote work settings, contributing to an expanded theoretical framework for understanding leadership tactics.

Additionally, the study advanced the development of a nomological network by exploring the antecedents, moderators, mediators, and outcomes of employee autonomy and LNS. This structured framework allowed for an in-depth examination of these

constructs' interrelations and impact on organizational outcomes, opening new avenues for future research.

By focusing on LNS from the leader's perspective, the study addressed the gap in the existing literature. First, this research defined LNS. Additionally, the qualitative approach adopted allowed for exploring the rationale behind LNS, whether as a conscious decision or ignorance. This opened new research questions and areas for investigation, particularly concerning implications for organizations.

Moreover, this research study's methodological contributions were notable. The qualitative methodology provided a framework for exploring complex issues in leadership, underscoring the value of using qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into leaders' motivation, perceptions, and experiences regarding employee autonomy and LNS. This approach could serve as a model for future research exploring leadership behaviors from a leader's perspective.

Finally, the study's findings indicated potential for interdisciplinary research that integrated leadership theories with insights from psychology studies. Investigating how leadership behaviors intersect with cultural norms, organizational structures, and individual psychological factors could help academia develop a holistic leadership model.

The study enriched academia by offering insights into leadership dynamics from a leader's perspective in a remote work context. It enhanced the understanding of employee autonomy and LNS from a leadership standpoint and laid the groundwork for future research to delve into these constructs.

Conclusion

The accelerated adoption of remote work stemmed from the necessity for adaptability in the modern workforce. Historically, leadership dynamics focused on direct, in-person interactions. The advancement from traditional office settings to remote or hybrid models had fundamentally altered how leaders engaged their teams. These shifts necessitated a reevaluation of leadership styles, particularly regarding employee autonomy and LNS. These leaders – the pioneers of the modern workforce – leveraged technology strategies as traditional leadership practices became less effective. Unfortunately, not all leadership practices evolved at the same pace.

What remained the same was the intrinsic need for connection and validation between employees and leaders. This fundamental human connection remained constant regardless of changes in the work environment. The ability to manage teams effectively hinged on leaders' capacity to adapt their strategies to meet these needs.

The need to be more adaptive in leadership approaches was more pressing than ever as remote work became more prevalent. The reduction in physical office necessitated a stronger remote leadership capability (Cappelli, n.d.). Employee autonomy versus LNS played a pivotal role at the heart of this leadership transformation. This change could make or break team effectiveness. The winner in this modern workforce was the leader who understood the nuanced demands of remote work, team requirements, and the flexibility to change. This process could lead to building a more resilient team. As researcher Sandel stated, "The delicate balance between autonomy and aligned expectations requires careful consideration" (Sandel, 2023).

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The research model provided a framework for navigating the complexities of employee autonomy and perceived neglect. The modern leader needs to devote time and energy to mitigate employees' feelings of neglect and understand how they were granted autonomy. In conclusion, these initiatives were not merely strategies but the foundation of a thriving remote work culture.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol with Annotations

    A.   Questions on demographics (*only applicable if I cannot find this info*

ahead of time) (SurveyMonkey, 2023)

        a.   I have been with my current organization for a year now. How

long have you worked for the organization (in years)?

        b.   How long have you been in a leadership role? (level of leadership,

extent of leadership/management experience)

        c.   What is your age (in years)?

        d.   Gender: My pronouns are She/her/hers; what are your pronouns?

           i. He/Him/His

          ii. They/Them/Theirs

         iii. Ze/Hir/Hirs

         iv. Prefer not to say

        e.   Please specify your ethnicity

           i. Native American

          ii. Asian

         iii. African American

         iv. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

          v. Caucasian

         vi. Latino or Hispanic

        vii. Two or more

viii. Other/Unknown

ix. Prefer not to say

B.   Intro – thanks again for agreeing to share your leadership experience with me. Did you get a chance to read through the disclosure? If not, I can read it to you. Your answers will be anonymous and will not be shared with anyone else. Do you mind if I record our conversation?

 a.   Leadership style – let us talk about your leadership style. How would you describe your leadership style? Are there any principles that guide you in terms of how you lead? Have you thought about it? If so, how? (Khan et al., 2016).

  i. *(For coding – and not to ask: Transformative - Inspiring and developing team members, transactional - Setting clear goals, expectations, and rewards, absentee - Trusting your team to know what they are doing and providing guidance only when necessary.)*

  ii. Can you please give me an example or two that would help me understand your leadership style in practice?

  iii. How do you think your team members perceive your leadership style? What would they say your leadership style is?

  iv. Do you think you are a good leader? Would your team answer the same way?

b.   Autonomy –I would love to understand how you perceive autonomy for your team members. What is your philosophy regarding how much autonomy you want for your team members? If it is easier, you can even think of it from a third-party perspective (i.e., if you were standing as an outsider to us, how you would perceive the autonomy in the following scenarios) (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013).

   i. The term autonomy can be so broad. How do you describe it in terms of managing your team members? Can you give an example of how you might give or control the autonomy of your team members? How would you describe what an autonomous team member would look like?

   ii. Method autonomy: How much autonomy do your team members have in deciding how to get their work done? Can you think of an example regarding team members and how much autonomy you encourage regarding how they get their work done?

      1.   Can you give an example of what autonomy looks like in your team? How much autonomy do you believe you give your team members? Why?

      2.   Considering your leadership experience, why does autonomy make sense to your team?

3.   Thinking about autonomy from your team member's point of view, do you think they feel they have a lot of autonomy? Why or why not?

4.   Do you think they would like to have more or less autonomy? What makes you think so? Tell me about the specific roles on your team and if roles matter for how you manage autonomy for your team members.

5.   How do you feel they perceive their autonomy? Are there differences in what subordinates may perceive?

iii. Schedule autonomy: How much autonomy do your team members have in control over scheduling their work? How do you do that?

iv. Criteria autonomy: How much autonomy do your team members have over their job objectives (e.g., goals and expectations)?

c.   Let us move on to an interesting topic that keeps popping up recently: working in a remote environment and the perceived feeling of too much autonomy or perceived indifference that an employee may feel (Avolio & Bass, 2002, 1995).

i. What does "too much autonomy" mean to you?

ii. Can you describe a time when you felt like you were indifferent or inattentive towards your employees? Is there a time when a subordinate may think so?

1. Was it a conscious choice or the result of other factors like a busy work schedule?

iii. Has an employee ever indicated or had a sense that they felt that you were being neglectful <indifferent or inattentive>? What was the reason they gave that you might have been neglectful <indifferent or inattentive>?

1. <understand if they fall into these categories> waiting too long before acting.

2. Has there been a time when you have waited too long to decide? Did that impact your team members? Was that instance just a one-off? What was the reaction of your team members?

iv. Do you ever wait till things go wrong before acting? What about when you want to help encourage your team members to take risks? Why?

d. What is the worst characteristic of an employee that did not work for you? Describe

e. What is your ideal type of employee? Describe

f. What are the most enjoyable and fulfilling memories about your leadership experience, especially regarding giving team members the right amount of autonomy while not making them feel neglected?

Thanks so much for all your time. I loved listening to your experiences. As a reminder, everything you say will be kept confidential. Is there anything else you want to share?

Appendix B: Record of Transcribed Excerpts Categorized by Aggregate Dimension One: Reconciling Aspirations and Realities

Theme 1: Leadership Validation Versus Autonomy

1.   "Typically, that could happen in an audit engagement, where an audit partner, I would have a lot more autonomy; then I can pass it on to the team, like look, imported this company's financial statements, how we do it is up to us. And, you know, it is, we do not, I feel like the work we do, we have autonomy, but it is limited because there are very specific client requirements, they want it done a certain way, they want a certain level of depth."

2.   "I appreciate autonomy. Like I said, I'd like my managers to leave me alone. Let me do my thing if I need some help. And because I feel like I have a good idea of where we need to go, not just from a high-level organizational perspective, but also how to get there."

3.   "I would not also be part of a security, which was part of my remit. So, kind of folks that work with me on work, pay, and then play security learn. And once that was off my plate, they continued to work and prosper in that field. So, some folks you do not see or have not incubated that idea of God, the team started, and now they are self-sufficient."

4.   "I spoke about autonomy, right? There was a big set of senior leadership there. I let my speaker associate present the tech, and I guided him; it definitely where led him to take the leadership role to present it to the senior leadership of a form which was such a way that most of my colleagues and others would not take

the top agenda to put a team member in the front and stay in the back to guide

them. So, I felt that anybody can do it better if you give them the opportunity."

5.   "I try to lead by directing towards outcomes instead of mere outputs. […] I

want the individuals I lead and the team to continue to have the room, the space,

and the culture of thought authority to grow."

6.   "We do not learn if we do everything for them."

7.   "I try to be very direct. The joke is that you always know where you stand

with me. Because I tell you, right? Because how else are you going to know?"

8.   "I have to help guide autonomy, or it gets confusing."

9.   "When people are given a role or an assignment, they bring unique talents,

abilities, and skills to that role or assignment."

10.   "Validating my team and supporting is what I should be doing as a

leader."

11.   "Autonomy is […] You give the individuals guidance, and they go and get

it done. They come back to you with a version early on."

12.   "I believe in leading by example. If I expect them to perform well, I need

to show them how by doing it myself first."

13.   "My focus is not necessarily on how I aspire to leadership. How do I

aspire to lead people but more along the lines of how do I, which is enriching and

fulfilling to me? How do I help people achieve their career dreams and, your

perspective, you know, from their perspective, the things that they want to

accomplish? And, you know, is there a way that I can do that, such as working

alongside them and providing some insights, mentoring, or something like that? That is just how I love to do that. And I do not know why I am wired that way, but it has just been something that I have been focused on doing."

14.   "I would classify myself as largely hands-off and go out of my way to provide necessary resources. In other words, when there is an engagement that we have going on, when the folks that I am leading need help, that is sort of where I jump in; otherwise, I am very trustful, maybe certain to the degree of two trustful when it comes to leadership, I do my best to kind of, you know, stay back and allow folks to learn kind of, and I provide learning opportunities whenever I can. But I would like to help them grow and allow them to have those experiences by themselves. And I often rely on them as the experts, especially in such a sort of niche area that that we are in with an instant response."

15.   "So that is why I allow them to take that initiative and then take engagement management and Opportunity Management off their plate. That way, they can worry about the important stuff, which is the response aspect."

16.   "I try to lead by how I act. So, I try to lead by throwing in and working alongside my teams; I try to lead with empathy, understanding, asking questions, and not trying to be a jerk, although I have also had my share of being a jerk. But I try to live by the golden rule of treatment: treat one as you want to be treated from that perspective."

17.   "If you have, like I said earlier, with someone who's personally motivated, then, most likely, regardless of how good their ideas are, when you tell them an

outcome, you're going to get the spark of a thought of how to do it. And that's exactly what you want on your team. I think you want the innovative person, the engineer, the creator, who's motivated, and whatever you're trying to accomplish."

18.　　"You need to give him enough rope to run with things so they can grow in upload and do your job right. At the same time, you need to be there when they are about to hang themselves, and I would prevent them from leaving themselves so that I would do it. That is what I somewhat oversee, and I can make sure the things you can help operate."

19.　　"At that point, the only request or ask I would have been to keep me in the loop and bring it back to me, not so much as a reporting mechanism. But as a validation, as maybe I can add something to it, I can shift gears, maybe the knowledge that I have, at the macro level knowledge of the situation, knowledge of the project manager, the people knowledge at the head of the organization, may bring a different lens to it. And so, in that sense, I would like to be kept in the loop for validation instead of anything that is controlling."

20.　　"I am very comfortable with its autonomy. I am not comfortable with the bat black box. So that doesn't mean it is because of trust. Although, you see, at a very macro level, it is trust, I don't think it is. I don't think of it as trust. So, what I would ask of you is your path. This just helped me stay in the loop. Let's agree on something. Maybe it's once in two weeks, you shoot me an email and say nothing has happened. You might shoot me in a loop the next two weeks and, say, three bullet points. ABC done. That is all I need to know."

21.   "What I generally do is try to teach juniors as much as I can, you know, so that I can speed up their growth; I do not want them to, like, grow at a natural, normal pace, okay, whatever you are learning on your struggles, do it that way. If I can work as a catalyst and speed up that process."

22.   "Some folks have worked with me for ten-plus years. They know what I am thinking before I am even thinking it right. So, in those instances, I don't need to micromanage. I trust them, and trust is something to be earned. It's not just given, right? So, in those instances, it may be more of a Hey, big picture, this is what we are trying to achieve. I have got some ideas. I will share, execute, and deliver those ideas, right? And come back to me if you have questions."

23.   "I am also not the type of leader to say, here is my vision; go figure it out. And I walk away. Because, as a leader, I deal with clients regularly, right? And if something goes wrong, they will look to me as in charge, right? So, I have to be responsible. Right. And I have to be engaged and involved. And candidly, if I was just, here is the vision, do it yourself. I am not being a good leader, right?"

Theme 2: Discrepancy in Leadership Self-Perception

24.   "Am I a good leader? Am I a bad leader? Do they like me? Which [if] they liked me or not, I don't care as long as we get the job done."

25.   "They would see me as empowering; I think they would see me as a partner who provides, hopefully, great experience and knowledge."

26.   "I think I am a good leader generally. I have had way more good feedback than bad feedback."

27.   "I strive to be approachable and supportive, but I wonder if my drive for results makes them feel pressured."

28.   "Where I fall as a leader is I don't delegate well... that is a challenge for me."

29.   "I have a good knack for scanning people... whether or not I am going to get along with them."

30.   "I have always seen myself as someone who leads by example, but I have had feedback that sometimes I need to be more vocal."

31.   "I understand quickly... so people need to be able to keep up with my speed."

32.   "I think I am someone that likes to give many people opportunities... to build that wider network of trust."

33.   "It's not based on years of experience; an individual's title is based on whether it is trust-built."

34.   "But if I count the past ten years, I don't know if it is like gender or whatever, but my nature, everyone has said that she is way too open. She is not diplomatic. We need that and a leader. You know, she should not be too open about these with her bodies or with her counselees."

35.   "I think early on in my career, I was not the best leader. I was more of a manager managing resources but didn't have much trust in my team. So, there are many things still as an individual. So now I think I can, you know, develop the

folks that I lead. And I would say I always have a lot of room for growth. But I do feel like I am a much better leader than I was before."

36. "If somebody needs to learn to delegate, I am the wrong person to teach."

37. "I've interviewed with companies, and they had interviewed people with 20 years of experience, 22 years of experience, and I still performing better than them, you know, so it's not really about the number of years I have worked in my career."

Theme 3: Aspirations Versus Transactional Realities

38. "I aim for transformational leadership, fostering innovation and growth."

39. "I intentionally let people see that there are going to be hard conversations, hard decisions that need to be made."

40. "I endeavor to inspire and motivate, but tight deadlines sometimes demand a more directive approach."

41. "So, I think that from a natural leadership perspective, I am a good leader because I'm empathetic to what is going on in people's lives, rather than just being that, they will say, straight dictator."

42. "With another team doing this for two years, I have stepped away altogether because I trust them."

43. "I am very controlling regarding my projects and clients because the team's performance is directly related to my reputation with the client."

44.   "Let us say there is a situation where I am uncomfortable dealing with the fact that a manager believes they are ready to be a director. And I do not think they are ready. I would say it very clearly."

45.   "I aspire to build a legacy of impactful leadership."

46.   "I want to see my team grow and excel and be part of that."

47.   "Sometimes I will drag it to the point it reaches its natural conclusion; maybe the form will say, this year, we are only promoting five managers, and therefore, you don't cut."

48.   "I try to say that very clearly. But there may be situations where I am on the fence; I am not sure."

49.   "At the end of the day, there is the need to meet client expectations efficiently."

50.   "I had to tell him that based on the timelines, we are supposed to have these conversations..."

51.   "I like to do it because I want to be more autonomous, away from this transactional leadership, and talk the big picture."

52.   "You need to be able to folks let try and fail and then ill and then pick them up and say Hey where do we how do we have the missteps learn from that how do we build that knowledge based on new roller decks this and then how do you shoot that with others."

53.   "I have always treated myself as positive because if you come with positivity, you build people up. If you want to have a toxic environment, just start beating people down to the ground that never gave me a chance to breathe."

54.   "So, to give you an example, we are on fire week engagement right now. And it has my client's executive team's oversight. This means the executives talk to us every single day to see how we're doing and how we're progressing. I have to be extremely transactional and surely perspective my team, because it is a short engagement. And they just need that structure."

Dimension Two: Navigating Context and Innovation

Theme 1: Contextual Flexibility in Autonomy

1.   "It is participative. I seek feedback and input. And I try to keep it diverse, right? For if I have too many males I'm speaking with, I try to get, you know, female or to writers just more insights because I - That is my leadership style is to get inputs from a diverse variety as much as possible during a business environment may not be 100% adhering to it. That is my principle. That is my leadership style."

2.   "If you do not give high marks on the method set, innovation will not exist. So, I felt that if you're going to let the team not work on the way or let the team look into the different kinds of methods to working. It will be less of an innovation, and there will be no thought leadership."

3.   "I can see it now. I can see you're either not executing, or I can hear that you ask the question, same question that you did two days ago, which is, I will

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say, for better or for worse, I will say a good trade that I have is I remember a lot of what I said or the direction that we have set. And so, assuming that I haven't missed anything in those couple of days, why are we still talking about this, like we should be here by now."

4.   "If something is not risky, for example, right, I will let somebody go right because at the end of the day, you learn through doing; I'll give you some feedback, I'll give you some ideas, vision, but then you have to be able to carry it through, I would say to you, I probably spend more time with people that are in the first five or six years of their career, because that's the foundational part of their career. And I will tell you, making that investment upfront has proved dividends later on."

5.   "So in the context of that, which I am sure you appreciate in the context of that, I lean in a lot on the schedule autonomy, so telling my people when they can work and other people on my team that like to start early and wrap up early, right like start at eight o'clock their local time be done by for some have kids, some multiple kids are single, but they are more restrictive schedules and frankly, people with kids, right? That is how they like to be. They would rather not be bothered after 430 Or five o'clock, and you know, and I can feel that, right?"

6.   "...when it doesn't match the type of leadership, the individual needs, or what they want, I can become a different type of leader."

7.   "My style changes depending on the type of team I work with."

8.	"It is not based on years of experience or an individual's title but on whether trust has been built, right? So, I think I like to give many opportunities."

9.	"The role matters depending on the role and how much you are costing. It is not getting done unless I handhold it."

10.	"My intention behind being a chameleon... is to give those people what they need in the style they need it so that they feel they have autonomy."

11.	"The ideal state is autonomy. However, autonomy functions as a trust mechanism. Then, trust becomes a function of your record of capability, performance outcomes, and all those things. So, for me, it is a pattern that's not necessarily linear […] I believe autonomous team members, or whatever it is, are where you want to aim."

12.	"I don't care what time they come in or what time they go to the gym or if they hang out with people; there are no restrictions. I know I can trust them. The work is going to be done, and they have that visibility and flexibility to come and tell me, 'From three o'clock to six o'clock, I have some personal engagement. I don't care, but I will make sure that work is getting done."

13.	"There is no perfect recipe for managing day-to-day and prioritizing people; it almost becomes who is the loudest on that given day. Who needs your support more than others? Who can wait a little extra for the support because you know their deadline is not necessarily immediate?"

14.	"I have no style of my own, or that I am wishy-washy in my approach to leadership; the decisions to change who I am are very intentional."

15. "People have different learning and leading styles... It is important to try to put those, like, how do you know the difference?"

16. "Autonomy is highly dependent on the specific demands of a project, client needs, and individual roles, necessitating a leadership approach sensitive to these varying circumstances."

17. "...if they need access to structure and systems, they need direct guidance..."

18. "...I will be whatever I can surmise that person needs."

19. "I am always thinking about my leadership style... if I see that some individuals need extra attention or need to be micromanaged, I will adjust my leadership position accordingly."

20. "Interesting; I like this train of thought, right? There is autonomy, but then there is also culture."

21. "One thing I want to keep true for myself is that irrespective of your designation and what things you know, each person has an individual character, right? So, I go in with respecting that individual character,"

22. "Well, generally, it is something that, in some ways, can be identified pretty early in working with somebody, giving them an assignment and doing some upfront coaching and saying, here is where you need to go. And then, even within a day or two, I will check in with them and see where they are. I look for that initial reaction of having them report what happened. So, if it is a longer-term project, you know, it may be an hour or two later versus a day or two, depending

on the nature of the project. But where it could be, maybe a month later, right? It depends on what it is. But when I check back, I always try to listen and just let them provide an update on what they have. I am listening for what they have discovered and learned, but mainly for their reaction, body language, and how they talk about where they have gone. Ask some follow-up questions to figure out if they are lost. Are they spinning a little bit? Are they feeling overwhelmed? Or are they feeling confident? Are they feeling overly confident? Just try to judge where they are with the process to see if, you know, they have, like, I have got this; this is within my wheelhouse. And I am moving it forward."

23. "I am very direct with tasks. And I'm very specific with the task. Suppose I know that the person I'm assigning that test to doesn't understand it or has that background, or they are transparent about not having that background. In that case, I provide those resources and become hands-off, but I closely supervise and check in with them throughout."

24. "If I know that somebody has done that task before, I have taught that certain thing to them, then I kind of just hand off a task directly with the feedback on the task, and let them run with it, and then have just kind of more infrequent check-ins."

25. "So, as far as autonomy goes, it depends. I never would like to say it depends, but it also depends on the individual. I don't think one person needs one specific leadership style; you have to be able to pivot as a leader and understand the person you are managing and leading and their needs specifically."

26.   "One of the things I have realized through my career is that different people tend to need different motivations but kind of come up with a habit of treating people differently."

27.   "Some people, I think, thrive in situations where they are just giving free rein."

28.   "It is like, hey, we need to accomplish this. They are like, great, I got it. And then you know they will give you the right answer and the structure you want within the next day or two."

29.   "Some people, I think, need very clear guidance and direction around what specifically you are looking for,"

30.   "I think others need a lot of coaching and explanation."

31.   "But it varies depending on who you work with."

32.   "So, I think one of the things I learned throughout my career is just trying to understand those differences and how to get the most out of people."

33.   "Well, I try to leave like my leaders leaving where they trust Him, trust me to my own devices, know what I need to do, but ask for guidance where appropriate. So, I also try to instill that in my people; when I give them a task, what they need to accomplish and how they do that, I leave it up to them. They come to me, but I will treat people like that by default if some individuals need extra attention or need to be micromanaged. I would adjust my leadership position accordingly."

34.   "As each new leader, I always think about my leadership style. I have realized that I am probably overly involved with my team, which could border on micromanaging without reading over their shoulder every email they send out. I like to tell the team less consistently what needs to be done, so I don't trust them to do it. Or so if I don't keep telling them, I'll forget. So, it kind of keeps me accountable as well."

35.   "From an emotional IQ standpoint, it is really important to know the other person and whether they can oscillate with you, whether they are a subject matter expert and stay at that level, or whatnot."

36.   "If I know these people, I worked with them before, and they have gotten the job done, and they are accountable...then I know I think those are the people I need to give autonomy to. But if I am working with somebody new, I need to be much more involved."

37.   "I have another team working for me doing this for two years. And I have stepped away altogether because I trust them. They've been doing this. I don't think they call me when they need me."

38.   "And I'm using the word try here because you asked me from principles, not skills. Also, in terms of my principle, I think, if I would, I would try to provide teams with the outcomes that I am looking for, including the impact of the work, what sort of impact the work should have, how long maybe it would take to do the quality level that I am expecting. Then, I would provide as much help as possible to shift into a supportive role where I provide guidance. You

know, unblocking things and allowing the team and individuals to figure out the outputs themselves."

39.   "Ways I don't care as long as the outcome of the forensics is the same, right?"

40.   "And if that's what we are talking about, the autonomy I give you, as a leader, you will tend to enjoy fully and sort of marinate in it because it is your topic, you know, what you're doing, you're in it."

41.   "So only ever given that the work is done on time, and within the extracted budget, and I think that is the only requirement I have, and with the right accuracy, because we do not want to end up in a situation where they did something and time is gone, the budget has gone, and then the work is not accurate, right."

Theme 2: Autonomy as a Catalyst for Innovation

42.   "So, when I was spinning up the Cloud team, I wouldn't be. I was also part of security, which was part of my remit as well. So, kind of folks that work with me on work, pay, and then play security learn. And once that was off my plate, they continued to work and prosper in that field. So, some folks you don't see or have not incubated that idea of God, the team started, and now they're self-sufficient."

43.   "Trying to give them this safe space, what I call a safe spot, right? If you don't, you don't have the safe space to feel like you can be heard, which I've seen happen to people who just shut down. And it is like whether they have the idea or

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not. That idea is now trapped. And it's probably the worst situation because you are trapped by the idea of being trapped by the person who is disenchanted. Now you have lost some of the additional horsepower you are looking for, not just on thinking, but just on energy, to be able to go and get stuff done."

44.   "I would say super, super high. That is one of my key things, like, I will let them choose. Try it out. If it is not working, let's say x fades out, and they will go back and try a different method. But that's super high. I will give the team full freedom. The method was a super high one."

45.   "And a lot of people will not take that initiative simply because they do not know who to go talk to. Right. So, my job as a leader is to help facilitate those introductions so they can reach out to others. And they can, you know, push themselves, right."

46.   "They are in their natural element when they get to decide […] there is a frequency that goes out and hits a tuning fork, which might resonate in a way that comes back. It is when I know they are leaning beyond the risk that they understand or when people with experience that I respect […] affirm, 'I get where you are going.' But, you know, there are things you did not know about; here is the risk around that. That is pulling back, right? Not everyone is afforded that latitude."

47.   "…they have the freedom to articulate their thoughts. Those are moments that I have observed working well for me."

48.   "I like to empower my team... letting people grow, letting people be creative."

49.   "People feel that they have skin in the game when it comes to creating it, and not just like, I am doing someone else's bidding."

50.   "I like to empower my people... give them the freedom to execute their tasks as they see fit while I handle the broader strategic issues."

51.   "If you have […] someone who is personally motivated, then, most likely, regardless of how good their ideas are, when you tell them an outcome, you will get the spark of thought of how to do it. That is exactly what you want on your team. In my opinion, you want the innovative person, the engineer, the creator, who is motivated, and whatever you are trying to accomplish. […] because again, if it is your idea, you are going to go for it, right, you are going to put your heart and soul into things because it is your idea, then you got to watch out there is that people do not fall in love with their ideas."

52.   "Innovation will be stifled if you do not offer substantial method autonomy. So, I have realized that if you don't allow the team to work in their way or encourage them to explore various methods, it results in diminished innovation and a lack of thought leadership."

53.   "My leadership style is all about enabling the team to perform at their best by removing obstacles and providing support."

54.   "…across my career, I have truly seen that when people are given a long leash, if you will, and provided with the opportunity and empowerment, […] that is when we harvest the best ideas."

55.   "I provide direction and let them figure out how to get there, which fosters innovation and accountability."

56.   "Autonomy means being able to do what I want and inspiring my team to take initiatives on their own."

57.   "I provide the framework; they fill in the gaps with their creativity and skills."

58.   "I like to empower my team to grow, take leadership, and feel ownership."

59.   "And that is, that was a very uncomfortable journey early on. And it is something that I embrace, and I love the ambiguity of the situation, as it just watched people surprise you. I am seeing this play out every day with AI and how the firm is leaning into this, and there is a natural inclination to want to take control over an area that's so much risk. And it is awesome to watch people surprise you and come about problems in a way that you would never have thought about."

60.   "So, it is up to the individual to decide. I do not force anything because if you force it, that is what I exact was. The way I gave before just doesn't work; it just does. Not what you are doing is saying don't think it is still right. Let us upset spray if you are Maverick. Can you guarantee that you are in the real world? It is

more of a go. Try to figure out what you do, and then we will check in when you like it."

61.   "So, it is a bit of a gambit because you have got to let go of the reins to let someone else take it over. And that is where the guidance comes in."

62.   "Curiosity to constantly be burning to push themselves pushing the envelope."

63.   "And if there is a new way, teach me also, you know, so,"

Dimension Three: Understanding and Mitigating Neglect

Theme 1: Workload and External Pressures as Precursors to Neglect

1.   "And then he told me about all these things he felt. And I know he had performance issues. As a performance issue of being positive like crazy, people did not respect him as much, right? But I did not realize that was as bad as he felt because I did not subject him to those micro-inequities. But he got to the point where he had a job offer and left less to keep in touch with him, but I felt bad. Like I told him, I know you have a better job offer. It is an industry; why would you want to continue? But I wish I knew that I would have felt better if I had at least tried."

2.   "And so, I think there have been a couple of times in my career where I am on the verge of burnout because I am helping too much, and you end up neglecting other people within the team."

3.   "Where I struggled was when they were on the page, and you gave them internal projects, right? When you assign them like Stripe, strategic initiatives, or

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some other internal projects, I struggled with checking whether they are working or not, how efficiently they are working, or if they are even interested in working in this right."

4.   "The more I can rely on a person, the more work I will give them. And I always feel like they will be too afraid to tell me they are too overwhelmed."

5.   "So, the last few weeks were hectic, and I connect with my counselees every couple of weeks or so. The last time I connected with them [...], we talked about them having access to this tool [...], And I had it in my mind to help secure that access, right? But until yesterday, it had not crossed my mind. I was so busy that it kept slipping."

6.   "I fear I will give these people so much autonomy. And then they will just be upset and feel alone on an island."

7.   "I am very controlling when it comes to... making sure that quality is up to my standard."

8.   "…facing an overwhelming situation with my parent, grappling with a personal challenge […] it was hard for me to be there for the team."

9.   "Not too much autonomy? Not attentive? Maybe the perception of not being attentive enough has been a comment."

10.   "Some folks may find me as someone who does not give enough direction, right? I just kind of give them high-level pointers and then disappear. Some people may find that frustrating. Some may find it motivating."

11.   "More so in two ways: I am either too busy and do not have the time to help with it, or it is a piece of work I don't care about."

12.   "I had to neglect him. Because I was so busy. And I was like, Yeah, I am because I don't want to tell the person I am telling you to do this. Do this. Yeah. So, I kind of backed out. When you have that self-doubt of your leadership, ideology, and the role that you want to play, you have to neglect that sometimes you cannot give your 100%, or you know, you would rather neglect the person than give them the wrong advice."

13.   "There are times where we have done that. And I have noticed a lot of great word products. And the team thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. And I was like, huh, and the client, right? Ignorance and neglect on my part."

14.   "And where I am based. I am running around a client all day, right? So I am, you know, less interactive on some days than others, right? I am home today. So it is easier. On Monday, I had to go to the city. And it was impossible to get a hold of me that day. So, you know, I have to prioritize. And I must make conscious decisions that certain things are not as important weekly. And that is a conscious decision."

15.   "Let us see, over a week just to deal with the feeling that I am out of the office. I am part of it. Being half of the office during a real personal family crisis, you must show respect to your spouse and family members. I am off my phone. I

think that is kind of the only circumstance I can take away. I felt like I neglected people."

16.   "But it is the least of my priorities, and I do not have enough time to deal with it. So, I just say go deal with it. Tell me when it is done. Or do not tell me when it is done. I don't care."

17.   "So, I always do that health check just to make sure, like, hey, or do you have a covered? Or do you need help? Give them that lifelong. But you like that wine is at the point where I am starting to feel guilty?"

18.   "And I do not want to be a lazy leader. I call that a lazy leader where I have to do this proposal. Oh, you have to do this proposal. Like I am not going just to push it downhill."

19.   "But one thing I'm finding is that as I delegate more and more, the guilt gets bigger and bigger. I am just talking to people and doing things I don't want. But they are things I should not be doing anyway, and I know that, but the guilt is still there. All I want to do is burden someone, overload them with work, and make them miserable."

20.   "So, either I will do all the work and be miserable or disperse the work to the team and feel guilty. And I think the biggest part of the guilt is that I will have three people under me on this project and get all the work to one. But I know that one person can handle it, and we will do it, and it will be right. Or will they be given to any of the other ones? It is not going to be wrong. I am going to have to do it anyway. So that is, I think, where the guilt conflicts."

21.   "Depending on which team I engage with, and if I am transactional, they probably [do] not see me as autonomous at all."

22.   "That is like a nightmare. Because usually, people other people have to take a pick on extra work right to make sure things are done."

23.   "And I would say often over-communicating is not over-communicating. Some people may find that annoying, but I am. It is another principle of mine that, and I think it aligns with everything I have talked about, that everybody needs to be very informed, right? And if you are on my team, especially if you are sort of a project manager role, and your job was to make kind of sure your clock is, you know, for you as the clock is ticking, and that is going to be the one thing that I am going to be very persistent on that there is lots of clear information, lots of visibility, about sort of where we are, what is going on, and what everybody should be doing."

24.   "Needs to be terminated because we did not want to lose the senior manager, and the senior manager was more valuable to the practice."

25.   "Are there situations where I did not pay attention to a person's problem? Absolutely, yes. It happens all the time you get distracted; you do what has you."

Theme 2: Mitigating Neglect through Personal Connections

26.   "I mean, they treat me well. I always treat them well."

27.   "Every month, we have a standing meeting with my counselee, where we just talk about what is happening in their life."

28.   "It is very common for me to ping people in the middle of the day just to say, 'Hey, how is it going?'

29.   "The second thing is I have the time even if they call me at midnight and ask for help. I am there for them. Once that scenario happened, a woman member of my team called me at 2 am because she had real issues. We need to fix it. Always available. So that is one of the things I saw. I put myself in the shoes and think timely help is important."

30.   "And sometimes it is about getting on the phone and not speaking. Like, okay, you wanted to talk to me. What is going on? And you give them the floor. To come back. And have the dialogue and the discussion. And then you listen. And you maybe share views? Like, well, have you thought about this? Have you thought about that? Whatever. So, it is not necessarily like you are giving them the answer. You are giving them ideas and parameters. So, they could conclude themselves, getting them there, but you are doing it differently in a different way. In a non-so direct, you have done something wrong. This is more of a matter of okay. I hear you take a breath. Clients are crazy, I get it, right? So, what can we do differently? Right? How do we approach it? What are your thoughts? People want to feel like they are heard, and people want to feel like they are included. And I honestly have to say I have had to learn how to do that."

31.   "I tried to actively combat that [perceived indifference] by having other meaningful interactions with them."

32.   "I keep regular tabs through informal check-ins. This helps ensure they do not feel neglected even when given autonomy."

33.   "Ensuring visibility in their work and providing timely feedback is key to preventing feelings of neglect."

34.   "I ping them every Monday right before our staffing call, and then I ask them, Hey, have you been staffed?"

35.   "I want to be that hidden parachute... not a big, bloated balloon or like, you know, a bed that you can jump on me."

36.   "Even though I advocate for autonomy, I am very involved in ensuring that no one feels overlooked or neglected."

37.   "It is our job to pull the oar like everybody else."

38.   "It is important to maintain a balance so the team does not feel overlooked even if they work independently."

39.   "It is a fine line to walk – being hands-off enough to empower but engaged enough so people do not feel ignored."

40.   "Neglecting just does not help individuals grow... That allows me to step back a lot. Perceived neglect is more like, you got this covered."

41.   "When I check back, I always try to listen... mainly for their reaction, body language, and how they talk about where they have gone."

42.   "You step away, never check in; that is neglect."

43.   "Neglect for me is when there is no visibility or communication until things have gone wrong."

44.   "I feel like maybe I can do a good job now to jump in and say, hey, it has been three weeks, or we have not spoken. How are you doing? So, I feel like maybe I do not want to allow them to come back and say, yeah, I was drowning, and you were there for me. Right? So, I do not want them to have the feeling or, you know, just be by themselves and nobody to talk to. So yeah, that is happening with two counselors right now. So that makes me worried a little bit."

45.   "Um, I have; one is going on PTO, but then I have sessions scheduled the week after the 13th. Just quick conversations, you know, 30-minute conversations with both and then to see how they are doing what I can do. To help them or if they need to switch their priorities, you know, or like, allocate different criteria."

46.   "I did apologize and say, Look, I am sorry, that that, you know, the check-in was so far away that you had this frustration bill, but then I did put it back to them and said, Look, I had no idea that you were spinning, I had trusted you to run a run up run with this. And let me know if there were questions and you did not, and let this build in the meantime."

47.   "Once I work with somebody long enough, we can usually figure that cadence out. But sometimes, I default to giving people more time out for me. And then I think that most people appreciate that. And sometimes it backfires because we are still figuring out how to work together."

48.   "But I have perceived myself as having not checked in frequently enough, especially with more junior resources who may not have been well equipped with

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their needs. So, I think there is always room for opportunity, just like anything else—I mentioned this before. I don't think it is possible to be a perfect leader."

49.   "And if you have that communication, and you can, at the lower level, provide that upward feedback and not feel like you are going to get any negative repercussions, then that is what is important to me."

50.   "For me, building that more personal connection I have seen lets people feel free to reach out and not be as afraid to reach out. I do not know that. I believe people should not be afraid to reach out to colleagues. But I know that is not true. And so, for me, this is a way to give them room to feel free to call me or reach out and say, "Hey, stop being a jerk; I need your help."

51.   "I, with my day-to-day teams, just try to show up and be there. Try not to miss too many status meetings, internal status meetings, and things like that. And I will probably tell you I have seen this: I like to tell stories and ask questions about people's lives. I like to make it like it is. I like to build more relationships, even though it is intentionally virtual. Some people may get annoyed and say, I have my 30 minutes. I just want to be done. But I feel like we need that interpersonal interaction. So now that it is on teams, I am just going to force it, and people have to listen to me or hang up a little bit."

52.   "I have worked with partners who just say bye, and it is like, hey, do you want to know how it went, or should I ask you for a bill? This is infuriating, so I sit as a leader and always try to return calls and messages from people the child

asks for support because I know how frustrating it can be, right? The most you ever get is an eight-second phone call. It is interesting."

53.   "Like many useless correspondence meetings, just a time waster people out. It is just keeping in touch, building trust with people, and letting him know it is like, hey, he is like you can ask me questions. I will not judge anything like that. Just keep the conversation going."

54.   "But I also have learned that with remote, it is much more important to have patience and develop that relationship over time. And to get people to know you through their observations of indirect actions, your decisions, and they come to trust you."

55.   "And so those are lifelong friendships now. And we work hard to force that. So, are we communicating, being very unselfish in the relationship, and trying to elicit information about them, what makes them tick, what their interests are, and what their family is, like, you know, all these different things? And when people lose a loved one, it is, it is sufficient to say, I am sorry for you, and were approved for you, or something else. But I tried to find a way to send them a Grub Hub certificate; you know, where I grew up, you took food to people's houses when they have lost a loved one."

56.   "And to profess a little bit of humility right now, something I am not happy with is that I have not connected as much with the people on a particular team. And they are working shift work. And I am making an effort to do that now."

57.   "It is, you know, this might be inappropriate, but you know, when they say when a kid is when he cannot hear a kid in the next room, that is when you should go check; hold on, right? If I am not hearing from somebody, or if I am not hearing about them from other people, that is when I am worried about someone. And I specifically go hunt them out. And, hey, what is going on? How are you doing? You know, so many times, I found that performance issues are less about their talent than just the person going through something hard and life outside of work."

58.   "Because if you build somebody up from within themselves and earn their trust, they will run with it. They will run with it. Those are the those of the Gog getters. Those are the kick-ass people, you know; the thug hires kickers, you know; that is really what I am looking to build for everyone."

59.   "Um, even if somebody is not performing well or not doing something well, I am always trying to motivate them to do better. So, I can't sometimes sleep until 1 pm because I am like, how did they not like get it? Right? And why did they not tell me? We are like; I do not know; I feel extremely passionate about everybody. And that's kind of frustrating because I cannot be indifferent. I always want them to be the best and do the best, and if they don't, that bothers me."

60.   "I remember my test lead, which I felt was getting neglected because we struggled to reach the test phase. But she was working on it. Laying out test scripts and test data and having it already in the test environment is the preliminary phase. And I remember she told me after I had supported on a number

of things, and she just said, she complimented me, she said, there is not a thing in this project that you cannot do as well as the lead."

61.   "very much a human empathetic approach because your management by walking around so you wander round and it will be put tubes and ask how they are doing I'll depend and on you isn't what they do this weekend or that's alright obviously that's a change in the virtual environment, but my style is more likely to note individual folks like who they are war I'm where they want to well go as um what you'll they want to personally do professionally what as is their family are situation kids situation there if they have kids you know have here 0 alternations."

62.   "So, some of the back of my head also is the confidence that if this is like if shit hits the fan, this person will call me, and we will have a conversation or two days later when I am in a better mind space; I may call the person and just talk it through. Do not say I don't know that I may be overconfident. But I don't know. I just don't feel like my indifference. I hope not. Maybe I'm delusional that my perceived indifference has been so palpable that somebody feels like this guy is an asset."

63.   "But yeah, I do feel good that all the people I work with have a genuine relationship, and maybe I'm doing things to attract those 10 or 20 people. I would rather do things that attract 1000. That's not my brand. That's just not me. Like, I mean, I have been saying things that I do not intend to do, like, I have no intention of coming and seeing someone and attracting them, just because it gives me more power. So, I am improving myself with the people I interact with."

Theme 3: Specialized Skills and Risk of Isolation

64.   "I work with specialists [...], and there are certain decisions they can take by themselves and lead. And if at all there is a mistake, there is no need to do a course correction or step in. They know their responsibilities, act similarly, and move further along the goal."

65.   "I work with people who know what they are doing, so they are under the radar […] I don't need to bother them."

66.   "And you know, certain people do not even need me to be there and be like a harness. They are like, hey, yeah, I am going to do this on his own, and they are doing well. Although I check in with them and then ask them, do you need help? And they are like, Nope, I got this."

67.   "I give free rain, and that is the implicit trust model. If you do the employer's smile, you can't be that helicopter dad constantly coming in and saying you must do this. It is very micromanaged, and it is all right; I hate micromanagers."

Dimension Four: Perceived Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments

Theme 1: Illusion of Autonomy Amidst Workload Pressures

1.   "I know folks who are over-utilized and are not getting much time for their personal life or the things they want to grow. So, they would not want it more. But some folks are getting more time to do those personal things and are not very utilized. And for them, it should be less, so it is. It is more like conditional time versus a straight answer for everyone."

2.   "I'm a New Yorker; I'm very direct to the point, set in my ways, and know how I want things done. At this point in my career, I do not care what steps they take to get to the end game as long as the end game is in the realm of my vision, right? And the vision of the client, right? And it is a healthy environment and safe environment for folks to be able to work towards."

3.   "I had a team member of mine that just expected to go get it done and get it working early in my career, from a manager perspective. Two months later, I circled back with him like I had not done anything with it; it is still over there boxed up. And so, it was a good example, I will say, neglecting to set the direction of what needs to get done even though I had the wherewithal to do what I thought was right. I did not have the follow-through to ensure that the team was executing on utilizing this equipment rather than just being a $5 million boat anchor."

4.   "With autonomy comes responsibility. And do we each have to be responsible? Like I tell my teams, I am okay if you do not make a deadline. Just don't wait until the day that something is due to tell me you won't make a deadline. Get to me in advance, let me know. And let me know why we might not make a deadline because then maybe we can collectively talk through it. Do we need to do something differently? Do we need to add resources? Do we need to go back and talk to the client? And it's okay. There are many options, and we can do many different things, so it is all right. But we have to be able to communicate and communicate early."

5.   "Change how you give autonomy based on trust."

6.   "There is another limit to autonomy. In certain areas, people do not have choices; we do not have full autonomy in our lives."

7.   "Providing them with the opportunity to innovate while meeting client expectations."

8.   "Autonomy is about making decisions... how I get my job done."

9.   "Autonomy for me is...inspire my team to take initiatives on their own."

10.   "I think they believed they had a lot of autonomy around [goals] because I think in the project-based environment that we work in, we have to set the goals that we need to achieve to satisfy the contractual requirements."

11.   "If you are motivated, you are not trying to minimize your energy; you will do extra stuff. You want to learn, and you have the desire to create something new. If you are not into it, you will try to use your existing resources, minimize your work, and get onto something you are motivated to fight about."

12.   "If you give someone autonomy in an area where they cannot make a choice, you are not giving them autonomy at all."

13.   " Because other things are going to be made for them, then you just have to draw a line in the sand and play the game that other priorities were playing."

14.   "If you do not make your requirement or task hot, with consequences, you know, with some kind of deadline and urgency, then you are kidding yourself; if you think you are giving them autonomy, you are not. They will just plug that into what they must do next and never make it."

15.   "The ideal state is autonomy. But autonomy is a function, and I would say it is a function of trust."

16.   "Capability, performance outcomes, all those things. So, to me, it is a very, like, not necessarily linear pattern because you can have kind of can go back, some thinking gets remediated, and then, you know, trust gets returned. But"

17.   "I think autonomous team members, or whatever it is, is where you want to get to know. I am still defining that as the team would still come together despite people operating autonomously, but would still come together to collaborate, compare this, that, and the other thing."

18.   "The autonomous team member can execute as a function of being trusted."

19.   "I have been raised personally and professionally to be very checklist and whatever-oriented, but I have found it hard to put that on everyone. So, I like that there needs to be some pattern and structure. And then within the confines of that structure, I will allow more autonomy in some instances than less based on trust."

20.   "There needs to be some pattern and some structure. And then, within the confines of that structure, I will allow more autonomy in some instances than less based on trust."

21.   "I am finding, like, on my account, especially now that we are growing, and I am finding it to be harder and harder and harder to implement because we are getting way beyond grassroots efforts, which is great. But it is reaching like I

am reaching a new tier, and I realize I got to apply a different level of rigor and structure, but again, still allowing That, like, you know, in some instances people are good there stylistically is not going to subscribe to like, my way of project managing. But then there are some high-stakes interactions with clients like this and others, which I will impose because that is the right thing to do. So it is, it is a mix, I."

22.   "I am going to be autonomous and out there and just doing things, not communicating in the 11th hour. Yeah, I sold a piece or whatever; whatever the scenario is, that does not always help. Like, it doesn't it can be a good outcome but does not allow leadership's leaders to lead."

23.   "I trust the team to get it done. I am confident they will be able to do it. I am also confident that if they were frustrated by my lack of involvement, they would have told me I needed you to be here. I expect that kind of working relationship if I give you autonomy. I expect that to work both ways. If you need more of my time, I need you to tell me that. Right? And be comfortable telling me that."

24.   "And I have had that stuff, too, right? If there is a task that the client asks us about that is low priority, self-proclaimed by them, then I could provide that task and be completely hands-off."

25.   "I think if I am providing direct feedback and saying, hey, just check in with me, the out the output, or the outcome has to be a written email once a day, and I do not get a written email for three days, then yeah, I do think it is on them

completely. If it is feedback on my part, or it is not as direct, and I just kind of leave it open, leave it open, and do not say, hey, this is a specific deadline that I need this accomplished by, or this is something that you may have or should have already known. And it was just an assumption on my part, and it is my problem."

26.   "So well, they have autonomy to do it, but they do not have a full creative license to do whatever they want. You still have to set those guardrails around them because otherwise, they can go in a different direction that, you know, nobody's going to want."

27.   "So, I have somebody in mind I would consider the perfect employee, somebody who cares, tries their hardest, does the work, puts the effort in, and knows what I am looking for without having to tell."

28.   "Now that I am thinking about it, I have probably two people who can do that. And they get a lot more leeway and autonomy, so they prove themselves."

29.   "Senior Associates needs to be handheld. A million questions do not get the concept. Cannot give them full-on autonomy."

30.   "And then we can polish it together. I don't get that for this specific senior, so they do not get that autonomy. They get the Let me hold your hand; I will spoon-feed it to you. Because otherwise, it is not getting done."

31.   "That is why Rockstar associates get it. He is the person that I am going in front of the CFO; I do not care. I am checking in on him a lot. Mostly because I want to make sure he is happy. Because it is not fun work, and I do not think you

have loved it. But I need him in that role, at least for the next few months. So, I always check in on him where he probably wants me to check in a little less."

32.   "I was forced to give him autonomy because there was just too much work to be done; I could only stretch so thin, and that caused an almost project-ending disaster. So, he got absolutely zero autonomy, putting him in a corner under a new manager. And basically, you have been busy working for a month before eventually rolling up the product."

33.   "So, I give my team full schedule autonomy, no matter how well or poorly they have one. One thing that I do not have time for is micromanaging people's calendars."

34.   "I do not think anybody ever consciously gives people autonomy. I think it just kind of happens based on trust and circumstance. I never go into a project saying you will get the most autonomy. Because, like, no, you, it will be like, oh, can you handle these tasks? I am telling them to handle these tasks because I know them, and they can do it."

35.   "It became absolute scrambles to get stuffed on, but stress on me and the other leaders. But I can't think of a situation when we did not get it done right. It would have been much less stressful for the other leaders if we had probably reached out soon."

36.   "I think that what I do could be seen as neglect or could we see as autonomy each it could be seen as autonomy mate so that I would wear that line every single day, unfortunately, but I think over time what folks will say over

time folks will see if you are showing that you care showing that you care showing that you are there for them not being the helicopter dad you are going to see they will perceive it as mortal Right, but I call it tough love too right like hay if it happens wrong we are going to fix it right."

37.   "And I've not heard from them, or when I hear from them, it is not very good. And I give them another chance, and often they can deliver. He tells me, "Hey, I needed to help these people. And now I am not neglecting them because I am not trying to get them back on track." By starting to see that things are not turning out how we expected or needed it to be. That means something is wrong. And if I haven't had a chance to correct the course, I guess it becomes neglect."

38.   "So, the communication that they give me and in the sharing like something that I'm like this not what I expected it, I give them another chance and I'm just not getting it that starts to tell me like Hey, I maybe I needed to be way more involved than I thought I needed to be involved."

39.   "You know, there is another limit to autonomy: certain areas where people don't have full autonomy in their own lives. So, if you give someone autonomy in an area where they don't have the ability to make a choice, you're not giving them autonomy, it all."

40.   "So, it tells me like, okay, you know, I got to be, you know, realistic, except what it is. And, you know, this also means that my team members will, you know, grow, and their career is going to be slower than what I had envisioned, right, three or four years ago. So that is my only gripe."

41.   "Alex is, you know, is there expecting a baby, so, right, I have to be mindful, like, as much as I want him to work hard and crank up those hours. I do know that. He probably has a word on his mind as they are expecting a baby here in the next month."

42.   "For example, my delivery is like, let's say this Friday, I will have a couple of checkpoints, and by when I say the end of the day or Thursday morning, everything should be ready for us to review and get anybody's feedback if it is required. So, I would say I am less tolerant of that. But the team members, when they are working with me, some people will send emails at 2 am or 3 am; I don't care what time they have come to our time they go if they need to go to the gym if they need to go and hang out with the people, no restriction. I know I can trust them. The work is going to be done, and they have that visibility and flexibility to come and tell me from three o'clock to six o'clock. I have some personal engagement I am not going to be, but I will make sure that the work gets done."

43.   "But when I feel that there are some, for example, newcomers from a university, they will not they are more like I would say like they are more tensed about the schedule, how they are going to meet or guide them through because they do not know the state of working how the firm works, how the person works. So, then I need to probe in more and help them. We tend to be less tolerant around it like you need to guide more with multiple instances."

Appendix C: Data Structure for Dimensions & Concepts

Data structure for dimensions and themes

First Order Concepts	Second Order Concepts	Aggregate Dimensions

"I try to lead by directing towards outcomes instead of mere outputs. [...] I want the individuals I lead and the team to continue to have the room, the space, and the culture of thought authority to grow." (5)
"I try to be very direct. The joke is that you always know where you stand with me. Because I tell you, right? Because how else are you going to know?" (7)
"I have to help guide autonomy, or it gets confusing." (8)
"Validating my team and supporting is what I should be doing as a leader." (10)

→ **Leadership Validation Versus Autonomy**

"Am I a good leader? Am I a bad leader? Do they like me? Which [if] they liked me or not, I don't care as long as we get the job done." (24)
"They would see me as empowering; I think they would see me as a partner who provides, hopefully, great experience and knowledge." (25)
"I strive to be approachable and supportive, but I wonder if my drive for results makes them feel pressured." (27)
"I have always seen myself as someone who leads by example, but I have had feedback that sometimes I need to be more vocal." (30)

→ **Discrepancy in Leadership Self-Perception**

→ **Reconciling Aspirations and Realities**

"I aim for transformational leadership, fostering innovation and growth." (38)
"I endeavor to inspire and motivate, but tight deadlines sometimes demand a more directive approach." (40)
"I am very controlling regarding my projects and clients because the team's performance is directly related to my reputation with the client." (43)
"I aspire to build a legacy of impactful leadership." (45)
"I desire to see my team grow and excel and be part of that." (46)
"At the end of the day, there is the need to meet client expectations efficiently." (49)

→ **Aspirations Versus Transactional Realities**

"It is not based on years of experience or an individual's title but on whether trust has been built, right? So, I think I like to give many opportunities." (8)
"The ideal state is autonomy. However, autonomy functions as a trust mechanism. Then, trust becomes a function of your record of capability, performance outcomes, and all those things. So, for me, it is a pattern that's not necessarily linear [...] I believe autonomous team members, or whatever it is, are where you want to aim." (11)
"I don't care what time they come in or what time they go to the gym or if they hang out with people; there are no restrictions. I know I can trust them. The work is going to be done, and they have that visibility and flexibility to come and tell me. 'From three o'clock to six o'clock, I have some personal engagement. I don't care, but I will make sure that work is getting done." (12)
"There is no perfect recipe for managing day-to-day and prioritizing people; it almost becomes who is the loudest on that given day. Who needs your support more than others? Who can wait a little extra for the support because you know that their deadline is not necessarily immediate?" (13)
"Autonomy is highly dependent on the specific demands of a project, client needs, and individual roles, necessitating a leadership approach sensitive to these varying circumstances." (16)

→ **Contextual Flexibility in Autonomy**

"They are in their natural element when they get to decide [...] there is a frequency that goes out and hits a tuning fork, which might resonate in a way that comes back. It is when I know they are leaning beyond the risk that they understand or when people with experience that I respect [...] affirm, 'I get where you are going.' But, you know, there are things you did not know about; here is the risk around that. That is pulling back, right? Not everyone is afforded that latitude." (46)
"...they have the freedom to articulate their thoughts. Those are moments that I have observed working well for me." (47)
"If you have [...] someone who is personally motivated, then, most likely, regardless of how good their ideas are, when you tell them an outcome, you will get the spark of thought of how to do it. That is exactly what you want on your team. In my opinion, you want the innovative person, the engineer, the creator, who is motivated, and whatever you are trying to accomplish. [...] because again, if it is your idea, you are going to go for it, right, you are going to put your heart and soul into things because it is your idea, then you got to watch out there is that people do not fall in love with their ideas." (51)
"Innovation will be stifled if you do not offer substantial method autonomy. So, I have realized that if you don't allow the team to work in their way or encourage them to explore various methods, it results in diminished innovation and a lack of thought leadership." (52)
"...across my career, I have truly seen that when people are given a long leash, if you will, and provided with the opportunity and empowerment, [...] that is when we harvest the best ideas." (54)

→ **Autonomy as a Catalyst for Innovation**

→ **Navigating Context and Innovation**

"So, the last few weeks were hectic, and I connect with my counselees every couple of weeks or so. The last time I connected with them [...], we talked about them having access to this tool [...], And I had it in my mind to help secure that access, right? But until yesterday, it had not crossed my mind. I was so busy that it kept slipping." (5)
"...facing an overwhelming situation with my parent, grappling with a personal challenge [...] it was hard for me to be there for the team." (8)
"Some folks may find me as someone who does not give enough direction, right? I just kind of give them high-level pointers and then disappear. Some people may find that frustrating. Some may find it motivating." (10)
"More so in two ways: I am either too busy and do not have the time to help with it, or it is a piece of work I don't care about." (11)

→ **Workload and External Pressures as Precursors to Neglect**

"Every month, we have a standing meeting with my counselee, where we just talk about what is happening in their life." (27)
"It is very common for me to ping people in the middle of the day just to say, 'Hey, how is it going?' (28)

→ **Mitigating Neglect through Personal Connections**

→ **Understanding and Mitigating Neglect**

"I work with specialists [...], and there are certain decisions they can take by themselves and lead. And if at all there is a mistake, there is no need to do a course correction or step in. They know their responsibilities, act similarly, and move further along the goal." (64)
"I work with people who know what they are doing, so they are under the radar [...] I don't need to bother them." (65)

→ **Specialized Skills and Risk of Isolation**

"If you are motivated, you are not trying to minimize your energy; you will do extra stuff. You want to learn, and you have the desire to create something new. If you are not into it, you will try to use your existing resources, minimize your work, and get onto something you are motivated to fight about." (11)
"If you give someone autonomy in an area where they cannot make a choice, you are not giving them autonomy at all." (12)
"Because other things are going to be made for them, then you just have to draw a line in the sand and play the game that other priorities were playing." (13)
"If you do not make your requirement or task hot, with consequences, you know, with some kind of deadline and urgency, then you are kidding yourself; if you think you are giving them autonomy, you are not. They will just plug that into what they must do next and never make it." (14)
"You know, there's another limit to autonomy; certain areas where people don't have full autonomy in their own lives. So, if you give someone autonomy in an area where they don't have the ability to make a choice, you're not giving them autonomy, it all." (39)

→ **Illusion of Autonomy Amidst Workload Pressures**

→ **Perceived Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments**

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Appendix D: Leadership Model – LNS and Employee Autonomy

Leadership Model - LNS and Employee Autonomy

Leader Inputs

| Project demands | Individual capabilities | Established trust | Adjust level of autonomy based on context | Encourage creative freedom within boundaries | Align with organizational goals | Regular check-ins | Tailor support based on unique needs and skills | Prioritize employees amidst challenges and pressures | Recognize unique contributions | Understand each employee's role | Provide support regardless of specialization | Gauge employee workload | Provide guidance to navigate tasks | Foster substantive autonomy, not just an illusion |

Leader Process

Assess Context —Informs→ Provide Contextual Autonomy —Requires→ Personalized Engagement —Mitigates→ Address Perceived Neglect —Ensures→ Genuine Autonomy in High-Pressure Environments

Enhances

Employee Outcome

Employee Innovation and Creativity

The leadership model above is broken into the following sections. Proposition #1 is an overarching theme underlying the other dimensions and propositions. The ability to reconcile aspirations with realities, validate team efforts, and demonstrate adaptability is crucial for leaders to effectively navigate the challenges of balancing autonomy and mitigating neglect in remote work environments.
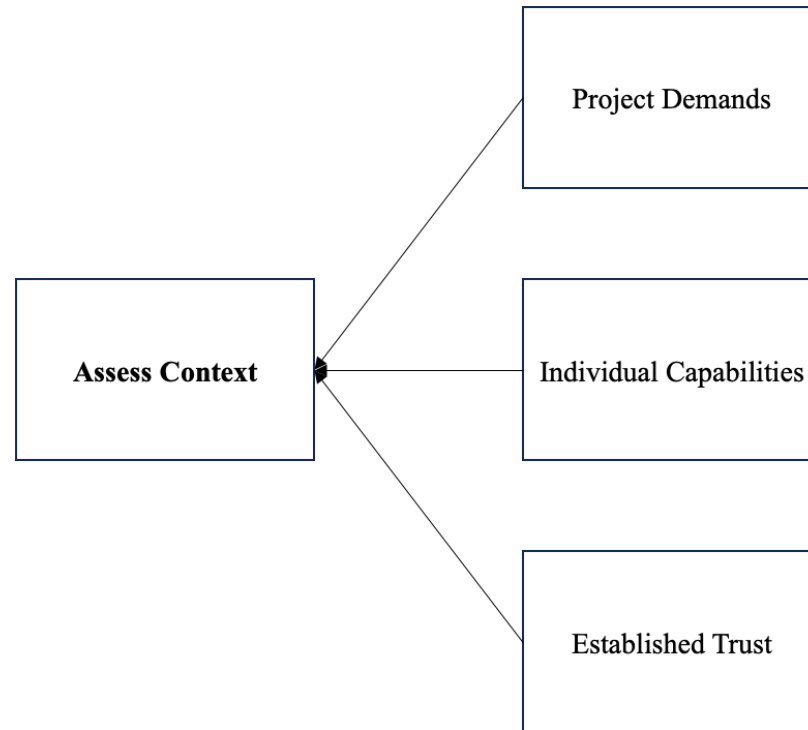
This image aligns with Proposition #2, as it focuses on factors that influence contextual flexibility in granting autonomy, such as "Project Demands," "Individual Capabilities," and "Established Trust." As stated in the proposition, these elements are crucial in determining the appropriate level of autonomy to grant.
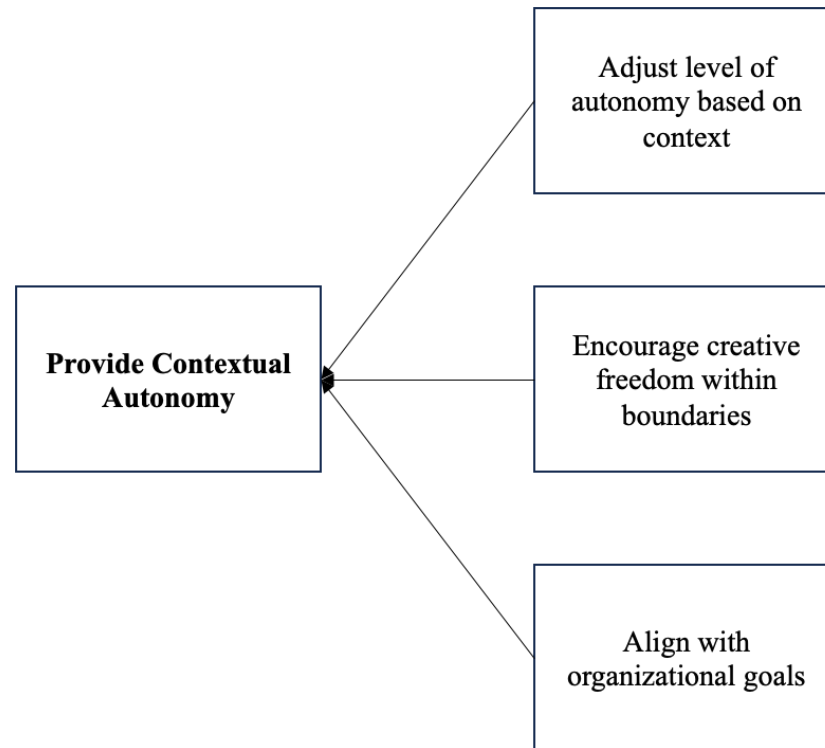
This image aligns with Proposition #2, which highlights the importance of implementing contextual flexibility in granting autonomy to enhance innovation and stimulate creative ideas from employees. The image includes elements such as "Adjust the level of autonomy based on context," "Encourage creative freedom within boundaries," and "Align with organizational goals," which are critical aspects of the proposition.
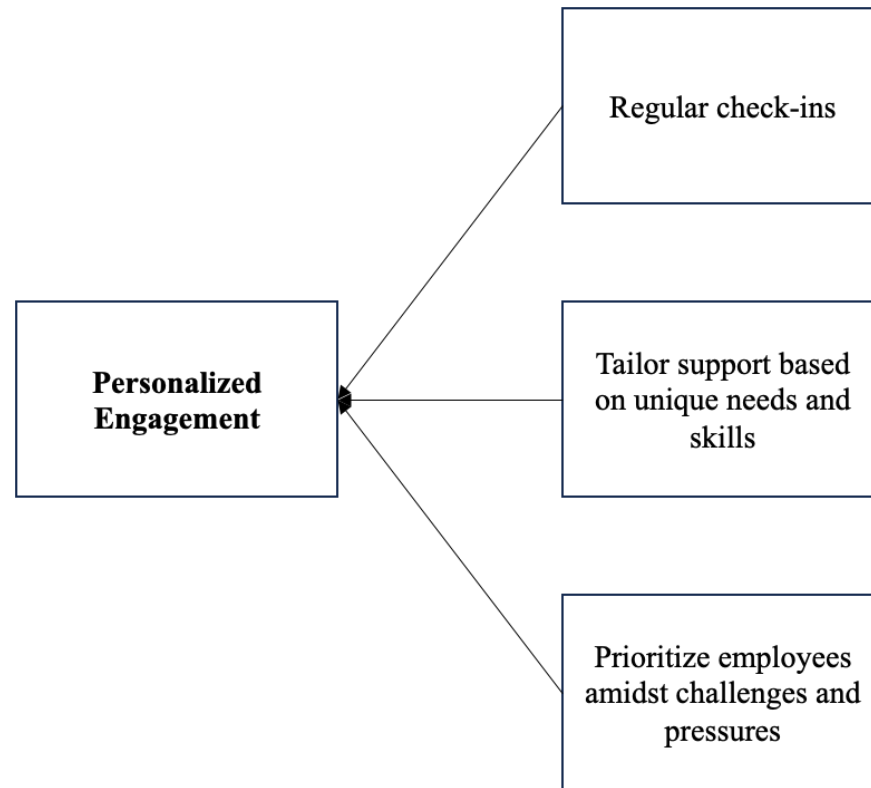
This image aligns with Proposition #3, as it focuses on strategies to mitigate neglect, such as "Regular check-ins," "Tailor support based on unique needs and skills," and "Prioritize employees amidst challenges and pressures." These elements are central to the proposition's emphasis on personalized engagement and tailored support
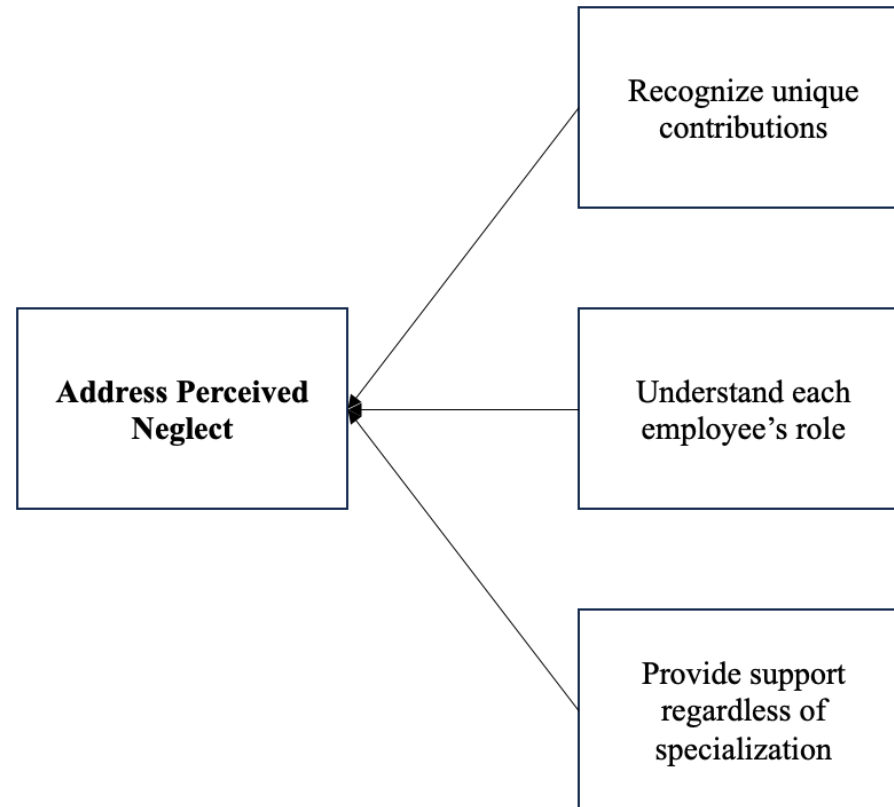
This image aligns with Proposition #3, which emphasizes the importance of cultivating personalized engagement and tailored support to mitigate the challenges of perceived neglect. The image includes elements such as "Recognize unique contributions," "Understand each employee's role," and "Provide support regardless of specialization," which are critical aspects of the proposition.
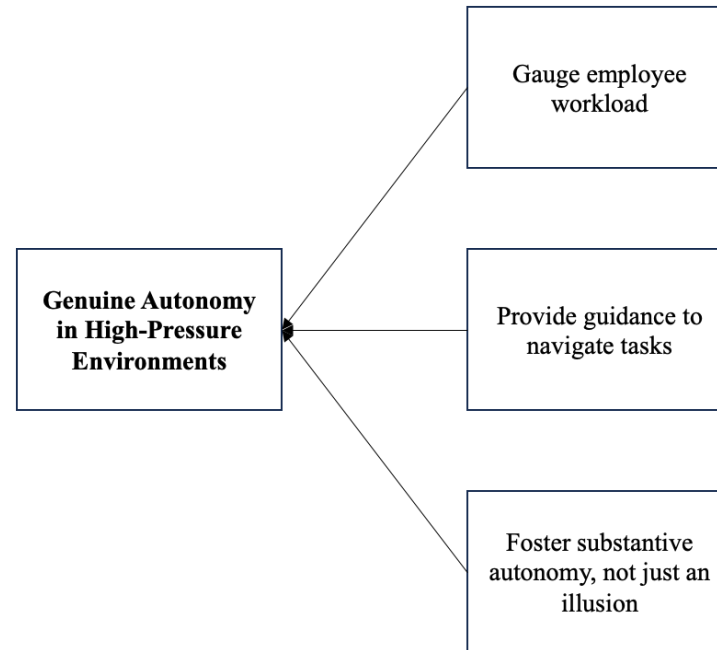
This image aligns with Proposition #4, which states that leaders need to ensure that the autonomy granted is genuine and substantive rather than an illusion masked by external pressures. The image highlights the concept of "Perceived substantive autonomy, not just an illusion," which directly relates to proposition #4.

Appendix E: Nomological Network for LNS and Employee Autonomy

Nomological Network for Leader Neglect Towards Subordinates

Moderators
- Career values
- Employability
- Employee autonomy
- Employee incivility
- Employment alternatives
- Generational differences
- Industry
- Laissez-faire leadership
- Leader incivility
- Leader–member exchange (LMX)
- Organizational identification
- Organizational injustice
- Organizational tenure
- Perceived control
- Perceived organizational support (POS)
- Procedural justice climate
- Self evaluation

Antecedents

Affective commitment	Employee silence	Managerial empowerment	Psychological empowerment
Attitude	Employee voice	Managerial openness	Psychological strain
Authentic leadership	Employee well-being	Monitoring	Role conflict
Burnout	Employment-based social capital	Organizational change	Safety
Career development satisfaction	Exit	Organizational ethics	Self-deception
Consultative management	Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN)	Organizational commitment	Self-neglect
Customer unethical behavior	Family conflict	Organizational culture	Structural empowerment
Cynicism	Fear	Organizational symbolism	Supervisor behavior
Decision making	Goal setting	Organizational isolation	Supervisor bottom-line mentality
Disempowerment	Incivility	Organizational trust	Supervisor incivility
Efficacy	Job characteristics	Perceived leadership style	Supportive management
Emotional exhaustion	Job demands	Perceived support	Task feedback
Emotional neglect	Job enrichment	Perception of isolation	Telecommuting
Emotions	Job insecurity	Personal accomplishment	Training & development
Employee bottom-line mentality	Job involvement	Personal control	Transformational leadership
Employee development	Job reward	Personality	Trust
Employee dissent	Job satisfaction	Power	Violence
Employee fairness	Laissez-faire leadership	Professional isolation	Voice encouragement
Employee influence	Leader communication	Prohibitive voice	Work conflict
Work experience	Workaholism	Workplace bullying	Workplace incivility
Employee innovative work behavior	Loyalty	Psychological contract	Work engagement

LNS

Mediators
- Conscientiousness
- Coworker support
- Emotional exhaustion
- Employee mood
- Innovation
- Job engagement
- Job insecurity
- Job satisfaction
- Leader-member exchange (LMX)
- Organizational commitment
- Organizational support
- Perceived organizational support
- Power exchange
- Psychological contract
- Role ambiguity

Outcomes

Absenteeism (+)	Employee empowerment (-)	Job performance (-)	Psychological isolation (+)
Affective job commitment (-)	Employee engagement (-)	Job satisfaction (-)	Resource availability (-)
Affective organizational commitment (-)	Employee health (-)	Job stress (+)	Retention rates (-)
Anxiety (+)	Employee performance (-)	Knowledge sharing process (-)	Rigidity (+)
Assertiveness (-)	Employee performance ratings (-)	Leader development (-)	Sales performance (-)
Attitude (-)	Employee silence (+)	Leader effectiveness (-)	Self-neglect (+)
Burnout (+)	Employee turnover (+)	Leader incivility (+)	Self-reported work effort (-)
Career success (-)	Employee turnover intention (+)	Loyalty (-)	Social undermining (+)
Change acceptance (-)	Employee voice (-)	Mental health (-)	Stress (+)
Chronic lateness (+)	Ethical decision-making (-)	Openness (-)	Task characteristics (±)
Creativity (-)	Ethical literacy (-)	Organizational citizenship behavior (-)	Task performance (-)
Customer service performance (-)	Exit (+)	Organizational commitment (-)	Trust (-)
Cynicism (+)	Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN) (+)	Organizational efficiency (-)	Withdrawal (+)
Democratic organizational structures (-)	Fear (+)	Organizational performance (-)	Work engagement (-)
Depersonalization (+)	Job change (+)	Organizational productivity (-)	Work stress (+)
Emotional exhaustion (+)	Job control (-)	Physical isolation (+)	Work-related exhaustion (+)
Emotional well-being (-)	Job dedication (-)	Procedural justice (-)	Workplace exclusion (+)
Employee bottom-line mentality (+)	Job security (-)	Process improvement (-)	Workplace incivility (+)
Employee development (-)	Job neglect (active) (+)	Professional isolation (-)	Workplace victimization (+)
Employee deviance (+)	Job neglect (passive) (+)	Psychological contract (-)	

The nomological network for leader neglect towards subordinates is broken down into the sections below:

Antecedents

- Affective commitment
- Attitude
- Authentic leadership
- Burnout
- Career development satisfaction

- Consultative management
- Customer unethical behavior
- Cynicism
- Decision making
- Disempowerment
- Efficacy
- Emotional exhaustion
- Emotional neglect
- Emotions
- Employee bottom-line mentality
- Employee development
- Employee dissent
- Employee fairness
- Employee influence
- Work experience
- Employee innovative work behavior

- Employee silence
- Employee voice
- Employee well-being
- Employment-based social capital
- Exit
- Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN)
- Family conflict
- Fear
- Goal setting
- Incivility
- Job characteristics
- Job demands
- Job enrichment
- Job insecurity
- Job involvement
- Job reward
- Job satisfaction
- Laissez-faire leadership
- Leader communication
- Workaholism
- Loyalty

- Managerial empowerment
- Managerial openness
- Monitoring
- Organizational change
- Organizational ethics

- Organizational commitment
- Organizational culture
- Organizational isolation
- Organizational symbolism
- Organizational trust
- Perceived leadership style
- Perceived support
- Perception of isolation
- Personal accomplishment
- Personal control
- Personality
- Power
- Professional isolation
- Prohibitive voice
- Workplace bullying
- Psychological contract

- Psychological empowerment
- Psychological strain
- Role conflict
- Safety
- Self-deception

- Self-neglect
- Structural empowerment
- Supervisor behavior
- Supervisor bottom-line mentality
- Supervisor incivility
- Supportive management
- Task feedback
- Telecommuting
- Training & development
- Transformational leadership
- Trust
- Violence
- Voice encouragement
- Work conflict
- Workplace incivility
- Work engagement

Image shows that "cynicism" and "job demands" are listed among many antecedents that can lead to leader neglect towards subordinates.

Moderators

- Career values
- Employability
- Employee autonomy
- Employee incivility
- Employment alternatives
- Generational differences
- Industry
- Laissez-faire leadership
- Leader incivility
- Leader–member exchange (LMX)
- Organizational identification
- Organizational injustice
- Organizational tenure
- Perceived control
- Perceived organizational support (POS)
- Procedural justice climate
- Self evaluation

The image highlights that items like "leader incivility" are identified as moderating factors that can influence the relationships between antecedents and outcomes, suggesting leader neglect or mistreatment of subordinates can exacerbate negative consequences.

Mediators

- Conscientiousness
- Coworker support
- Emotional exhaustion
- Employee mood
- Innovation
- Job engagement
- Job insecurity
- Job satisfaction
- Leader-member exchange (LMX)
- Organizational commitment
- Organizational support
- Perceived organizational support
- Power exchange
- Psychological contract
- Role ambiguity
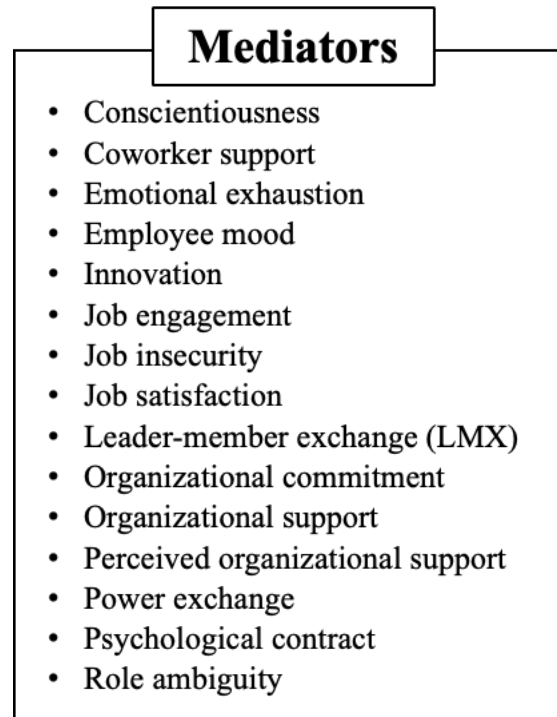
The image indicates that characteristics like "leader-member exchange (LMX)" are considered potential mediators, implying that the quality of leader-subordinate relationships, which could be impacted by leader neglect, can mediate or transmit effects to various outcomes.

Outcomes

- Absenteeism (+)
- Affective job commitment (-)
- Affective organizational commitment (-)
- Anxiety (+)
- Assertiveness (-)
- Attitude (-)
- Burnout (+)
- Career success (-)
- Change acceptance (-)
- Chronic lateness (+)
- Creativity (-)
- Customer service performance (-)
- Cynicism (+)
- Democratic organizational structures (-)
- Depersonalization (+)
- Emotional exhaustion (+)
- Emotional well-being (-)
- Employee bottom-line mentality (+)
- Employee development (-)
- Employee deviance (+)

- Employee empowerment (-)
- Employee engagement (-)
- Employee health (-)
- Employee performance (-)
- Employee performance ratings (-)
- Employee silence (+)
- Employee turnover (+)
- Employee turnover intention (+)
- Employee voice (-)
- Ethical decision-making (-)
- Ethical literacy (-)
- Exit (+)
- Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN) ($\pm$)
- Fear (+)
- Job change (+)
- Job control (-)
- Job dedication (-)
- Job security (-)
- Job neglect (active) (+)
- Job neglect (passive) (+)

- Job performance (-)
- Job satisfaction (-)
- Job stress (+)
- Knowledge sharing process (-)
- Leader development (-)
- Leader effectiveness (-)
- Leader incivility (+)
- Loyalty (-)
- Mental health (-)
- Openness (-)
- Organizational citizenship behavior (-)
- Organizational commitment (-)
- Organizational efficiency (-)
- Organizational performance (-)
- Organizational productivity (-)
- Physical isolation (+)
- Procedural justice (-)
- Process improvement (-)
- Professional isolation (-)
- Psychological contract (-)

- Psychological isolation (+)
- Resource availability (-)
- Retention rates (-)
- Rigidity (+)
- Sales performance (-)
- Self-neglect (+)
- Self-reported work effort (-)
- Social undermining (+)
- Stress (+)
- Task characteristics ($\pm$)
- Task performance (-)
- Trust (-)
- Withdrawal (+)
- Work engagement (-)
- Work stress (+)
- Work-related exhaustion (+)
- Workplace exclusion (+)
- Workplace incivility (+)
- Workplace victimization (+)

Image lists several adverse outcomes like absenteeism, low job satisfaction, turnover intentions, unethical behavior, psychological contract breach, and more that can arise when leaders neglect subordinates over time within an organization.

Nomological Network for Employee Autonomy

Moderators
- Automation
- Autonomy support
- Coping
- Creative self-efficacy
- Culture novelty
- Emotional intelligence
- Employees' calling
- Individual goal orientation
- Job characteristics
- Job demands
- Job duration
- Job meaning
- Mentoring
- Organizational innovation
- Organizational structure
- Role ambiguity
- Supervisor support
- Team performance pressure
- Work-family conflict

Antecedents

Absorptive capacity	Flexible role orientation	Leader's task communication	Remuneration
Abusive supervision	Flexible working practices (FWPs)	Leadership behavior	Respect
Acquired knowledge	Goal clarity	Lean production	Role conflict
Action-state orientation	Humble leadership	Learning agility	Role crafting
Affective commitment	Individual self-concept	Learning motivation	Schedule flexibility
Collective self-concept	Interest incongruence	Location autonomy	Self efficacy
Commute	Job control	Machiavellianism	Servant leadership
Conscientiousness	Job crafting	Manager support	Situational job autonomy
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	Job demand	Managerial autonomy	Situational work motivation
Creative self-efficacy	Job environment	Neuroticism	Social skill
Customer behavior	Job monitoring	Organizational culture	Structural empowerment
Emotional labor	Job overload	Organizational identity	Task identity
Emotional stability	Job passion	Participative decision-making	Teamwork
Employee Empowerment	Job performance	Perceived autonomy support	Training
Employee status	Job performance readiness	Perceived organizational support	Transformational leadership
Employee-centric behaviors	Job satisfaction	Performance feedback	Unscripted agility
Empowering leadership	Laissez-faire leadership	Personal initiative	Work conflict
Environmental stewardship orientation	Leader behavioral integrity	Proactive personality	Work engagement
Ethical leadership	Leader-member exchange (LMX)	Professional identity	Work-life balance
Extraversion	Leader autonomy expectations	Prosocial motivation	Workload
Family conflict	Leader's feedback behavior	Psychological empowerment	Workplace social support

Employee Autonomy
(decision-making, schedule, task, method)

Mediators

Affective commitment	Organizational climate
Affective trust	Organizational commitment
Altruistic citizenship behaviors	Passion
Automation	Perceived competence
Cognitive trust	Perceived control
Compliance citizenship behaviors	Perceived insider status
Controlled motivation	Perceived supervisor support
Coworker support	Self-efficacy
Demographic profile	Social support
Employee voice	Trust
Job crafting	Work engagement
Job satisfaction	Work-life balance
Leadership self-efficacy (LSE)	Work-life conflict
Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	

Outcomes

Absenteeism (+)	Meaningful work (+)
Anxiety (-)	Mental health (+)
Assertiveness (+)	Mood (+)
Burnout (+)	Operational performance (+)
Career self-management (+)	Organization effectiveness (+)
Coworker respect (+)	Organizational citizenship behavior (+)
Coworker trust (+)	Organizational commitment (+)
Creativity (+)	Organizational performance (+)
Customer service (+)	Passion (+)
Cynicism (-)	Proactive work behavior(+)
Decision-making (+)	Productivity (+)
Emotional exhaustion (-)	Profitability (+)
Employee productivity (+)	Psychological capital (+)
Employee satisfaction (+)	Role conflict (-)
Employee turnover intention (-)	Role overload (+)
Employee voice (+)	Self-efficacy (+)
Enrichment (+)	Service quality (+)
Exit (-)	Social exchange relationship (+)
Expertise (+)	Stress (-)
Financial performance (+)	Taking charge (+)
Innovation (+)	Task performance (+)
Job attitude (+)	Task-Oriented Leadership (-)
Job crafting (+)	Team performance (+)
Job engagement (+)	Transformational Leadership (+)
Job passion (+)	Trust (+)
Job performance (+)	Vitality (+)
Job satisfaction (+)	Well-being (+)
Knowledge transfer (+)	Work engagement (+)
Leader effectiveness (+)	Work-life balance (+)
Life satisfaction (+)	Workaholism (+)
Loneliness (-)	Worker control (+)
Loyalty (+)	

The nomological network for employee autonomy towards subordinates is broken down into the sections below:

Antecedents

- Absorptive capacity
- Abusive supervision
- Acquired knowledge
- Action-state orientation
- Affective commitment
- Collective self-concept
- Commute
- Conscientiousness
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Creative self-efficacy
- Customer behavior
- Emotional labor
- Emotional stability
- Employee Empowerment
- Employee status
- Employee-centric behaviors
- Empowering leadership
- Environmental stewardship orientation
- Ethical leadership
- Extraversion
- Family conflict

- Flexible role orientation
- Flexible working practices (FWPs)
- Goal clarity
- Humble leadership
- Individual self-concept
- Interest incongruence
- Job control
- Job crafting
- Job demand
- Job environment
- Job monitoring
- Job overload
- Job passion
- Job performance
- Job performance readiness
- Job satisfaction
- Laissez-faire leadership
- Leader behavioral integrity
- Leader-member exchange (LMX)
- Leader autonomy expectations
- Leader's feedback behavior

- Leader's task communication
- Leadership behavior
- Lean production
- Learning agility
- Learning motivation
- Location autonomy
- Machiavellianism
- Manager support
- Managerial autonomy
- Neuroticism
- Organizational culture
- Organizational identity
- Participative decision-making
- Perceived autonomy support
- Perceived organizational support
- Performance feedback
- Personal initiative
- Proactive personality
- Professional identity
- Prosocial motivation
- Psychological empowerment

- Remuneration
- Respect
- Role conflict
- Role crafting
- Schedule flexibility
- Self efficacy
- Servant leadership
- Situational job autonomy
- Situational work motivation
- Social skill
- Structural empowerment
- Task identity
- Teamwork
- Training
- Transformational leadership
- Unscripted agility
- Work conflict
- Work engagement
- Work-life balance
- Workload
- Workplace social support

The image shows that "employee status" and "job passion" are among many antecedents that can potentially lead to employee autonomy. These factors, along with others like job control, job performance readiness, and leader-member exchange (LMX), are listed as precursors that may influence the degree of autonomy an employee experiences.

Moderators

- Automation
- Autonomy support
- Coping
- Creative self-efficacy
- Culture novelty
- Emotional intelligence
- Employees' calling
- Individual goal orientation
- Job characteristics
- Job demands
- Job duration
- Job meaning
- Mentoring
- Organizational innovation
- Organizational structure
- Role ambiguity
- Supervisor support
- Team performance pressure
- Work-family conflict
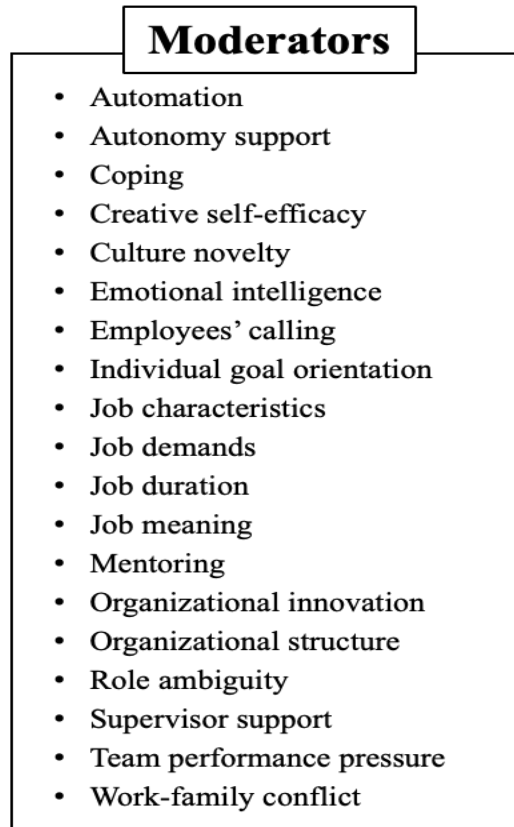
The image highlights that items like "emotional intelligence" are the moderating factors influencing the relationships between anteceden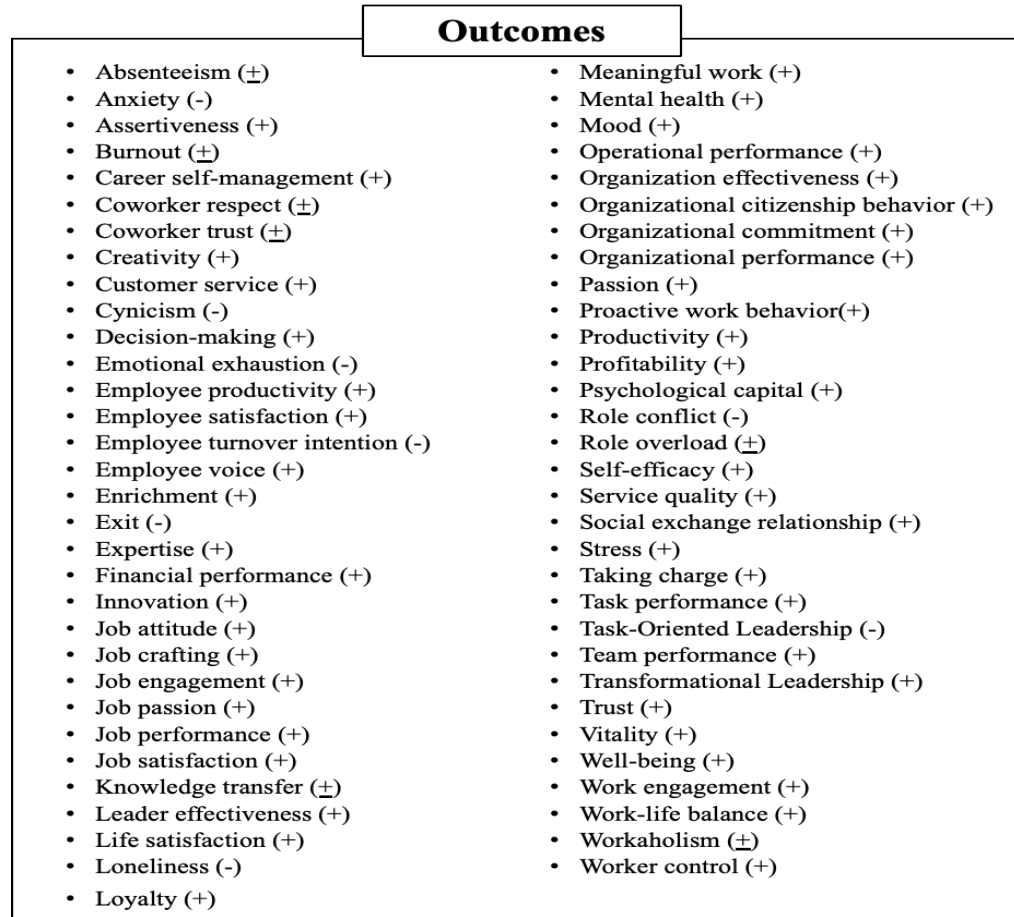ts and outcomes. This suggests that an employee's emotional skills and awareness can affect how much autonomy their leader is willing to provide. Leaders may be more inclined to grant autonomy to emotionally intelligent employees.

Mediators

- Affective commitment
- Affective trust
- Altruistic citizenship behaviors
- Automation
- Cognitive trust
- Compliance citizenship behaviors
- Controlled motivation
- Coworker support
- Demographical profile
- Employee voice
- Job crafting
- Job satisfaction
- Leadership self-efficacy (LSE)
- Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

- Organizational climate
- Organizational commitment
- Passion
- Perceived competence
- Perceived control
- Perceived insider status
- Perceived supervisor support
- Self-efficacy
- Social support
- Trust
- Work engagement
- Work-life balance
- Work-life conflict

The image indicates that characteristics like "job crafting" are potential mediators, implying that the extent to which an employee can craft and shape their responsibilities, which is influenced by their level of autonomy, can mediate or transmit effects to various outcomes. In other words, job crafting serves as a mechanism through which employee autonomy can indirectly impact key individual and organizational results by enabling employees to mold their roles to best fit their skills, interests, and working styles.

Outcomes

- Absenteeism (±)
- Anxiety (-)
- Assertiveness (+)
- Burnout (±)
- Career self-management (+)
- Coworker respect (±)
- Coworker trust (±)
- Creativity (+)
- Customer service (+)
- Cynicism (-)
- Decision-making (+)
- Emotional exhaustion (-)
- Employee productivity (+)
- Employee satisfaction (+)
- Employee turnover intention (-)
- Employee voice (+)
- Enrichment (+)
- Exit (-)
- Expertise (+)
- Financial performance (+)
- Innovation (+)
- Job attitude (+)
- Job crafting (+)
- Job engagement (+)
- Job passion (+)
- Job performance (+)
- Job satisfaction (+)
- Knowledge transfer (±)
- Leader effectiveness (+)
- Life satisfaction (+)
- Loneliness (-)
- Loyalty (+)

- Meaningful work (+)
- Mental health (+)
- Mood (+)
- Operational performance (+)
- Organization effectiveness (+)
- Organizational citizenship behavior (+)
- Organizational commitment (+)
- Organizational performance (+)
- Passion (+)
- Proactive work behavior(+)
- Productivity (+)
- Profitability (+)
- Psychological capital (+)
- Role conflict (-)
- Role overload (±)
- Self-efficacy (+)
- Service quality (+)
- Social exchange relationship (+)
- Stress (+)
- Taking charge (+)
- Task performance (+)
- Task-Oriented Leadership (-)
- Team performance (+)
- Transformational Leadership (+)
- Trust (+)
- Vitality (+)
- Well-being (+)
- Work engagement (+)
- Work-life balance (+)
- Workaholism (±)
- Worker control (+)

The image lists several positive outcomes when leaders provide employees with autonomy. These include increased assertiveness, boosted creativity, enhanced customer service, improved well-being, and many other benefits. By granting employees autonomy, leaders can cultivate a high-performing, empowered workforce to deliver individual solid and organizational outcomes.