

Leaders' Well-Being: Exploring Implications for Leadership Theory and Organizational Practice

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Heidi K. Scott

Approved by:

Major Professor: Laura Holyoke, Ph.D.

Committee Members: Davin Carr-Chellman, Ph.D.; Steven Daley-Laursen, Ph.D.

Jerry McMurtry, Ph.D., Krista Soria, Ph.D.

Department Administrator: Laura Holyoke, Ph.D.

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Abstract

Leadership is a challenging and complex practice. The study of leadership spans across organizational and functional boundaries, applies to institutions, academia, private and public industry, theoretical exploration and conceptual application. Well-being is also a broadly encompassing term, embracing elements across human complexities, organizational and team dynamics, as well as social and general implications. Marrying these two terms—leaders and well-being—this research seeks to understand well-being for leaders themselves. Accepting leaders as humans and their role to play in their followers' well-being, provides a basis for exploration, yet recognizes how leaders are often exempted or excluded. The literature suggests support for a relationship between leadership and followers' well-being. The missing aspect is understanding well-being for leaders themselves. Hearing leaders' well-being stories through qualitative interviews provided rich and contributory data. The main research question for this study was, how do leaders describe their well-being experiences? The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. The study goal was understanding and elemental construction of the leaders' well-being concept, and to capture the narrative in how leaders tell their stories. This complementary approach aimed to elicit insights into leaders' well-being experiences, exemplifying needs to explore this topic more deeply. Leaders acknowledged opportunities to improve their own well-being management, while recognizing lack of support for this focus. Leadership development opportunities do not provide comprehensive, holistic approaches required to allow leaders to be successful with their own well-being. Thematic analysis developed themes contributing to leaders' well-being and illustrating a balanced approach in assessing both "what" and "how" leaders describe their well-being experiences. Collecting data contributing to leaders' intra- and inter-personal needs suggests complex requirements for developing leaders' well-being as a concept. Embracing an intradisciplinary approach while inviting diverse perspectives and leaders' experiences is necessary to ensure the leaders' well-being concept finds useful application for individual leaders and broad generalization to the study and practice of leadership as a whole.

Keywords: leadership, leaders, well-being

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Dedication

I appreciate all the support and encouragement throughout this process and leading up to this point. To my family, thank you for your patience, believing in me, and your encouragement to keep going. Thank you for your ideas, examples, and positivity—to see through challenges, and pushing me to do better. To my friends, family, and colleagues, thank you for your ideas, questions, and experiences. I am grateful for the opportunities to explore alternatives, invite perspectives, include ideas, and push beyond the possible.

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Statement of Contribution

The multi-authored manuscripts in this dissertation reflect the doctoral student as primary author and major professor as second author. This authorship recognizes the student as demonstrating primary responsibility and writing responsibility, and primary contribution to the collaborative work. The major professor provided guidance, support, review, and collaboration throughout the process. The student had primary responsibility for design, data collection, and analysis. The student conducted all the interviews, recorded and transcribed the interviews, and led the subsequent analysis phases and efforts. The student led the writing for each of the manuscripts and for the bookend chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This three-manuscript dissertation seeks to develop leaders' well-being as a concept. I aim to provide readers with an orientation to leaders' well-being as a research study topic, and methods used.

Researcher Positionality Statement

As a researcher, I am informed by my doctoral study, as well as my personal and professional experiences. This experience informs the first aspect of my researcher positionality, addressing the subject under investigation as leaders' well-being (Holmes, 2020). Spending 20 years in professional business environments informed my perspective on leadership, both from my own experiences as well as through observations of other leaders. My progression into doctoral study allowed for me to embrace interdisciplinary study and to marry my business experience with my education. My growth was enhanced by the program's focus on adult learning, organizational learning, and leadership. I realized opportunities to further connect research on the study of leadership with actual leadership practice. This realization allowed me to dig into the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being. Through preliminary research, I learned of pre-existing scholarly support for this relationship. Recognizing the acknowledged relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, drove me to want to explore well-being for leaders. For me, personally, professionally, the opening of this learning opportunity drove me to this study. The literature and my lived experiences led me to want to know more about leadership and well-being.

My initial exploration into leadership and followers' well-being converged with the emergence of impacts from the COVID-19 global pandemic. Leadership is challenging and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of those challenges. Filling an organizational leadership role, I was supporting my team members, while striving to meet desired execution and performance. I too, feel the pressures as a leader and in finding balance across my other life roles (wife, mother, friend, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, organizational leader, neighbor, community member, teacher, learner, student, peer, volunteer).

The University of Idaho, Adult Learning, Organizational Learning, and Leadership Research Apprenticeship also allowed me to expand research into ideas of Profound Leadership. The Research Apprenticeship employed a faculty-student mentoring co-research model. Through this model, I had an opportunity to be first author on a publication for the *Journal of Values Based Leadership (JVBL)* on Profound Leadership. This publication was an integrative literature review, which brought together, five leadership theories; synthesizing servant, authentic, level 5, spiritual, and transformational leadership (Scott et al., 2020). Elements elicited from these leadership theories

contributed to the formation of Profound Leadership, while embracing the convergence of performance and humanity. Ideas from profound leadership research contribute to my desires to explore leaders' well-being. The reason for this noted contribution is to exemplify my progression in the study of leadership. Building the profound leadership concept provided an opportunity to build a new leadership concept and challenged my thinking. These opportunities contributed to building my motivation and intentions to develop leaders' well-being as a concept.

Reflecting on my career, I hold growing awareness of the taboo nature of well-being in workplace discussions. Through added transparency and focus during the pandemic, topics like mindfulness, resilience, and well-being have become more commonplace. There seems to be a general appetite and added openness to conversations mixing leadership and well-being, yet, when it comes to real acceptance and application, there is still hesitation and resistance to the incorporation of these topics. Leaders who talk about well-being, could be perceived as weak. Traditional conceptions of leadership require leaders to be invulnerable and infallible, suggesting leaders cannot struggle with their well-being. Lack of acceptance puts leaders in a disadvantaged space. Leaders may appreciate when peer leaders find work-life balance or do a decent job of "walking the talk." Yet, leaders are hesitant to manage well-being for themselves. These leadership experiences and observations influence my choice to investigate leaders' well-being. Addressing the choice to investigate leaders' well-being, acknowledges this as the subject of investigation and a key area for locating my researcher positionality (Holmes, 2020).

The second area to identify my researcher positionality is in comparison with the study's participants (Holmes, 2020). Inward and outward considerations allowed for me to view my identity relative to the study participants. I thought selecting participants with business leadership experience, would have allowed me to act as an insider. This assumption was based on my having access to the culture being studied. However, I recognize now that I spanned across the insider/outsider position. This traversal across insider/outsider positionality is supported by Holmes' (2020) assertion,

Similarly, Mercer (*ibid.* p.1) suggests that the insider/outsider dichotomy is, in reality a continuum with multiple dimensions and that all researchers constantly move back and forth along several axes, depending on time, location, participants, and topic (p.6).

I view my position as moving along this insider/outsider continuum. Recognizing, I held advantages of an insider position through my business and leadership experience. These insider advantages gave me an ability to ask meaningful questions, to build trust by securing honest answers, capturing authentic descriptions, and finding understanding of leadership language (Holmes, 2020).

Conversely, I recognize disadvantages to this position. The disadvantages include, inherent bias, assumed knowledge, dismissal of obvious truths, and limited willingness by participants to reveal sensitive information to another known insider. I believe by taking an outsider perspective to mitigate these disadvantages allowed me to fully explore the leaders' well-being investigation. From an outsider perspective, I recognized the high-level of attainment for the participant-leaders I interviewed. I saw their achievements as desirable and felt interested to understand their experiences in the context of leaders' well-being. Through reflexivity, I appreciated the autonomy garnered during their career achievements and wondered about leaders' well-being in their context. This approach reinforced the social process of research, where "the interviewer and interviewee participate jointly in knowledge creation" (Holmes, 2020, p. 7). I see how my role as interviewer intertwined with the leader participants and in our joint construction of the leaders' well-being concept. I also believe that engagement in reflexivity has allowed further development of my positionality, beyond this research and over time (Holmes, 2020).

The third element of my researcher positionality addresses "the research context and process," where sensitivity is necessary given the implications of my own "ethics, personal integrity, and social values" (Holmes, 2020, p. 2) on the research process. Also recognizing the personal nature of well-being experiences drives the need to acknowledge my own ethics, personal integrity, and social values as part of the research. Reflexivity allows me to acknowledge the role I play as the researcher and recognizing my prior work and educational experiences as influential in the research. My researcher positionality is also ever-changing, where my "subjective contextual aspects of [my] researcher's positionality or situatedness change(s) over time" (Holmes, 2020, p. 2). Due to this evolving nature of researcher positionality, I provide the context of my work and educational experiences as influential in how I approached and viewed this research. Through this lens, I also recognize how I am "not separate from the social processes (I) study" (Holmes, 2020, p. 3). Recognizing the influence of my insider/outsider role, also informs the interpretation and understanding of the leader provided data. I recognize how my own leaders' experiences may be part of the findings from this study, recognizing the interpretation of data is viewed through my researchers' lens. My business career and educational progression offer context to the research and reinforce my focus to better understand well-being for leaders.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. The main research question asked,

- How do leaders describe their well-being experiences?

The supporting research questions, included:

- What is leaders' well-being?
- What are leaders' stories of well-being?
- How do leaders practice well-being?

The purpose statement and research questions apply to the manuscripts throughout this dissertation. Each chapter reflects the appropriate applicability of the purpose statement and research question.

Procedures

This dissertation uses a three-manuscript approach. Each manuscript is a research product aimed to demonstrate effective doctoral research progression. The goal of this dissertation is to synthesize and summarize my research progression, supporting leaders' well-being exploration and exemplification of deep qualitative study. For the purposes of this dissertation, a manuscript dissertation is a "document containing three or more related manuscripts intended for publication or published in a peer-reviewed journal format" (Smaldone et al., 2019). The reasoning behind an alternative manuscript approach is supported by research findings, where researchers publish sooner and more often, than those selecting a traditional approach (Graves et al., 2018; Smaldone et al., 2019). Research suggests advantages and disadvantages with the manuscript dissertation approach (Graves et al., 2018).

There are notable advantages and disadvantages to the manuscript dissertation approach. Advantages include generating publications (volume and timeliness), program recruitment and future career options, gains in collaboration (for students, faculty, and peers), and increased student motivation (Graves et al., 2018). The University of Idaho Doctoral Research Apprenticeship Program through Adult Learning, Organizational Learning, and Leadership (AOLL) program aptly prepared me for scholarly research through faculty mentorship and collaboration and writing opportunities. I presented at academic conferences and published in conference proceedings. These opportunities led to scholarly learnings and experiences. Emphasizing the advantage of collaboration, the AOLL Research Apprenticeship cultivated student, faculty, and peer collaboration through research teams and co-authorship research opportunities. Publication deadlines enhanced my motivation, leading to effectively meeting milestones and product deliverables.

Disadvantages with the manuscript dissertation option occur with lack of Ph.D. program faculty support or experience, potentials for copyright infringement (and needs to embargo), lack of

clarity in expectations, and students' writing ability (Graves et al., 2018). To address potential disadvantages with the manuscript approach, I am grateful to have faculty, a major professor, and doctoral committee supporting a three-manuscript dissertation approach. My major professor encouraged me to identify scholarly research supporting a manuscript dissertation approach, as well as prior manuscript dissertation examples. This exploratory exercise allowed me to investigate options as well as validating the five-chapter approach as an acceptable and common option for three-manuscript dissertations (Graves et al., 2018; Smaldone et al., 2019).

Regarding copyright, the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) affirms that manuscripts do not infringe upon copyright, where stated, "individual authors retain the copyright to their papers" (see Appendix B). This copyright retainment applies to Manuscript 1 and Manuscript 2, as submitted to AHRD as part of their International Conferences in 2021 and 2022. I clarified expectations with my major professor and doctoral committee through regular virtual sessions, mitigating any potential lack of clarity and receiving approval for each milestone. I used each iteration and manuscript as an opportunity to improve and focus my writing, soliciting and embracing feedback as input to improve. By addressing these advantages and disadvantages I sought to provide acceptable justification for the manuscript dissertation approach.

Organization

This study is organized into five chapters (see Figure 1). In addition to synthesizing across the three manuscripts, Chapters 1 and Chapter 5 also frame the manuscripts as bookends. Chapter 1 focuses on the introduction and Chapter 5 focuses on conclusions. Recognizing, certain sections will be repeated throughout the chapters, the bookend chapters aim to capture the intentions and findings across the three manuscripts. Manuscript one became Chapter 2, focused on the integrative literature review. Chapter 3 is the second manuscript, focused on the methods associated with the narrative inquiry and empirical study. Chapter 4 is the third manuscript, emphasizing findings and themes, as elicited through thematic analysis. Chapter 5 provides conclusions, strengths and limitations, recommendations, and addresses study quality.

Manuscript 1

Chapter 2 is Manuscript 1, an integrative literature review, conceptualizing the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. This manuscript was submitted and accepted to the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) 2021 Annual Conference. The theme for the 2021 AHRD International Research Conference focused on "Innovating and leading in times of rapid and unplanned change." This manuscript was accepted under the conference track, "Leadership, Strategy, and Engagement." The manuscript met the criteria for refereed full manuscript submission, at 8,000

words, exemplifying a fully developed, scholarly product (see Appendices E and G). The full manuscript was submitted for blind peer review, accepted with revisions, and with revisions completed, virtually presented at the 2021 conference. The full manuscript was published in the Conference Proceedings (see Appendices H and I).

Figure 1

Overview of the organization of the three-manuscript dissertation chapters

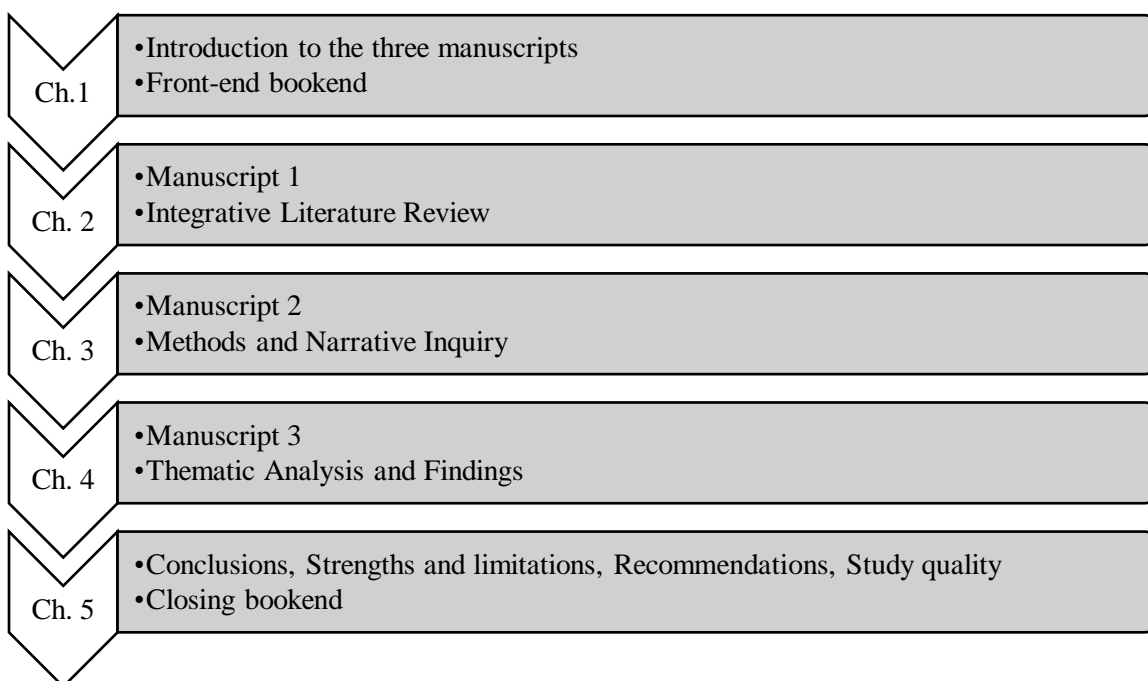


Figure 1: Overview of chapter organization

The integrative literature review affirms the acknowledged relationship between leadership and followers' well-being; however, providing limited support for leaders' well-being itself. The integrative literature review sought to understand existing literature contributions to developing the leaders' well-being concept. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being. The supporting research question asked, *what is leaders' well-being?* Viewing the complex nature of well-being, encapsulating internal and external factors, the integrative literature review intentionally focused on the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. This intrinsic focus aimed to explore leaders' internal capacities and methods for managing their well-being. From the literature four key themes developed: mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources. These four themes provided methods showing leaders could manage well-being from an internal perspective.

Mindfulness focused on present moment awareness. Self-actualization aligned goal seeking with intrinsic desires, achieving fulfillment and finding purpose. Self-care allowed leaders to find

individualized methods to manage well-being. Resources acknowledged the burden of leadership, coupled with sources of strength for the leader. The literature review focused on intrapersonal factors. The literature touched on needs for external support, peer relationships, interrelatedness, and connection. Recognizing the significance of adding external needs, provided justification to move forward with an empirical study. For the purposes of this study and throughout this document, empirical research uses the definition by Trochim et al. (2016) where, “empirical, meaning that it is based on observations and measurements of reality—on what you perceive of the world around you” (p. 13). This research focuses on leaders’ perceptions of their well-being and leaders’ description of well-being experiences. My observations from exploring leaders’ well-being experiences forms the empirical nature of study.

Manuscript 2

Chapter 3 is Manuscript 2, focused on methods of the empirical qualitative study. This second manuscript was accepted in response to AHRD’s 2022 call for submissions for their International Research Conference in the Americas, exemplifying AHRD’s vision of “Leading Human Resource Development through Research.” The 2022 AHRD Conference theme encouraged submissions related to “Transforming individuals and organizations: Rethinking the meaning of work” (see Appendix F). Manuscript 2 was accepted as a refereed full manuscript, blind peer-reviewed, and under the conference submission track of “Leadership, Strategy, and Engagement.” For acceptance, refereed full manuscripts complied with full evaluation criteria (see Appendix G).

The second manuscript uses aspects of narrative inquiry methods, for the qualitative study. Progressing from the integrative literature review, a logical next step was to pursue qualitative interviews. The aim of the interviews was to investigate leaders’ well-being experiences as told by leaders themselves. The purpose of this study was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. The supporting research question asked, what are leaders’ stories of well-being? Selecting a narrative inquiry approach allows for focus on the nature of experiences, stories, and their associated meanings. Participants offered their reflections throughout the interview dialogue. Leaders’ reflections provided input to developing the leaders’ well-being concept. As interviewer, I allowed the leader participants to drive the discussion. The participants were leaders selected based on their TED Talks on leadership with millions of views. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds and leadership roles. Leaders’ experiences included organizational leadership, academic leadership, and leading change initiatives across industries.

Surprisingly, while the selected leaders held exemplary performance and high-level leadership positions, there was general hesitation for interview participation and limited willingness

to speak to well-being. Reinforcing the objective to hear about well-being experiences from leaders themselves, elicited an interesting dialogue while leaders navigated through some uncomfortable waters. This unfolding narrative allowed the investigator to explore what leaders shared when discussing their well-being, as well as how leaders told their well-being stories. Manuscript 2 emphasizes the narrative nature of the leaders' well-being journey. Findings are developed into themes with progression into Manuscript 3.

Manuscript 3

Chapter 4 is the third manuscript focusing on thematic analysis and developing themes from findings. At the time of this dissertation writing, the third manuscript has not yet been submitted for publication. Potential venues for submission and dissemination of this third research product may include American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), Adult Education Research Conference (AERC), *Journal of Values-Based Leadership (JVBL)*, and other leadership related scholarly journals.

Manuscript 3 walks through the progression of codes to categories to themes, describing the methods of approach and detailed findings. The ideas from Manuscript 1 and Manuscript 2 inform the thematic analysis for Manuscript 3. The purpose of this study was to identify leaders' practices of well-being. The supporting research question asked, how do leaders practice well-being? Leaders characterizing their well-being experiences through an individual lens provided deep insight, while also broadly generalizable given the applicability to the study and practice of leadership. Leaders touched on intrinsic needs and well-being considerations, validating ideas found from the integrative literature review in Manuscript 1. Additionally, leaders explored external needs of peer and organizational support bolstering well-being resources. The external sources add to the complexity of developing leaders' well-being. Recognizing the importance of internal leaders' self-management, does not forsake the significance of human connection and peer relationships supporting leaders' well-being.

Chapter 2: Manuscript 1—Literature Review

Manuscript 1 represents the integrative literature review forming the foundation of this dissertation and associated leaders' well-being research. Manuscript 1 was accepted and published by the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), for the 2021 AHRD Conference.

Scott, H., & Holyoke, L. B. (2021). Conceptualizing the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being: An integrative literature review. In K. Yeager, & D. S. Chai (Eds.), *Proceedings AHRD 2021 International Conference in the Americas* (pp. 278-309). Academy of Human Resource Development.

Abstract

Well-being and resilience surge in the popular literature, driven by the global pandemic, economic pressures, international economy, and agile methods of doing business, and running organizations. However prominent the well-being concept stands for the general population; leaders' well-being appears lacking in the scholarly literature. The leader's relationship to follower well-being appears accepted and substantiated in the literature. Yet, the leaders' well-being concept appears unconstructed, blatantly assumed, or simply omitted. Early leadership literature acknowledges leader stress versus a healthy leader, however forsaking the concept of leaders' well-being. More recent leadership literature acknowledges a need to explore the leaders' well-being concept, however forming the concept remains an opportunity. This thorough integrative literature review explores a hundred years of literature and 100 sources, seeking elements and eliciting themes to inform an initial line of inquiry to research leaders' well-being. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being. The findings from this review intend to build an initial leaders' well-being concept, framing leaders as humans, informed by self-determination theory, and conceptualized under the healthy leader.

Keywords: leadership, well-being, Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Conceptualizing the Intrapersonal Nature of Leaders' Well-Being: An Integrative Literature Review

Leaders' well-being explored through an integrative literature review, seeks to build the leaders' well-being concept through themes developed from the scholarly literature. This integrative literature review explores concepts related to leadership and well-being, focusing specifically on leader well-being. Documenting search strings and methodology intends to capture the used approach and foster transparency in building the leaders' well-being concept.

Establishing the Need

Scholarly literature suggests support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being. However, the scholarly literature exploring leaders' well-being is lacking (Byrne et al., 2014a; Kaluza et al., 2020).

Background

Informing this literature review are strands of employee well-being, leaders' relationship to follower's well-being, and ethical leaders. These strands frame the leaders' well-being concept, informing the literature review, and providing lenses to view leaders' well-being. The scholarly literature demonstrates support for the leaders' and followers' well-being relationship and potential relationship between ethical leadership and leaders' well-being. For purposes of this review, the terms employee and follower are used interchangeably.

The literature supports a relationship between leadership and followers' well-being. Recognizing a relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, we step back further to conceptualize leaders' well-being. We seek to understand how leaders' well-being relates to leadership, and how leadership relates to followers' well-being. Important implications of this relationship include input to leadership development and human resource development programs.

Ilies et al. (2005) and Braun and Peus (2018) implicated authentic leadership as influencing followers' well-being. The environmental conditions fostered by leadership behaviors and co-created with employees relates to followers' well-being (Roche et al., 2018; Skakon et al., 2010). Byrne et al. (2014b) suggested the quality of leadership behaviors, values, ethics, and character are predictors of employee well-being. Berger et al. (2019) summarized leadership behavior as influencing employees' perceptions of demands and well-being relating to resources necessary to cope with these demands. Added support comes from Sy et al.'s (2005) mood contagion, coupling the leader and follower well-being relationship.

Ethics in leadership provides fodder for the leaders' well-being concept. Pignatelli (2015) suggested, "individuals submit to a set of practices designed to cultivate one's ethical conduct and fortify one's resolve to exercise agency" ... where "practices intended to support an ethical subjects' capacity to avoid the undertow of desires and habits that erode the capacity to 'master the appetites' that risk engulfing you" (p. 199). Where leadership practices bolster self-control, leaders find fortification through an ethical nature, avoiding and mitigating faced risks. Burns (1978) cited Gandhi as a transformative and ethical leader, suggesting implications for both leaders and followers through enhanced lives and personalities. Burns (1978) suggested an ethical aspiration in both the leader and follower, reinforced by Yang (2014) who identified a positive relationship between ethical leadership and follower well-being. Crane and Ward (2016) suggested leaders often encounter challenging and ethical issues, and the act of going through a "self-inventory" mitigates implications and negative responses, by adapting to handle crises ethically and effectively (p. 388). Leveraging leaders' well-being for ethical crises provides added resources and nurtures leaders as empowered to question and manage their physiological state (Crane & Ward, 2016). Indeed, Fry and Slocum (2008) claimed employee well-being is "one of the greatest challenges" for present leaders (pp. 975-977) as leaders find themselves ethically responsible for influencing follower well-being.

Problem Statement

Scholarly literature focuses on leader impact, influence, and the relationship with followers' well-being. The focus on followers' well-being neglects leaders' well-being, an omission encapsulating the problem statement. Leaders' well-being appears to be without definition or formalized as a concept. Literature offers cursory acknowledgment of leaders' well-being (Ilies et al., 2005); yet does not substantiate or provide useful resources for building the leaders' well-being concept. Leaders' well-being appears assumed in the scholarly literature. Further, accepting leaders' well-being as different from followers' well-being is based on Bass and Stogdill's (1990) investigation into leadership traits. Finding, leadership is not simply passive status or possession of certain traits; rather, leadership is based on relationships, situations, willingness, and capacity. Bass and Stogdill found "leadership is always associated with the attainment of group objectives. Leadership implies activity, movement, and getting work done. The leader is a person who occupies a position of responsibility..." (p. 76). These leader distinctions draw on Bass and Stogdill's findings providing fodder for our leaders' well-being argument. Acknowledging leaderships' situational and relational nature, leaders' well-being focuses on the time and space in which a person functions as a leader, distinguishing their qualities, characteristics, and skills from that of followers (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). For purposes of this review, we focus on the point in which a person assumes a

leadership role for a given relationship or situation. We focus on the leaders' well-being concept, in the leader's role, for when a person is acting in a leadership capacity.

Justification and Significance

From digital transformation and international workplaces, and more recently, exacerbated by the COVID-19 world pandemic, leaders experience additional complex pressures impacting their ability to perform and execute strategy. As explored in the problem statement, leaders' success in navigating complex situations, depends on their capabilities, capacity, willingness, and relationships. We also believe, leaders' capacity relates to their well-being, thus provoking the need to define the leaders' well-being concept. Leadership development and advanced degree programs focus on developing leaders' behaviors, skills, and technical competencies. Leadership courses explore methods, behaviors, and models of leadership. Popular business culture literature and social media outlets highlight focus on resiliency, self-care, and burden elicited from the COVID-19 global pandemic, different ways of working, and social changes.

Lacking is a clearly defined picture of leaders' well-being, antecedents to and consequences of. Potential relationships between mindfulness, resiliency and wellness also require investigation along with leaders' well-being. Once defined, the leaders' well-being concept may find relevant opportunities to become part of human resource development and leadership development programs. From a policy and practice perspective, we must consider the driving forces behind well-being conversations and determine the relevance of well-being for current and future leaders. This literature review begins a line of inquiry with the aim of building a leaders' well-being concept. Finally, the literature review intends to frame leaders as fallible humans and not as perfect machines, not existing solely to ensure followers' well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of this literature review was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being. The supporting research question for the literature review asked, *what is leaders' well-being?* This question begs the development of leaders' well-being as a concept and supports the main research question, asking, how do leaders describe their well-being experiences? The leaders' well-being concept is framed under leaders as humans, informed by self-determination theory, and conceptualized under the mentally healthy leader concept. This review focused on the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. We intentionally chose to focus the review on the internal components of well-being. Building an initial construction of the leaders' well-being concept informs future research and leadership development. The apparent dearth of scholarly literature conceptualizing

leaders' well-being provided justification for the integrative literature review. Searching through scholarly literature for leaders' well-being related concepts produced vast results. However, the term "leaders' well-being" pointing specifically to the leaders' well-being concept was found rarely, sparingly, or not at all. Byrne et al. (2014a) provided support for the relationship between leadership behaviors and employees well-being; however, offered "limited parallel research in leaders' well-being" and "less consideration given to leaders' own well-being" (p. 345). Kaluza et al. (2020) conveyed "the link between leadership and follower well-being is well established, less is known about the relation between leaders' leadership behavior and their own well-being" (p. 34). These assertions supported the need to explore leaders' well-being as a concept.

With an estimated \$13.6 billion spent on leadership development programs by US firms in 2012 (Subramony et al., 2018), leaders' well-being may be an important contribution to leadership development criteria, construction, and curriculum. Kaluza et al. (2020) asserted leadership development programs incorporating organizational health interventions provides broad impact. Tsey et al. (2018) indicated the significance of well-being and its importance for inclusion in leadership training. Excluding leaders' well-being from leadership development programs and training, may cause leaders well-being deficiency (Kaluza et al., 2020). Environmental challenges, increasing pressure, complexities, competitiveness, and hierarchical ascension may degrade leaders' well-being (Roche & Haar, 2013; Roche et al., 2018). Hirschfeld et al. (2020) explored internal and external forces relating to leaders' well-being and a need to build and understand leadership through an "evolutionary perspective" (p. 23). A lack of conceptualization of leaders' well-being appeared shadowed by mystique of its phrasing. Skakon et al. (2010) used the term "leader stress" to relate with leaders' well-being, however, did not qualify, explain, or define the phrase. These references suggested a need to include well-being in leadership development programs, yet leaders' well-being, still appears to be missing as a concept. The literature suggested how including well-being in leadership development may be useful, yet well-being for leaders remains undefined.

Framing Leaders as Humans

The literature begged exploration into ideas informing the leaders' well-being concept. The relational and situational nature of leadership drove the obligation to define the leaders' well-being concept. De Cremer and van Knippenberg (2004) suggested "leader self-sacrifice may elicit favorable leadership perceptions" (p. 141). These favorable perceptions suggested that leaders are expected to sacrifice and rise above their own human nature. Given this sacrificial nature of leadership, conceptualization of leaders' well-being is important. The importance of leaders' well-being is further

implicated by the effects on followers' well-being. When leaders' well-being is avoided or unacknowledged, leaders may be left at a detriment. Pfeffer (2015) suggested "encouraging individuals to be responsible for their own well-being helps them come to think of themselves as fully functional adult human beings" (p. 191).

Leadership is complex, exacerbated by human leader expectations. Integrating humanity into leadership and well-being into leaders who are humans, embraces leaders as "whole persons" (Burns, 1978, p. 449). These conceptual integrations provide opportunities for exploring contributions to individual well-being, organizations, and society. Dewey (1933) rejected a strictly dichotomic approach of dividing human beings between emotion and intellect, and instead regarding leaders "as a whole" (p. 278).

Embracing the human part of leadership, provided a holistic lens through which to view the literature review. Meaning, for the purposes of developing leaders' well-being as a concept, I suggest, we look at leaders as humans. On the surface, this assertion may be easily accepted, however, the self-sacrifice expected from leaders appears to exempt them from normal human allowances (De Cremer and van Knippenberg, 2004). Leadership development often focused on competencies and technical skill development. For leaders, there appeared to be less focus on enabling leaders' progression as person. Leaders' well-being may positively contribute to empowering leaders to remain human, serving followers' without sacrificing their whole selves. Long ago, Mayo (1933) suggested "human and social factors mattered as much as technical and economic ones" (Bolman & Deal, 2017, p. 334). Humanizing leadership holds relevance to building the leaders' well-being concept: leaders are human. To discount leaders' human nature, suggests a lack of common sense (Solansky, 2014). Continued focus on profits over wisdom and performance over wellness, emphasizes failure of the dichotomic approach. A less polarizing approach supports the necessary leader and well-being integration, embracing both success and wellness (Solansky, 2014). Seeking wisdom in leaders' well-being provides individual, organizational, and social wellness. Wisdom as part of the leaders' well-being concept emphasizes, well-being as a "goal of wisdom, not wisdom for wisdom's sake-but how wisdom serves others" (Solansky, 2014, p. 48).

Wisdom is the greatest human capacity according to some of the most prolific thinkers in history... King Solomon urged people to seek wisdom through a discerning heart because it bestows well-being (Proverbs 3, pp. 13-18, Zondervan 2011). Socrates argued that wisdom is a timeless pursuit of truth and is a source of power that should be used to bring about well-being (Sherman 1997). (Solansky, 2014, p. 39)

Recognizing the incorporation of wisdom with leaders' well-being, embraces the implications on leaders themselves, as well as on their follower's well-being.

Methodology

The structure of this literature review followed Torracco's (2005, 2016) multi-step approach to integrative literature reviews. Performance, wellness, and pressures drove the need to focus on leaders' well-being. Pressure on leaders were amplified by an international economy, digital transformation, and disruption from the global pandemic. Justification for the review was further supported by the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, and the significance of framing leaders as humans. Torracco's (2005, 2016) stepped approach established need, defined methods, led to critical analysis of the literature, building the leaders' well-being concept through developed themes and finally, stated conclusions and limitations. The integrative literature review sought to build leaders' well-being as a concept by integrating concepts and growing identified commonalities into themes. Methods followed a detailed search, seeking elements of leaders' well-being through scholarly literature, books, and peer-reviewed journals.

Conceptual frameworks provided the lens to view literature, including Bass and Stogdill's (1990) "The Mentally Healthy Leader" and Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Basing literature selection on generalizability, aimed not to be too specific to any industry, organization, or location. Critically analyzing the scholarly literature intended to elicit and integrate leaders' well-being components. Contributing components derived from the reviewed literature included themes of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources. The literature analysis brought forth these themes as contributory to the leaders' well-being concept. Figure 2 portrays a map of search methods, showing the search entry point, and resulting, selected authors. The authors and years noted in Figure 2 support the four captured themes, with themes exemplified further in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Research questions and limitations are considered in the literature review findings.

Methods

Initial scholarly literature review provided resources referencing the leadership and follower-well-being relationship. This prior work acts as a springboard providing the basis for this integrative literature review. Searching google scholar for the term "well-being" provided over 4 million results. "Leaders' well-being" brought 1.74 million research results on google scholar. The literature reflected use of both terms, "leaders" and "well-being;" however, "leaders' well-being" as a concept was not initially substantiated or fully developed in the literature. Books used in doctoral program course work provided context and history, along with popular business writings. Online searches added

scholarly literature resources through google scholar, online university library resources, ERIC.ed.gov, secondary citations, and doctoral committee input. Search strings included leader self-care, authentic leadership and well-being, leadership self-care, healthy leader, leader’s motivation and well-being, the well-being of leaders. Figure 2 outlines the search details and resulting citations. Reviews and annotations of each literature piece led to themes viewed through the frameworks informing the analysis. Sources spanned over nearly 100 years and 100 references.

Figure 2

Integrative Literature Review Search Methods Map

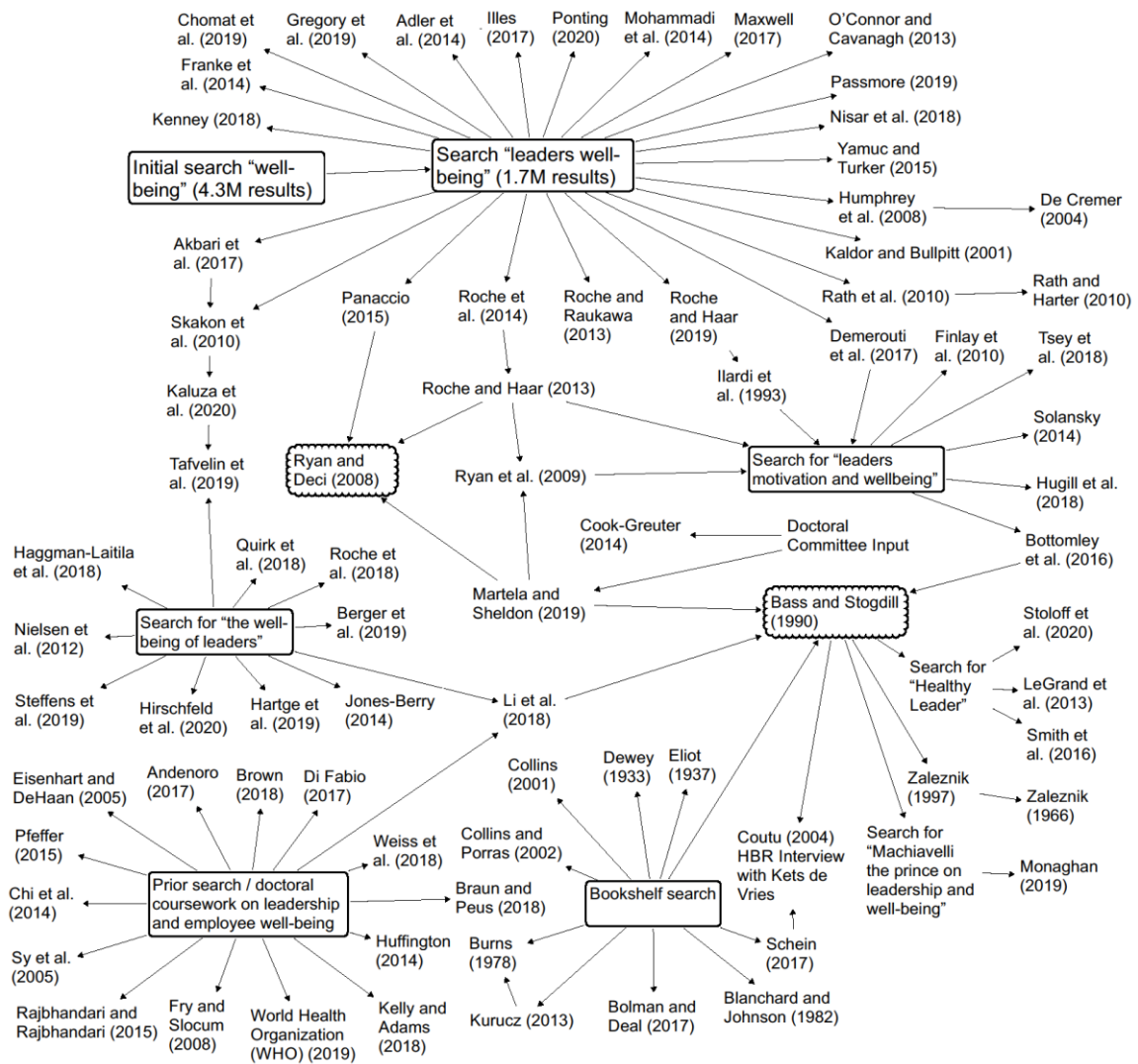


Figure 2: Integrative Literature Review Search Methods Map

Frameworks informing the analysis

Bass and Stogdill's (1990) "mentally healthy leader" and Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self Determination Theory (SDT) supplied the lens to build the leaders' well-being concept. These conceptual frameworks provided criteria and aligned well with the integrative literature review.

The Healthy Leader

Conceptually framing this literature review was the "mentally healthy leader," by Bass and Stogdill (1990) (supported by Cleveland (1985) and Zaleznik (1966)). Bass and Stogdill (1990) suggested "a healthy self-concept contributes to one's effectiveness as a leader"; where "they are at peace with themselves"; "healthy leaders retain a balanced view of themselves and how to deal with their work" (p. 159). Bass and Stogdill implied healthy leaders,

Avoid maladaptive responses to the conflicts arising from their moving up the organizational ladder, they help themselves by understanding their motivations, by establishing a firm sense of their identity, by maintaining continuity and predictability in their relations with their colleagues, by being selective in their activities and relationships, and by living appropriately with their own daily rhythms. They can face disappointment realistically and do not hide or deny their occurrence. They remain masters of their fate and can tolerate their feelings of loss. They know when to withdraw and to reexamine their emotional investments with people and activities. (p. 159)

Bass and Stogdill (1990) addressed the importance of leaders' well-being without ever explicitly using the term; suggesting leaders' relationships, concentration and energy levels all depend on leaders' well-being. Leaders' visibility relates to well-being, experiencing feelings of being in the "goldfish bowl" (Zaleznik, 1966, p. 4) and pressures of "scrutiny stress" (Maxwell & Riley, 2017, p. 484). Scrutiny drives internal conflicts within leaders, supporting the focus on leaders' well-being as an intrapersonal concept (Zaleznik, 1966). Internal acceptance of leaders' self, exemplified through Kets de Vries statements on madness, reinforces a relationship between authenticity and well-being. Kets de Vries asserted,

We can accept that we need a little madness in our leaders, because I happen to believe that those who accept the madness in themselves may be the healthiest leaders of all. To quote (George Bernard) Shaw once again, 'We want a few mad people now. See where the sane ones have landed us!' (Coutu, 2004)

Kets de Vries also acknowledged the role of suffering in leadership, citing “martyr” as one of the Dutch leader meanings. Implicating leaders’ martyrdom as a form of self-sacrifice, one must consider the sacrificial cost to leaders’ well-being (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004). Zaleznik (1966) offered added support to leaders suffering, suggesting leaders experience a range of emotions driven by pain, shame, doubt, anxiety, and guilt. Emotional capacity influences leaders’ well-being and leaders’ empathy for peers and followers (Zaleznik, 1997).

Schein (2017) cited Kurt Lewin’s (1947) original change theory, relating leadership and change, driven by pain and dissatisfaction. Monaghan (2019) suggested leaders suffering results from Machiavellian approaches. “Powerful leaders who truly prescribe to Machiavelli’s teachings are far from the epitome of mental health” (Monaghan, 2019, p. xxii). Machiavellian “psychopathological consequences” (Monaghan, 2019, p. 4), are detrimental to leaders’ well-being. Comparing Bass and Stogdill’s (1990) “mentally healthy leader” to a Machiavellian approach, finds Machiavellian tactics contrary to achieving optimal leaders’ well-being.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Ryan et al. (2008) stated the three essential psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness form the basic needs of self-determination theory (SDT). These SDT needs informed the lens through which to build the leaders’ well-being concept. Autonomy embraces freedom of choice and opportunity to regulate one’s behavior. Leaders’ sense of self-control also relates to well-being (Stoloff et al., 2020). Competency focuses on effectiveness and ability to execute. Relatedness harkens to relationships and connection (Ryan et al., 2008; Martela & Sheldon, 2019). All three needs are required under SDT and used here to begin building the leaders’ well-being concept (Ryan et al., 2008). Martela and Sheldon (2019) suggested deprivation of any one of these needs may negatively influence well-being. Based on this assertion, I suggest all three SDT needs are essential in building the leaders’ well-being concept.

Autonomy. The first element of SDT, autonomy, appeared in the literature with strong potential contribution to leaders’ well-being. Zaleznik (1966) suggested leaders face inner conflict exemplified through suffering, fear of failure, and fear of success. With these internal conflicts, leaders strive for autonomy and environmental control (Zaleznik, 1966). Leaders’ environmental control includes their workspace, control over their own decisions, a sense of control within their organization, control over self, and control over the work and teams they are leading. Individualistic views focus on autonomist actions, choices, and freedom; exemplifying SDT’s element of autonomy and its relationship to leaders’ well-being (Zaleznik, 1966). Bolman and Deal (2017) offered

alternative perspectives on autonomy, suggesting leaders seek balance between generous autonomy and risks of isolation, versus tighter connections and burden of coordination. Bass and Stogdill (1990) cited self-actualization and autonomy as being most important in leaders themselves; yet the “least well-satisfied managerial needs” (p. 151). “Bass, Burger et al. (1979) found managers’ identified their most important goals as self-realization (self-actualization) and independence (autonomy)” (Bass & Stogdill, 1990, p. 151). Bass and Stogdill (1990) explicitly captured self-realization with self-actualization and independence with autonomy.

Bass and Stogdill reinforced coupling independence with autonomy, offering “individuals who see themselves as masters of their own fate, rather than at the mercy of luck, fate, or powerful other people, tend to cope better with stress and generally make more effective and satisfying leaders” (p., 153), The leaders’ internal view of their autonomy provides better coping skills, leading to more effective leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Ryan et al. (2008) added support for autonomy with “strong predictive relations for human performance, persistence, and well-being outcomes. The process of internalization, through which external regulations and values become integrated to the self, thus become a central focus of SDT” (p. 146). The literature indicated autonomy contributes to leaders’ well-being.

Competency. Leaders’ well-being may relate to leaders’ competency. As the second element in SDT, competency relates to leaders’ effectiveness with their well-being. Bass and Stogdill (1990) simply asked, “can effective leaders successfully mask or compensate for their debilitating illnesses? How much of the success or failure of businesses can be traced to the ill health of top executives?” (p. 156). The relationship between poor leader well-being and leaders’ competency is supported by Napoleon III’s incapacitation by stones in his bladder implying “a grain of sand in a man’s flesh and empires totter and fall” (Bass & Stogdill, 1990, p. 155). Leaders’ mental and physical health disorders and poor health choices relate to leaders’ performance (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Chi et al., 2014). Demerouti et al. (2017) supported the relationship between work structure and leaders’ well-being, marrying autonomy with competency and suggesting leaders’ need influence over both elements.

Relatedness. Relatedness is the third element of SDT. Martela and Sheldon (2019) suggested “relatedness is about the sense of having mutually caring relationships in one’s life” (p. 467). Roche and Haar (2013) stated relatedness needs are met through meaningful connections with others and these connections enhance well-being. Ryan et al. (2008) focused on needs for relatedness referring to “feeling connected to and cared about by others” (p. 153). Viewing leaders’ need for relatedness, reinforces the focus on leaders’ humanness. Leaders are not exempt from a “desire to feel connected

to others, to love and care, and to feel loved and cared for” (Panaccio et al., 2015, pp. 339-340). Smith et al. (2016) explored relatedness in a multi-generational study, considering impacts of organizational support on leadership capacity. Focused on work-life integration, alignment of organizational values to personal values demonstrates concepts supporting well-being (Smith et al., 2016). Where followers, peers, and organizations support work-life balance, leaders are more likely to manage their own balance. Well-being exemplified through balance is shown through optimal hours worked and effective stress management. Relationships and relatedness are future research areas to build the leaders’ well-being concept.

Figure 3

Themes and Supporting Authors

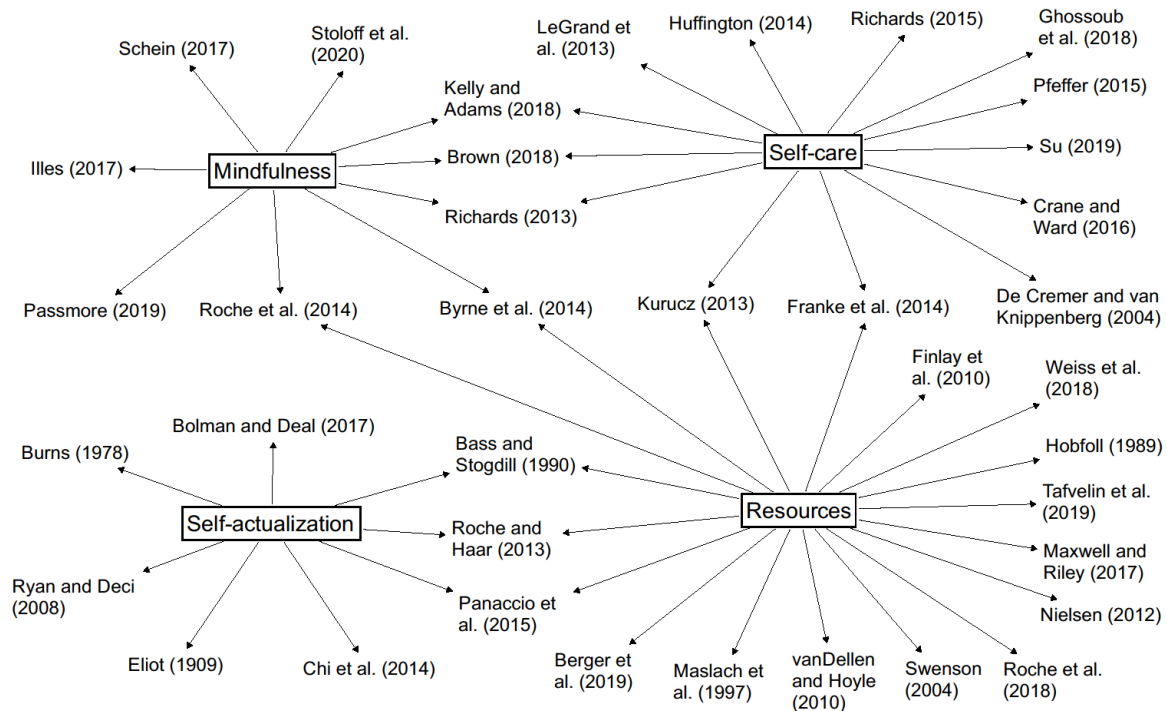


Figure 3: Integrative Literature Review Themes and Authors

Analyzing the literature

To build the leaders’ well-being concept, critical analysis and synthesis of the literature developed into the four themes of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources (Figure 3).

Mindfulness

Roche et al. (2014) studied the direct effect of leaders' mindfulness (stated as heightened awareness) and the mediating effect of psychological capital (stated as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) on leaders' mental well-being. Using structural equation modeling, Roche and colleagues found mindfulness was negatively related to dysfunctional outcomes (anxiety, depression, burnout). Roche et al. (2014) cited Ryan et al. (2008) where "self-determined behavior regulation and autonomy has long been associated with mental well-being" (p. 479). Applying the three SDT needs along with mindfulness, provided input to begin building the leaders' well-being concept.

Leaders who experience undesirable affects from confronting challenges tend to spread this negativity to employees, damaging employees' well-being (Roche et al., 2014). Assuming ill-being is the opposite of well-being, "what is not understood is the role that positively oriented psychological antecedents may have in buffering leader's ill-being in the first place" (Roche et al., 2014, p. 476). Roche et al. supported the role mindfulness plays in leaders' well-being; mindfulness is typified by present moment awareness and accepting what is without judgement. Mindfulness may relate to Dewey's (1933) "attitudes to cultivate" (pp. 30-33), including open mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. Under, whole-heartedness, Dewey (1933) suggested, "when a person is absorbed, the subject carries him on" (p. 31). Dewey's whole-heartedness, paired with an openness to deep listening allows people to consider different options. Dewey's full attention and absorption may be earlier phrasing indicating mindful leader approaches. More recent literature reinforces absorption, where,

Engagement translates into a person's emotional capacity to live in the present moment. When performing an action, a person is absorbed by the task and activity to the extent that s/he loses the notion of time and space. In a state of well-being, optimal engagement refers to the idea of timelessness as involving not only an absence of time, where nothing else exists, but also a refreshing sense of emptiness. This phenomenon echoes the notion of flow described by Csikszentmihalyi (2008). The experience of flow during optimal functioning at work is quasi-addictive: it leaves the person with a desire for more. (Stoloff et al., 2020, p. 25)

Present moment awareness helps leaders focus on current challenges instead of past problems or anticipation of problems (Roche et al., 2014). Roche et al. suggested mindfulness, "allows leaders to facilitate reflective choices to situations that in total benefit their mental health outcomes and well-being" (p. 477). Likewise, Dewey (1933) proposed, "the illogical person wanders aimlessly"; and "to

be really thoughtful is to be logical”; “thoughtful persons are heedful, not rash; they look about, are circumspect instead of going ahead blindly” (pp. 75-77). Applying leaders’ thoughtful, mindful approaches aligns to leaders’ well-being.

The term mindfulness is derived from a translation of the term “Sati” (Passmore, 2019, p. 166). Where “Sati” combines aspects of “awareness, attention, and remembering, with non-judgement, acceptance, kindness, and friendliness to oneself and others” (Passmore, 2019, p. 166). Passmore purported mindfulness permits leaders an openness, allowing divergent perspectives. Harkened back to first century A.D., The Golden Sayings of Epictetus suggested, “the beginning of philosophy is to know the condition of one’s own mind” (Eliot, 1909, p. 132). Awareness of one’s mind may be an earlier conceptualization of mindfulness. The literature suggests leaders’ well-being may be supported by internal self-awareness, mindful presence, thoughtfulness, and time absorption.

Self-Actualization

Maslow’s (1954) self-actualization appeared in the literature, integrating ideas into the leaders’ well-being concept. Burns (1978) stated “self-actualization is to Maslow a complex class of ‘higher’ needs ... a need, more healthy psychologically” (p. 116) or a calling of self-growth. Meeting psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness contributes to individual well-being (Roche & Haar, 2013). Roche and Haar further suggested “psychological wellbeing requires a synthesis between needs satisfaction and the goals and aspirations of the individual leaders” (p. 517).

In an exploration of the holistic nature of self-actualization, Ilies asserted “the marks of a self-actualized persona are maturity, self-awareness, and authenticity” (p. 25). Synthesizing these elements, under the umbrella of self-actualization suggested a potential relationship with leaders’ well-being. Panaccio et al. (2015) suggested leaders attain personal growth and wellbeing through deep self-knowledge and actions aligned with their values. This alignment transfers to enhancing work relationships. True self action aligns with literature on authentic leadership and influence on leaders’ well-being. A lack of authenticity in leadership indicates decreased well-being (Weiss et al., 2018).

Supporting leaders’ challenging efforts to achieve self-actualization, Collins and Porras (2002) confronted the popular notion that charisma is required to attain well-being. Collins and Porras asserted charisma is unnecessary and attempting to embody a charismatic personality may be wasted, unnecessary, and not plausible. Instead, to achieve self-actualization and well-being, leaders should be focused on embracing their authentic self, proposing “leaders’ emotional authenticity is positively

associated with their well-being” (Weiss et al., 2018, p. 310). Bass and Stogdill (1990) discovered managers’ foremost aspirations in life were self-actualization and autonomy. In SDT, autonomy and self-actualization contribute to leaders’ well-being. “SDT predicts that both the ‘what’ (goal contents) and the ‘why’ (the relative autonomy underlying actions) are important to consider in the relations between goals and well-being outcomes” (Ryan et al., 2008, pp. 155-156).

SDT exemplifies the intrapersonal nature of leaders’ well-being. Where, “elements in Aristotle’s conception of eudaimonia are at the core of self-determination theory’s (SDT’s) conceptions of wellness. SDT began with a focus on intrinsic motivation, or the pursuit of an activity because of its inherent interest and enjoyability” (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 146). Roche and Haar (2013) acknowledged external motivators (monetary incentives, work contests, and ego), detract from well-being. Diminished leaders’ well-being spreads to employees and beyond. Seeking extrinsic goals can lead to burnout from the amount of emotional energy required (Roche & Haar, 2013).

Self-actualization links to what people already hold within themselves or simply in their being (Maslow cited in Burns, 1978). Embedded realization through self-actualization, embraces leaders’ well-being. Burns (1978) suggested, “the most marked characteristic of self-actualizers as potential leaders goes beyond Maslow’s self-actualization; it is their capacity to learn from others and from the environment – the capacity to be taught” (p. 117). Learning is not explicitly stated as a building block of leaders’ well-being; however, implied as a leadership essential. Learning, views leaders as possessing the aptitude towards being taught or led by others (Burns, 1978). Leaders’ well-being embraces the reciprocal nature of leadership and the relational circle of learning.

Self-Care

Self-care appeared in the scholarly literature as another crucial theme contributing to the leaders’ well-being concept. Richards (2015) suggested self-care includes intuition, inner wisdom, listening deeply, observing actively, and absorbing. Richards added how self-care is about “choosing behaviors that balance the effects of emotional and physical stressors; engaging in meaningful connections; listening to our bodies; learning to self-soothe” (pp. 198-199). An essential part of these chosen behaviors requires creating time for solo contemplation to bring clarity to situations (Richards, 2015). Taking care of oneself, supplies benefits to the individual and those around; self-care is not indulgence nor self-pampering but a requirement towards well-being. When leaders practice self-care, it provides a model for others to follow and establishes a groundwork of endorsing positive well-being habits in the workplace (Franke et al., 2014).

Exploring lack of self-care attention as relates to leaders' well-being, Su (2019) suggested leaders wrestle with the idea of giving themselves "permission to ease up even for a little bit... that somehow it feels selfish or too risky..." (p. 13). Leaders become inclined to neglect their physical and mental well-being or adopt harmful behaviors when challenges and expectations escalate (Kenney, 2018). Notable leaders tend to show selflessness in their proclivity to undergo negative situations in order to live their values (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004). "The concept of self-sacrifice indicates that the leader is willing to incur personal costs (or run the risk of such costs) to serve the goals and mission of the group or organization" (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004, p. 141). A balance between leader self-sacrifice and leader self-care could help to maintain leaders' well-being, reinforcing Bass and Stogdill's (1990) healthy leaders' balanced views of self and work. Rapid changes and competitive organizational environments generate a propensity in leaders to forego contemplative examination for more advantageous alternatives (Kurucz et al., 2013).

Collins (2001) explored leaders building "red-flag mechanisms" (pp. 78-79) in support of truth telling, information eliciting, and becoming aware of triggers or detriments. "Red-flag mechanisms" are a useful tool for leaders managing organizational performance and their well-being. Collins (2001) suggested "red flags" can be information that cannot be ignored, offering an example of a red paper issued to MBA students, empowering them to use this "red flag" however they deemed fit. "Red flag mechanisms give you a practical and useful tool for turning information into information that cannot be ignored and for creating a climate where the truth is heard" (Collins, 2001, p. 80). Where leaders leverage "red flags" to be alerted of performance issues, the same notice could be applied for alerting to well-being issues. In the "One Minute Manager" storied outcome, Blanchard and Johnson (1982) suggested leaders' well-being achievement could be realized by taking time to pause and participate in physical activity. The ability to invoke self-discipline serves as a renewable resource (vanDellen & Hoyle, 2010).

Awareness, acknowledgement, and action contribute to leader self-care. Crane and Ward (2016) suggested "awareness is the key element for practicing self-care, and it involves becoming consciously alert to one's physical, mental, and emotional reactions in different situations, especially the ones that are stressful" (p. 389). Practicing awareness as a part of self-care builds capacity to resolve problems and address ethical issues without becoming overwhelmed (Crane & Ward, 2016). Building leader capacity through effective self-care could positively contribute to leaders' well-being. The literature suggested a conscious leader embraces mindfulness and self-care, stymying appetite for power, which promotes leaders' well-being. Huffington (2014) explicitly described leaders' work-life

balance challenges and a need to conjoin well-being with their interpretation of prosperity. As a practice of self-care, Brown (2018) recommended talking to yourself the same way you talk to someone you care deeply about.

The perception of having time for self-care influences leaders' well-being (LeGrand et al., 2013). Leadership maintenance "refers to a leaders' psychological, sociological, and physiological (PSP) well-being in order to enrich proactive reflective behavior towards the accomplishment of situational readiness for effectiveness and a harmonious organizational climate" (Rajbhandari & Rajbhandari, 2015, pp. 2777-2778). Further, Rajbhandari and Rajbhandari (2015) suggested leadership maintenance is critical for enhancing leadership competencies and "in creating a conducive environment for both leaders' and followers' well-being" (p. 2777). Resources of time and equanimity provide reserves for exhausted leaders and leaders abused by power (Burns, 1978). Self-care considerations reinforce intrinsic opportunities a leader holds to support their well-being, where elements of tiredness or exhaustion erodes well-being. Self-care components must be considered when developing the leaders' well-being concept.

Resources

Resources are another critical theme in developing the leaders' well-being concept. In reviewing resources and leaders' well-being, Tafvelin et al. (2019) suggested an investigation into an "understanding of how leaders' own well-being and work environment may influence the leadership process" (p. 157). Recognizing the implications of the leadership process on followers' well-being, requires an understanding of leaders' well-being. Encouraging an increased focus on leaders' resources, for the purposes of both leaders' and followers' well-being,

...[F]indings firmly emphasize that leadership does not happen in a vacuum. The leader's pre-requisites matter. This implies that in order to unleash the benefits that good leadership can have for followers' well-being, more focus need to be put on leaders' context. Efforts that increase leader's experience of vigour and peer support thus may have an indirect effect on followers' burnout, in addition to the potential positive impact vigour and peer support may have on the leader. (Tafvelin et al., 2019, pp. 166-167)

Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory upholds the coveted nature of resources. COR theory suggested resources beget additional resources more easily, where resources increase well-being and stress resilience. When leaders hold resources to properly handle information and to effectively manage stress, leaders are perceived as thoughtful decision-makers (Bass &

Stogdill, 1990). Burns (1978) suggested humans “draw on internal resources as they grow older and learn to exert power against those who constrain them” (p. 14). Roche and Haar (2013) proposed physical health can function as a resource for leaders in lowering their stress and mitigating burnout. Effective resource management lessens the impacts of leadership pressures and promotes leaders’ well-being. Leaders’ self-care cultivates resources, resulting in enhanced well-being.

Figure 4

Literature Identified Themes and Integrated Supporting Elements

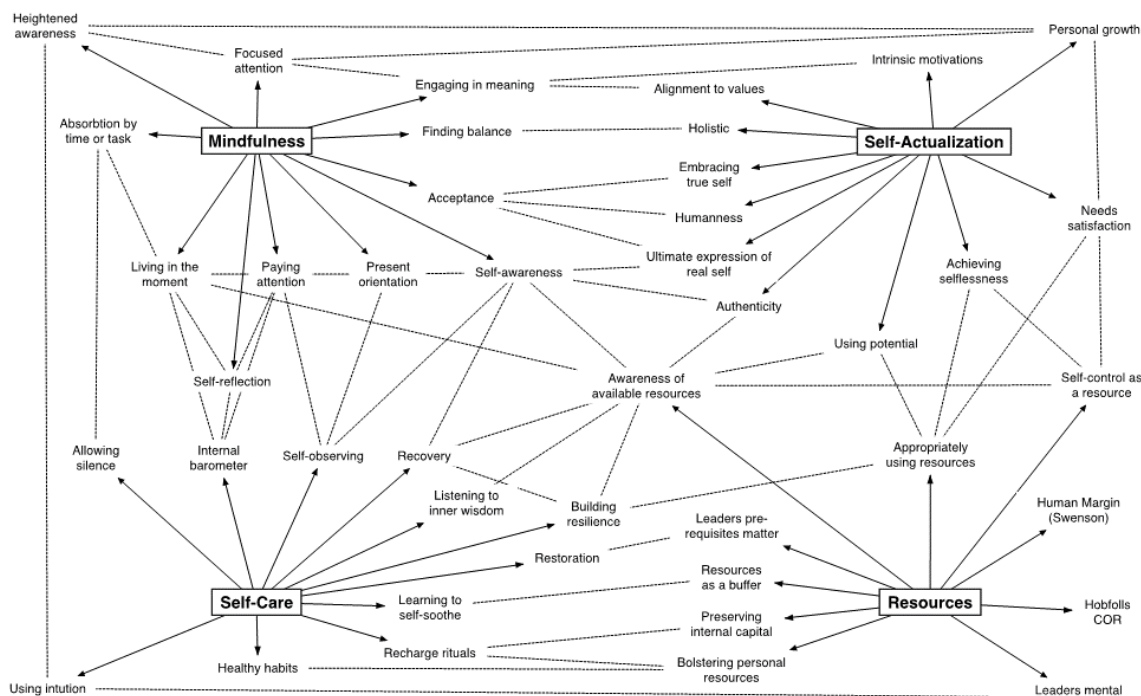


Figure 4: Integrative Literature Review Themes and Elements

Swenson’s (2004) Human Margin Equation reflected the difference between one’s resources and burden, which equates to margin (resources – burden = margin). “Leftover” margin may be positive or negative. Leaders with negative margin have negative impact on their well-being. Role conflict, ambiguity, and overload contribute to leader distress followed by burnout due to emotional exhaustion (Panaccio et al., 2015). Employees who experience emotional exhaustion feel they can no longer positively contribute to the workplace (Maslach et al., 1996). “Occupational stress theories posit that burnout results from the combination of prolonged demands and/or effort and limited or over-used resources” (Maxwell & Riley, 2017, p. 487). Byrne et al. (2014a) implied how personal

resources help determine leader effectiveness and over-focusing on followers' well-being may sap leaders' resources resulting in diminished leadership effectiveness.

Burns (1978) suggested how the consumption of leaders' resources may be a "cost" of "the exercise of effective leadership" and offered, "the strategy is to use these resources without using them up" (p. 374). Managing leaders' resources appeared as a proposedly simple strategy; however, difficult to predict. The uncertainty of objectively measuring available resources, relates to leaders' well-being. Leaders' mindfulness, self-care, and self-actualization helps to preserve resources; however, "a leader's emotional intelligence and strength of character cannot truly be measured until subjected to intense pressure, which is often too late" (Kenney, 2018, paragraph 7).

Building the concept

The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being. Through literature analysis and integration, a leaders' well-being concept was developed. This concept was developed as viewed through the lenses of the conceptual frameworks of Bass and Stogdill's (1990) mentally healthy leader and Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self-Determination Theory. A synthesis of leaders' resources, self-care, self-actualization, and mindfulness contributed to building the leaders' well-being concept. Framing leaders as humans reinforced an intrapersonal look at leaders' well-being, embodying concepts of awareness, self-control, mindful practices, and internal resource management. This intentional view embraced the leaders' role, along with their holistic human needs, and acknowledged expectations of self-sacrifice. Ultimately, development of leaders' well-being as a concept required remembering how leaders are just humans, after all. Building the leaders' well-being concept, terms of intention, agency, realization, and actualization were embraced. Hobfoll's conservation of resources and a need for leaders' effective resource management, reinforced benefits of self-care and mindfulness. Leaders' effective management of their resource supply and demand contribute to their well-being. Internal empathy and introspection, self-awareness, and self-compassion, hold relevance to developing the leaders' well-being concept.

In reviewing the literature, I looked for Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as I started to build the leaders' well-being concept. In each literature component, I sought to understand if one of the three SDT needs was a key component of the literature. Of the nearly 100 reviewed articles, autonomy explicitly appeared in 13 articles, competency in 6 articles, and 7 articles specifically supporting the relatedness need. Viewing the SDT needs in the literature reinforced the applicability of selecting this theory as an appropriate conceptual framework. Several authors also noted SDT when examining the need to build leaders' well-being as a concept (Roche & Haar, 2013; Roche &

Haar, 2019). Along with seeking to find the SDT needs in the literature, I also noted where one of the four developed themes appeared explicitly. Mindfulness showed in eight articles, Self-Actualization in six, Self-Care in 11, and Resources in 20 pieces of literature. An excel matrix captured the occurrences of these elements across the literature. I then re-reviewed the literature to understand the key contribution or primary theme for each article, recognizing how that piece of literature also supported a SDT lens.

Figure 5

Mind Map Supporting Integrative Literature Review to Build the Leaders' Well-being Concept

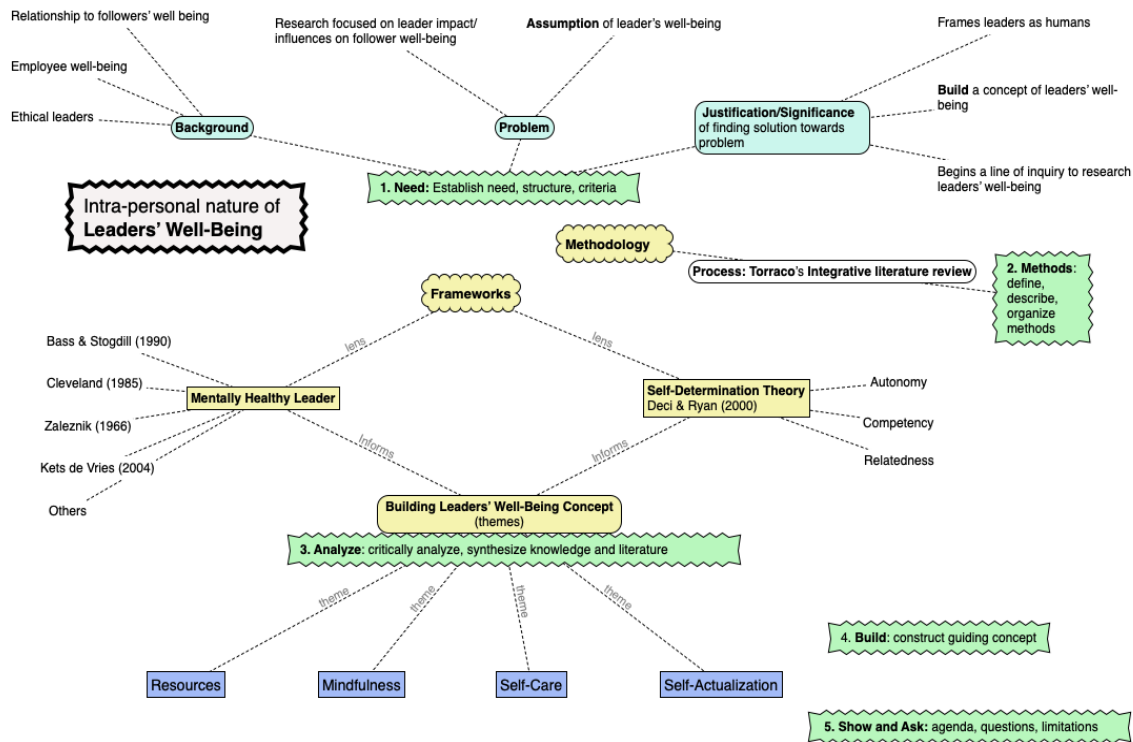


Figure 5: Mind Map Visualization Integrative Literature Review

Acknowledging human fallibility, foolishness, pain, and mistake-making, accepts leaders as humans and includes human traits in building leaders' well-being. Integrating resources, self-care, self-actualization, and mindfulness, contributes to developing leaders' well-being as a concept. Through literature analysis, I recognized the need to embrace all four themes. Mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources should be further explored to expand the constituent elements, integrate shared components, and fully construct the leaders' well-being concept. These themes are also reinforced through the SDT lens and the added needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness.

The elements supporting each theme exemplified in Figure 3 should be further explored to understand commonality among the themes and benefits to leaders' well-being. Figure 5 exemplifies the embodied process for this integrative literature review.

Conclusions and Limitations

This integrative literature review focused on the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. This focused scope recognized how the literature offered added importance for leaders' interpersonal needs. While acknowledging, the importance of further integrating external influences and organizational relationships into developing the leaders' well-being concept. Digging deeper into human pain and suffering for leaders, informed well-being exploration and provided elemental construction to the leaders' well-being concept. Exploring the inclusion of leaders' well-being in leadership development programs provided fodder for future research, and human resource development policy and practice. Once leaders' well-being is fully formed as a concept, methods to attain and sustain, antecedents to, and consequences of, implore future research.

As an initial line of inquiry, the literature suggested a need for the leaders' well-being concept, reciprocally supporting followers' well-being, while also supporting leaders themselves. The literature suggested strong, solid, scholarly support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being yet assumed that leaders have their own well-being handled. If leaders' behaviors implicate followers' well-being, it requires an understanding of the implications on leaders' own well-being if not effectively managed or maintained. The literature also suggested internal and external requirements for effective well-being management. Viewing leaders through the SDT lens, reinforced these requirements through creating opportunities for independence and autonomy, competency and self-actualization, as well as relatedness and meaningful connections. These three SDT needs, can be supported by the developed themes of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care and resources. Embracing leaders' well-being in human resource development policy and practice may provide essential benefits to teams, organizations, and society through improved leader performance and improved leaders' well-being.

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Chapter 3: Manuscript 2—Methods

Chapter 3 presents the second manuscript, focusing on methods through an empirical study. This subsequent step further develops the leaders' well-being concept. Manuscript 2 was submitted to the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) in the Fall of 2021, in response to a call for proposals for the 2022 AHRD Conference. At the time of writing, this manuscript was accepted with revisions, re-submitted with the required revisions, not yet published, pending the conference, scheduled virtually for April 2022.

Scott, H., & Holyoke, L. (forthcoming). Discovering leaders' well-being: A narrative exploration through qualitative study. In K. Yeager, & D. S. Chai (Eds.), *Proceedings AHRD 2022 International Conference in the Americas* (pp. xx). Academy of Human Resource Development.

Abstract

Expectations placed on leaders reinforce the perception of leaders' above human ability to navigate through momentous change, incredible challenges, while continuing to perform, lead, and be well. Social and political pressures, changing ways of working, technology disruption, plus impacts from events surrounding the COVID-19 Global pandemic, leaders remain under constant watch and pressure. Rising to the occasion, leaders find success in modeling behaviors for followers, demonstrating organizational performance, and leading teams through changing times. Missing—is leaders' own conception of well-being. Recognizing the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, begets a need to explore leaders' own well-being. The scholarly literature lacks deference to leaders' well-being. Precepts of leaders' above human nature positions them in a disadvantaged space. Leaders evade talking about their well-being possibly to avoid peer disdain, organizational exclusion, or self-imposed preservation. Instead, leaders offer rejection for the concept from typical leader competencies, suggesting other leaders must do well-being well. Discovering well-being through leaders' narrated experiences helps to bridge leaders' well-being conception and narrow the literature gap. The purpose of this study was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. Continual reliance on leaders, coupled with the accumulation of responsibilities, compels the discovery, understanding, and definition of leaders' well-being. Leaders' well-being has potential to positively contribute to organizational performance, followers' well-being, effective and important social change, leadership development and human resource development (HRD).

Keywords: narrative, leadership, well-being

Discovering Leaders' Well-Being:

A Narrative Exploration through Qualitative Study

Building on an integrative literature review (Scott & Holyoke, 2021), this qualitative empirical study (Trochim et al., 2016) delved into leaders' experiences by exploring observations of leaders' well-being experiences. Interviews and analysis provided data input to develop leaders' well-being as a concept. Narrative inquiry aimed to explore leaders' well-being experiences, unpacking both leaders' well-being as a concept and how the story is told. Recognizing lack of scholarly literature depth provided basis for the inquiry and supported need for this study. Analysis led to the development of preliminary codes and formation of categories and findings. These findings provide opportunity to inform future leaders' well-being research and application in leadership development, human resource development (HRD), organizational and academic institutional practices.

Background and Purpose

Studying the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, set the foundation for this study. An integrative literature review (Scott & Holyoke, 2021) found support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being while exposing a literature gap for leaders' well-being. This study sought to develop leaders' well-being as a concept.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. This exploratory study sought to develop the leaders' well-being concept using the integrative literature review, combined with rich interview data, and analyzed through a Self-Determination Theory (SDT) lens (Ryan et al., 2008). The study was an opportunity to explore well-being as viewed, experienced, and explained by leaders themselves. The supporting research question asked, what are leaders' stories of well-being?

A narrative inquiry approach (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Lindsay & Schwind, 2016) recognized the phenomena of leaders as individuals. The study purpose was a "holistic exploration of the chosen phenomenon," leaders' well-being, viewed through leader's individual narrative and lens (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016). Data gathered through interviews focused on lived experiences of leaders' well-being; leader as object of study, and phenomena is their well-being. From here and forward, "leaders' well-being" is represented as "LWB," providing an acronym for ease of reading.

Research Question

The main research question asked *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* For the focus of this study, the supporting research question asked, *what are leaders' stories of well-being?* This research question sought to address the purpose of this study, to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. The inquiry collected narratives from the leaders' stories to help in answering the research question. Analyzing results from this narrative inquiry provided input informing the LWB concept. For the purposes of this study, I followed the “guiding aspects for a ‘good’ narrative study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 270) by:

- Focusing on leaders as individuals,
- Collecting and focusing on the stories leaders told about their well-being experiences,
- Developing a chronology to connect aspects of leaders' well-being stories,
- Telling leaders' well-being stories through reporting what was said (themes), and how it was said (unfolding story),
- Embedding reflexivity through my own thinking and writing.

Justification and Importance

Justification

This research is justified given new and virtual ways of working (driven by, digital transformation, remote workplaces, and added to by the COVID-19 Global pandemic), changes and advances in technology (virtual work environments, technology disruptors, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML)), and international workspaces (supported by technology advances, digital landscape, and an international economy). Disruptors lean on leaders contributing added pressure to perform, provoking exploration into LWB. How do leaders think of their well-being when powering towards deadlines, working around the clock, meeting milestones, and managing dispersed virtual teams? What are leaders' stories of their own well-being experiences?

From a relevancy perspective, 2020-2022 were filled with individual, organizational, social, and leader-impacting challenges. These experiences informed my perspective when viewing this research, both at a U.S. National level and more personally. Changing ways of working, managing my own virtual team, allowed shifts in my perspective, embracing an evolving nature of my own researcher positionality (Holmes, 2020). Social unrest, political differences, global health pandemic, economic pressures, family, and social changes contributed to varied ways of living and working, acknowledging leaders are not exempt from pressures. The context and speed of change, compelled

leaders to adjust course quickly, potentially without tools or preparation to navigate remarkable events. Acknowledging the leader and follower well-being relationship (Braun & Peus, 2018; Ilies et al., 2005) supported a need to address LWB. Understanding leaders' well-being experiences may positively contribute to leaders and followers' well-being relationships and to organizational performance and practice.

Reflecting on workplace change, from 1990 to 2018, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) employment grew 79% (from 9.7 to 17.3 million), whereas overall employment only grew 34% (Funk & Parker, 2018). Leaders are managing more workers and diverse kinds of workers, adding to complexities and pressures of leadership. Added intricacies include an explosion in technology arenas with computer workers quadrupling (338% increase) from 1990 to 2018 (Funk & Parker, 2018). The addition of computer workers, technology disruption and adoption, all change the landscape of who and what leaders manage, how leaders manage, and from where they manage. LWB could inform research, practice, and application within leadership and human resource development (HRD).

Even before impacts from the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), presented ten workplace trends for 2019. Focusing on wellness and diverse leader skill requirements, added trends included:

- fostering worker and robot relationships,
- creating workplace and work schedule flexibility,
- improving gender diversity,
- mental health investments,
- addressing remote worker loneliness,
- workforce upskilling,
- soft skills focus,
- preventing burnout,
- and preparing for the future workforce generations.

These trends relate to well-being, acknowledging the expansion of responsibilities placed on leaders. Along with the required skills and capabilities to manage a significant amount of change, leaders need to manage their well-being. Adding the incremental impacts from the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, considers an intensified awareness and relevancy for concepts including leaders' well-being.

Importance

McKinsey & Company (2020) alluded to LWB importance by suggesting mental health is the coming workplace revolution. However, not entirely unexpected news, recognizing the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) acknowledged burnout as a medical condition in 2019. The WHO suggested burnout is caused by chronic workplace stress. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) suggested nearly one in four Americans has a mental health or substance abuse disorder (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Over 10 years (2007 to 2017), McKinsey & Company found the percentage of medical claims associated with behavioral health (including both mental illnesses and addictions) more than doubled. Further, McKinsey & Company asserted impacts of COVID-19 may stimulate the prevalence of behavioral health conditions. Accepting leaders as humans also requires accepting leaders' vulnerability, where humans and leaders have burnout, workplace stress, and behavioral health experiences.

Harvard Business Review (HBR, 2018) noted billions of dollars are lost each year due to depression, contrasted with \$4 returned to the economy for every \$1 spent caring for people with mental health issues. Accepting leaders' influence on followers' well-being, extrapolates the potential economic impact found by developing and applying LWB to the study of leadership. Where we recognize leaders have followers, and if well-being helps leaders, a multiplier effect spreads impact to followers, organizations, and society.

HBR (2018) also reinforced the positive link between authenticity and wellness, versus negatively implications of faking wellness and anxiety. This linkage further supports a relationship between authentic leadership and follower well-being (Braun & Peus, 2018; Ilies et al., 2005). Continuing, HBR (2018) embraced more research, openness, and willingness to talk about mental health and wellness. All these factors suggested support for leaders' well-being as a research topic.

LWB also demonstrates an important interdisciplinary approach. Bridging business and education, LWB embraces adult education concepts with human resource development (HRD). Viewed through my lens, this contribution added to the research and built on the practice of and HRD field of study. Coming from a business background, I recognize the importance of well-being for leaders, also seen through technology advances, the study of education, and spanning across the disciplines who acknowledged a need for leaders' well-being in the literature. This research seeks to apply concepts and experiences to leadership's vast and complex world. Eisenhart and DeHaan (2005) suggested an interdisciplinary approach facilitates collaboration, embraces an appropriate balance of breadth and depth, and promotes integration between research and education. The study of

leadership spans across disciplines, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, research agendas, and areas for practical application. Excitement, anticipation, and opportunity exist to explore LWB, providing input to future research, practice, and application.

Theoretical and Critical Concepts

Paradigm

An interpretivist approach aligned well to intentional seeking of meaningful LWB experiences, employing features of understanding, interpreting data, and self-reflection. The features of interpretivism paired well with the main research question, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences*. This methods' manuscript focused on the supporting research question asking, *what are leaders' stories of well-being?* These leaders' stories require interpretation through reflection and meaning making. Supporting interpretivism as an applicable and accepted paradigm, acknowledged this study's focus to understand leaders' well-being experiences and meaning making. Further, through interpretivism, exemplified the focus "to understand the situated meaning of a human in the world" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 220). Interpretivisms' key features of seeking to understand phenomena, interpreting data, and using self-reflection aligned well with the study's intent.

Framing interpretivism under constructivism aimed to explore findings through meaning making in the narrative. Thematic findings of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care and resources from Scott & Holyoke's (2021) integrative literature review informed interview protocol and study construction. This study was founded on the recognized lack of scholarly depth of leaders' well-being as a concept, itself. Constructivism embraces perspective where "reality and knowledge reside in the minds of individuals and knowledge may be uncovered by unpacking individual experiences" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 56). Uncovering and exploring reality and knowledge existing in leaders' own minds, meaningfully paired interpretivism and constructivism.

Theory and Conceptual Models

Conceptual frameworks included Bass and Stogdill's (1990) "mentally healthy leader" and Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self Determination Theory (SDT). These concepts selected as an outcome of the integrative literature review and from findings demonstrating a lack of scholarly literature defining LWB (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). The integrative literature review focused on LWB as an intrapersonal concept, looking inwardly at leaders' sources and detractors to managing well-being.

Mentally Healthy Leader

Bass and Stogdill's (1990) mentally healthy leader concept promoted leaders' balance, both in work and self-concept. Investigation through the integrative literature review brought forth awareness of the limited mention of leaders' own well-being. Bass and Stogdill's (1990) explicit depiction of the "mentally healthy leader" was an exception to a written reference to leaders' own well-being. This exception led to the selection of the "mentally healthy leader" as a contributing concept. The "mentally healthy leader" concept framed the research and provided a lens to construct observations through empirical study (Trochim et al., 2016). A mentally healthy leader is defined as holding understanding of self, understanding of motivations and identity, while maintaining continuity, predictability, and decisions aligned with self-understanding. The mentally healthy leader holds realistic expectations, tolerance, self-awareness, and an ability to adjust (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

Self-Determination Theory

Self Determination Theory (SDT) was selected as the well-being framework, elicited from the literature, and used as a conceptual framework to view the empirical study. SDT embraces three essential needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Ryan et al., 2008). SDT's three needs are the added lenses through which interview questions were derived and informed data collection and analysis. In reviewing the literature, I looked at sources acknowledging the SDT needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness. I used the SDT lens to focus my literature review, acknowledging SDT as a conceptual framework, then viewing the key themes coming forth from the literature as viewed through the SDT lens. From the literature, the key themes of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources were developed (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). The intrapersonal elements of leaders' well-being, informed study construction, interview questions, methods of approach, being careful not to lead participants with initial findings. Striving for narrative inquiry, an exploration into leaders' meaning-making experiences provided alignment and connect back to the purpose of this study, to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences?

Integrative Literature Review

Torraco's (2005, 2016) integrative literature review approach formed the foundation of the study. The integrative review found limited scholarly support for LWB. The literature showed solid support for the relationship between leadership and employee well-being, yet little reference to leaders' well-being itself. The lack of understanding for leaders' well-being, prompted the need for this empirical study. The empirical approach (Trochim et al., 2016) seeks to observe leaders while

they share well-being experiences through interviews. The literature review elicited four common and connected themes contributing to developing the LWB concept: mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Viewing the literature through Bass and Stogdill's (1990) "mentally healthy leader" and Ryan et al.'s (2008) SDT, allowed the opportunity to develop LWB, synthesizing leaders' mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources. The four themes identified in the integrative literature review (Scott & Holyoke, 2021) are outlined below, providing context to inform observations from this empirical study (Trochim et al., 2016).

Mindfulness

Under Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self Determination Theory, Roche et al. (2014) characterized leaders' mindfulness as heightened awareness and associations with leaders' psychological capital provide a mediating effect on leaders' mental well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Dewey's (1933) ideas of absorption, attention, and attitudes (open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility) exemplified mindfulness through awareness, acceptance, and reflection. Application of Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) flow resonated with mindfulness, further embracing Dewey's absorption, and living in the present moment (Scott & Holyoke, 2021).

Self-Actualization

The theme of self-actualization embraced SDT needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness, as contributory to well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Roche and Haar (2013) suggested LWB requires leaders to synthesize goals with needs satisfaction. Leaders find self-actualization by integrating personal growth with values alignment, balancing self-expression with selflessness, and embracing humanness while using potential (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). These goals of self-actualization drive at leaders' intrinsic needs, supporting their well-being. Burns (1978) added learning to self-actualization, pushing leaders towards a willingness to learn and be taught.

Self-Care

Self-care connected mindful awareness and reflection, further embracing self-actualization and authenticity. Specifically, leaders' intuition guides effective choices and leveraging choices may optimize well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Recognizing self-care as a responsibility and not a luxury allows leaders to optimize balance between selflessness and self-care. Leaders tend to neglect their own well-being in challenging times. Leaders who view self-care as an opportunity and not an obligation, find positive contribution to their well-being. Modeling self-care for followers, demonstrates personal acceptance and organizational support of well-being in the workplace. Offering permission for self-care, recognizes the importance of individuals' needs. Where leaders'

well-being must embrace elements of healthy habits, recharge rituals, restoration, resilience, and recovery (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Modeling behaviors further reinforced Sy et al.'s (2005) mood contagion and transmission of well-being from leader to follower.

Resources

Resources surfaced as a fourth theme from the literature. Leaders limited resources require effective resource management to support their well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) amplified focus on effectively managing and protecting critical leaders' resources. Occurrences of burnout, exhaustion, and distress take place when resources are less effectively managed. Leaders find benefit in managing resources through self-care, awareness and needs recognition (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Burns (1978) reinforced how leaders require a strategic approach to resource management, seeking balance with using resources, and not completely "using them up" (Scott & Holyoke, 2021).

Methodology and Design

Selecting a narrative inquiry approach aligned well with the research question; the paradigm, researcher role and positionality, leader as the unit of analysis, and LWB as the phenomena of study. The purpose of this study was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences.

Logic

Narrative inquiry was selected as the qualitative protocol, supported by Dewey, Geertz, and Bruner for effective "narrative approaches in social research..." (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 227). Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) initial use of narrative inquiry as a methodology to describe teachers' personal stories, reinforced Dewey's focus on life as education and meaning making exploration. Geertz viewed narratives as stories about us, well aligned for leaders to share well-being experiences (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Bruner suggested narrative includes both telling and knowing, where knowledge is created and constructed through stories of lived experiences and their meanings (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Selecting narrative approach allowed focus on individual LWB experiences, enabling exploration and hearing leaders' voices.

Accepted Steps and Protocols

Recognizing how "narrative research has many forms" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 67), this study focused on the storied nature of leaders' well-being experiences. For purposes of this study, the narrative approach, "begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals"

(Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 67). The told stories are of leaders' well-being experiences. Further, embracing Creswell and Poth's (2018) assertion that certain features define the boundaries of narrative studies, yet are not all required, nor exhaustive; this study focuses on the narrative stories told of leaders' individual experiences, shedding "light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 68-69). For the research reporting, the narrative approach included four key steps. First, interview transcripts provided a written and documented report, used to focus on leaders as participants and seeking understanding of the nature of their well-being stories. Second, documentation states the study rationale, capturing the significance of the individual leaders' experiences and related data procedures. Third, data inputs from the interview dialogues allowed for re-storying, theorizing, and narrating. Finally, applying interpretivism strived to seek understanding through "interpreting patterns of meaning" as expressed in LWB stories (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 106).

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations recognized the personal and sensitive nature of LWB stories. Recognizing my role as a researcher and positioned as an outsider, acknowledged my positionality and implications on the sensitive nature of the interview dialogue (Holmes, 2020). Leader-participants remained confidential through data management strategies aligned with IRB approved expectations (see Appendix A). Data analysis and transcription included transition of leaders' identities to pseudonyms, removal of identifying information, and focused on LWB meaning-making experiences. Re-storying reinforced study focus, conceptually examining LWB and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences.

Data Methods and Procedures

Data Collection and Generation

Data was collected through seven leader interviews. Feedback was provided to the participants to allow their expansion of their narrative. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Each interview was an iteration of data collection, notation, observation, review, analysis. The transcripts were viewed and analyzed through the lens of narrative inquiry. Focusing on the story nature of narrative permits targeted participant selection allowing for study depth and rich data. The selection of seven leader-participants is based on Creswell and Poth's (2018) qualitative research guidelines seeking "extensive detail" (p. 158). Finding "in narrative research... many examples with one or two individuals" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). Lindsay and Schwind (2016) suggested the number of participants for "in-depth interviews may be a few as one or potentially more" (p. 15). A

leader-participant population of seven allows for data depth and supports the critical case approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Interview Protocol

Interview protocol (Appendix D) included open-ended questions probing deeply into leaders' experiences with prompts allowing leader participants to guide the narrative inquiry. Seeking leaders' thick descriptions of well-being experiences enabled adoption of descriptive modes of explanation, with a body of questions probing social processes, relationships, linguistic characteristics, structural properties, and journeys (Franzosi, 1998).

Participants

Leaders were selected from the "Top TED Talks on Leadership." This selection employed a sampling methodology seeking a cross-cutting selection of leader participants aimed at rich study contribution and interdisciplinary leadership experience. Application of "critical-case sampling as a form of a purposeful sampling strategy" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 315) aligned study depth with a selection of qualified candidates. Identifying TED Talks speakers with millions of views targeted a case-based population of leaders to dramatically illustrate the LWB phenomenon. Targeted participants held leadership talks garnering over two million views with related well-being topics. Five leader-participants were pulled from the initial TED Talk leadership selection criteria (four with 2M+ views, one with 1.5M+ views). Plus, two snowball leader-participants were referred by colleagues via the TED Talk selection criteria. The first five participants were surveyed for potential snowball participant recommendations. Two of the participants suggested names for interview consideration. Each of the two snowball participants held leadership experience and offered interest and availability for the study. The snowball participants credentials were reviewed to ensure study alignment and potential for rich data contribution.

The seven leaders who participated in the study held various leadership positions and recent leadership experience. The leaders worked across academia, private and public sector consulting, leading their own firms, conducting speaking engagements, filling roles as writers, and thought leaders. Several participants previously worked in large international organizations and filled "C" suite roles, acting as a "chief" and in a leadership capacity.

Lack of agreed upon, defined, centralized, cross-industry or academic, leadership awards, criteria, or recognition, opened the door to this critical case sampling method of leader-participant selection. Choosing peer-support (Tafvelin et al., 2019) as a model for affirmation, asserted the

number of views as a form of recognized peer acknowledgement. Selected leaders were recognized for their span of influence and provided study representativeness. Various methods of participant engagement included email solicitation, website inquiry, and using public or social forums to connect (industry affiliation, groups, LinkedIn, university pages). Selected leader-participants provided accessibility and availability for the interviews, offered their interest in the study and suggested the potential for rich data contribution.

A total of 149 “leadership” talks were identified from the TED Talk website. Focusing on talks with 2 million or more views, produced 70 talks, and 64 speakers (five speakers having more than one talk). A criteria-based approach created an available critical-case speaker sample, from which leader-participants were selected. Added leader credentials bolstered their candidacy as top contenders. Critical-case sampling approach aimed to reinforce an interdisciplinary approach to the study of leadership, and to develop LWB (Eisenhart & DeHaan, 2005). TED Talks (2021) characterized study candidates as leadership experts, entrepreneurs, psychologists, economists, executives, educators, politicians, engineers, and other. To ensure a focus on leaders with actual leadership experience, participants noted solely as “experts” were eliminated from the target population. The candidate leaders’ breadth of experience embraced an interdisciplinary approach and drove towards rich data depth, seeking a wide encapsulation of LWB experiences.

Challenges persisted with the approach, including lack of direct contact information, less than timely responses, participants who declined, and those who never responded at all. Several leader-participants responded as feeling unqualified for the study and shared their apprehension with exploring well-being experiences. Several initially hesitant leaders ended up accepting the interviews through gentle encouragement in email exchanges and by receiving added study context.

Recording and Data Transformation

Study interviews were conducted using the online, virtual Zoom platform during a time most appropriate and comfortable for the interviewee. Interviews were recorded on the Zoom platform and saved privately, accessible only by the research team. The doctoral student led the research study and the major professor acted in a mentoring and guiding role. The research team refers to the doctoral student and major professor.

After saving the video interviews in Zoom and using YouTube Transcript to form interview transcripts, application of Intelligent Verbatim Transcription provided for a clean, print-ready transcript, correcting for errors and distractions. I used the Intelligent Verbatim Transcription

approach to improve sentence structure, eliminate majority of paraphrasing, remove fillers, delete false starts, and eliminate repetitions. I found this transcription approach useful when further analyzing the data and seeking meaning-making.

Data Analysis and Coding

Data analysis and interpretation followed five key steps based on a recommended approach and template for narrative analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.199). Selecting narrative analysis along with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a) intended to align with research methodology, justified by study design and objectives. Beginning with managing and organizing interview data, referencing scholarly literature, I followed these key steps:

1. Managed and organized the data through effective file management.
2. Read transcripts, make notes, and form initial codes.
3. Added reading sequences, allowed for memos, and captured ideas. Identified and described patterns and transitioned stories into a chronology.
4. Data was further described and moved from classifying codes into categories, categories into findings, located epiphanies within stories and identified contextual materials.
5. Data was then represented and visualized through re-storying and meaning interpretation (as presented in Figure 6).

Partnered with narrative analysis coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018), thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a) helped to develop preliminary findings based on leaders' well-being shared stories. Re-storying allowed the research team to view meaning making and well-being experiences through their lens. Coding the narrative analysis included chronology (epiphanies, events), plot (characters, settings, problems, actions, resolution), three-dimensional space (interaction, continuity, situation), and findings (findings or themes a, b, c). Coding followed Franzosi's (1998) recommended structure for narrative analysis and Creswell's (2018) narrative analysis sequencing and template. Each narrative coding component aimed towards an ultimate story representing the data in a meaningful fashion. Objectives of the narrative approach included ensuring story representation was authentic, effectively and ethically analyzed, and participants' voices were heard and not lost. Contributions to the analysis process, included excel matrices, scapple mind-mapping exercises, data visualization, researcher reflection, constructive dialogue, and iterative transcript review.

The research team captured and coded quotations for each of the leaders, connected codes to categories and categories developed into findings. Seeking normalization, the research team met

regularly, communicated via virtual and electronic means, setting and clarifying expectations. The shared files and observations, contributed to normalization. Each researcher worked independently, then checked in with the other researcher to review and validate findings. Data saturation leveraged an iterative approach, arriving towards rich data and depth, and recognizing the additive nature of qualitative data. An aim for conceptual depth focused on development and iteration, as opposed to attaining a pinnacle of data saturation. Conceptual depth strives at sufficient depth of understanding, versus completion towards a fixed point. Further supporting this approach,

Nelson (2016), echoing Dey's (1999) earlier view, argues that the term 'saturation' is itself problematic, as it intuitively lends itself to thinking in terms of a fixed point and a sense of 'completeness'. He thus argues that 'conceptual depth' may be a more appropriate term—at least from a grounded theory perspective—whereby the researcher considers whether sufficient depth of understanding has been achieved in relation to emergent theoretical categories. (Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1901).

Iteration reinforced the applicability of qualitative study, narrative approach, and using snowball participants. As an exploratory study, this iterative process supported a cumulative approach towards saturation and reinforced the objective to understand LWB experiences. Interview responses added data enrichment, capturing "richer and more insightful" ideas, recognized patterns and developed findings. Striving towards conceptual depth allowed narrative inquiry to probe deeply beneath the surface of LWB.

Study timing did not allow for member-checking. Post-study, I reached out to each leader participant for validation of their leaders' well-being story representation. A copy of manuscript two was sent to each of the seven participants requesting review and validation of their well-being story representation. Five of the seven participants (71%) responded to the request. One participant offered validation, writing,

"Thank you again for the opportunity – what I read here feels on par with my experiences... I'm not sure I was able to contribute much to these findings, which perhaps is part and parcel for what you found through these interviews."

A second respondent wrote, "Thanks for sharing. As a dissertation chair I really enjoyed reading it. Please do let me know when it is published, so that I can cite it." The third and fourth respondents confirmed receipt of the email and offered to read the manuscript. The fifth respondent acknowledged receipt and offered, "I'm so glad you had rich participation and insights... Thank you for sharing

this.” The leaders review of the manuscript and findings provided validation as a supplemental check to strengthen the research. The leaders’ review provided support for the manuscript and methodological integrity (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Figure 6

The Narrative of Leaders’ Well-Being: A Progression to Discovery

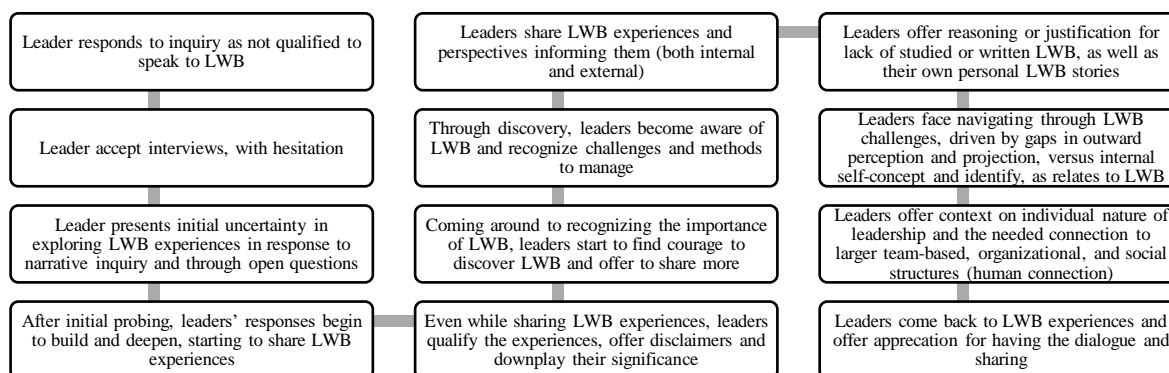


Figure 6: Leaders’ Well-Being Data Represented and Visualized through Narrative

Findings

The developed findings sought to provide an answer to the main research question, asking, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences*. A narrative inquiry and thematic analysis approach provided useful structure informing rich findings through deep qualitative data and insightful investigation. The inquiry delved deeply into the supporting research question, seeking to answer, what are leaders’ stories of well-being? The purpose of this research was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. Narrative analysis sought to capture linguistic characteristics (Franzosi, 1998), plus bringing out the sociology hiding behind the language used. Linguistic nuances found similarities in leaders’ stories of their well-being experiences, inclusive of language and word choice. Narrative approach, recognized the social nature of leaders’ stories, being interpretive, social products, produced in unique contexts, and necessarily biased. As Tomashevski (1965) offered, a “story is a journey from one situation to another” (Franzosi, 1998, p. 520). Franzosi continued, “a story, in other words, implies a change in situations as expressed by the unfolding of a specific sequence of events” (p. 52). This study sought to understand experiences, based on how leaders tell their stories. Through this storied method, the research team strived to answer the research questions and address the study’s purpose, to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. (Franzosi, 1998, p. 532).

While seeking to develop LWB, it remained important to answer the “how” aspect of the research question. The purpose of the study was to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. The narrative story is shown in Figure 6. This visual represents the progression of the leader participants through their well-being exploration. In general, each leader followed this progression. Figure 6 aims to exemplify the experience of the leaders as part of the leaders’ well-being investigation. Navigating both *what* is LWB and *how* leaders tell their well-being stories, provokes a new area of research and through a previously uncharted perspective. The presented findings represent categories elicited through analysis (see Figure 7). Figure 7 is a refined view of the narrative story of leaders’ well-being exploration. Figure 6 shows the progression for the leaders, while Figure 7 parlays the progression into study findings. The represented categories seek to provide preliminary findings relevant to human resource and leadership development (HRD).

Figure 7

Leaders’ Well-Being: The Narrative Story

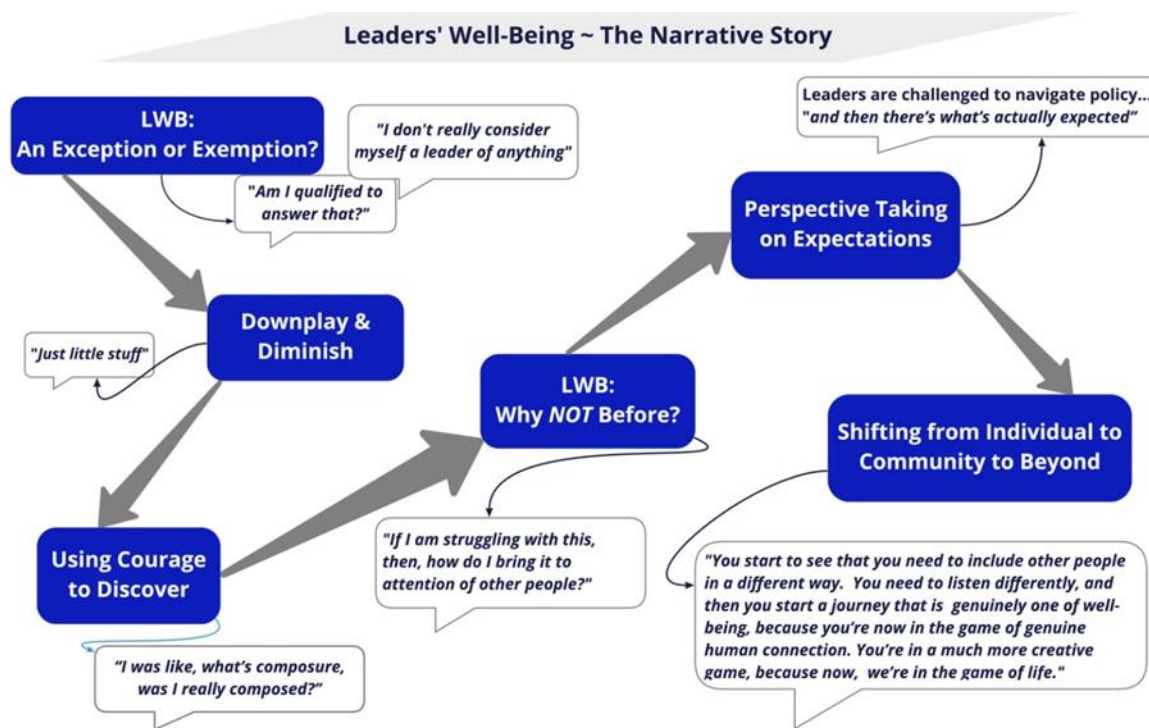


Figure 7: Leaders’ Well-Being-The Narrative Story

Finding: LWB an exception or exemption?

Leader-participants were asked to share a story or example as a case study of their well-being experiences. This “ask” was not the first interview question, however, a delicately sought narrative, building rapport, and gently easing into the personal nature of LWB. Biographical, role-oriented questions initiated the conversation, leading into deeper dialogue constructing well-being for leaders and provoking meaning-making through described experiences. Each leader-participant offered exceptions, words to alleviate burden from their well-being experiences. Sharing generalizations, leader-participants redirected questions from themselves, and deflecting more generally towards leadership as a study, occupation, or field.

Several leader-participants redirected responses through words and phrasing including “I don’t have data here,” or “am I qualified to answer that,” or “not for me” (but for others), “one of my colleagues,” or “that’s the way that ‘we’ as leaders” or “the best thing leaders can do is...” Leaders’ language choices suggested a need to defer to others, to qualify statements, or to generalize by removing direct focus, attention, or accountability. Leaders’ attempts for self-preservation, aimed at preserving leadership acumen and expertise, protecting leaders’ role, exempting from ownership, or rising above consequences. Deflections and repositioning suggested that well-being is a difficult topic for leaders to navigate, supported by the interview dialogue. I would suggest these findings offer how leaders’ feel not equipped to handle well-being across all cases. In some pockets, leaders offered their capabilities in managing well-being, while acknowledging more broadly that this is an unsupported area for leaders overall.

Finding: Downplay and diminish

Downplaying was another tactic leader-participants used when answering well-being questions. Leaders felt pressure to handle well-being yet felt ill-equipped and unprepared to handle those well-being pressures. Leaders downplayed well-being as though it should not be difficult or a big deal. Attempts at deflection and moderated responses were found through leaders’ language choices including, “nothing dramatic,” “I don’t feel this way about myself,” [it’s] “just little stuff,” or “little things,” and “the small stuff.” Perceptions and expectations drove leaders to underplay or diminish their own well-being experiences. Analysis showed leaders believed they should be able to handle, understand and describe their well-being experiences. However, when describing their well-being experiences, leaders paused, talked about their lack of well-being experience, and had limited explanation when responding to the inquiry. Throughout interviews, leaders developed added

awareness regarding sources and detractors of well-being; however, continued offering disclaimers, either for their own comfort or in their pursuits to arrive at their own well-being answer.

Finding: Using courage to discover

Throughout interviews, progressing through questions, leaders' responses exemplified courage, offering reflection and growing awareness. Recognizing earlier qualifiers, downplaying, and exempting; leader-participants began to open and share, leveraging spoken narrative as a source for deeper exploration. Interview prompts and probing aimed to dig deeper into the nature of leaders' social stories, and their chosen verbalized responses. One leader-participant offered "I wanted to laugh when you [the interviewer] said composure," "I was like, what's composure, was I really composed?" Another leader-participant spoke of "thriving" and "this is the point I was kind of making up, about thriving and you picked up on it, people don't think that they are allowed to thrive." An additional leader shared, "that was the moment of, wow, its lonely at the top... this is what they're talking about... I get it... it is lonely here." Other leader-participants described their well-being experiences as, "it's actually daunting... you get to think back and go, wow... I never really thought about leader well-being until it left..." "I left the meeting feeling really ungrounded," "it takes emotional energy." Leaders' verbalized reflections offered moments of growing awareness, in-action, during interviews. Moments of epiphany and realization suggested leaders had not previously taken time to pause and fully consider their well-being. As interviews progressed, leader-participants' comfort surfaced through candid responses unfolding a dialogue contributing to the development of leaders' well-being as a concept.

Finding: Leaders' well-being—why NOT before?

Leader-participants demonstrated courage through their interview responses. Leaders' elaborated responses showed growing awareness throughout the interview process. Growing awareness brings visibility to leaders' lack of prior well-being exploration. Learning how seven widely viewed, highly visible, leader-participants, with cumulative leadership TED Talk views totaling over 10M, were reluctant to talk about their own well-being, begs for further research. Recognizing the need, provokes questions of why leaders are not thinking of, talking about, writing about, or sharing their well-being experiences. The study shows how leaders approach a narrative inquiry into well-being, stepping in delicately, with hesitancy, and often qualified with disclaimers. Realizing well-being is a real topic to contend with, leaders seemed to wade into water, starting shallow, slowly immersing to their waists, being reluctant or hesitant to plunge into well-being waters. Leaders began exploring connections to what may be causing or contributing to their

hesitancy, reluctance, or avoidance. Leaders' avoidance may be seen as their hidden stories of well-being, ones they have yet to reveal to themselves or to others. It appeared as these well-being experiences were being shared for the first time in our interview dialogue.

Several leader-participants offered reasoning for their hesitation, as part of interview dialogue. One reason for leaders' hesitation in exploring their well-being, links to leaders' training and development, where well-being is lacking. One leader offered in the interview...

[Leaders] may or may not get any scaffolding, training or development for the knowledge, skills, behaviors, they're being asked to do... So, in some ways, they're being asked to operate in a place that's uncomfortable... or unforgiving... and the view is going to feel awkward... and it's going to feel, in some ways, threatening.

Another potential reason offered for leaders' hesitation in verbalizing and narrating their LWB, may be a symptom of leadership itself and the burden of speed.

I think, speed is very rarely our friend... and we operate at high speed... and it's like a snow globe... we keep shaking it up, we keep moving, we keep moving, we keep moving. And then when we stop, settle, we see things differently, the whole business world is just designed to operate at such high speed that people never, ever stop.

Leaders' feeling time pressure from the burden of speed, appreciated the lack of time to settle and be aware of well-being. Speed and burden may be contributing factors for lack of LWB dialogue or literature. Lack of dialogue and published literature may further exacerbate the lack of comfort with leaders and their willingness to discuss their well-being.

Another area where leaders offered reasoning or justification for trepidation to explore well-being, was based on fear of others' perception.

One of my colleagues this year said, 'I'm walking every morning because I know I need it'... and is. 'I'm logging off my computer at eight o'clock' ...and does. And [my colleague] stuck to it. And I think one of my fears is that if I do that, people think [I'm] prioritizing [my]self over everybody else. I don't think that about [my colleague], but that's my own block I have to move through.

Expectations set for leaders included self-driven or internalized expectations, along with pre-conceived or anticipated expectations from others. Leaders' who are worried about others'

perceptions or who hold a preoccupation with perception management, may limit dialogue and limit contributions to the scholarly literature.

Finding: Perspective taking on expectations

Leaders spoke of expectations driving, influencing, and relating to their well-being experiences. Leaders' expectations are generated from internal forces (within leaders themselves) and external forces (imposed by organizational, social, team-oriented, and familial structures). Leaders spoke of expectations imposing influence on their behaviors, ways of thinking, being and doing. They used words and phrases exemplifying expectations, referring to leaders with a "hero mentality," "when you step into [a leaders'] role, you serve more than one person," "the leader is seen as, defender of the team," where "leaders' health is just kind of assumed," and "there is just this perverse expectation." Leaders spoke of imposed expectations where, "we are asking more and more of people in general, just as humans. And leaders are no exception." Expectations wear on leaders, erode their well-being and place added burden on internal resources. One leader described expectations placed on leaders, not to put on own mask first, instead "the leader's role is to maybe take care of everybody else, themselves last, or their wellness is just another thing that they need to worry about."

Leaders' examples suggest possible justification for a dearth of literature on LWB. Leaders' reluctance or hesitancy to speak of their well-being, contributes to the lack of dialogue in the larger LWB space. Recognizing internal and external expectations, leaders' find reason to exempt themselves from the well-being conversation. With justification, leaders themselves, appear to, forsaking acknowledgement of the known connection between their behaviors and followers' well-being (Braun & Peus, 2018; Ilies et al., 2005). On the surface, it appears simple enough to put your mask on first. Or the adage, you can only pour from a full cup. However, these words do not show leaders embracing acts of self-preservation in practice. Instead, there was a disconnect between words and actions. Leaders are obligated to manage and navigate the resulting gap. One leader offered how COVID-19 has exacerbated, accelerated, and highlighted gaps and challenges for leaders, stating...

There's a lot of happy words about how organizations are doing this or investing in that...

The distance between the do-say-ratio has never been worse than it has been now. It's not that COVID19 introduced the problem, the problem has existed. It [COVID19] accelerated its visibility, and it has frayed all of the challenges that were always there beneath the surface. They're now visible, and they're fraying faster than we've ever seen.

Another leader-participant reinforced a distinction between action and words, adding to the narrative and further complementing challenges leaders face. Leaders are challenged to understand and navigate “the policy... and then there’s what’s actually expected.” This leader exemplified the gap between actions and words. The “policy” may speak to organizational policy, team/unit-structure policy, or targeted individual leader policy. Regardless, leaders are left to mind the gap, and seek to understand between what is said, what they say, versus what is done. Leaders must read between the lines, while preserving their teams’ performance, managing expectations, and finding ways to optimize their well-being. Leaders spoke to the expectations of navigating conflicting messages, while still seeking ways to model behaviors...

It takes setting that example... that means don’t send the email at 11:30[PM], even though you say ‘oh I want us to prioritize nights and weekends’... *you have to be showy on that* (emphasis added). Figure out how to schedule it to send later. Or even better, take the night off. You need to be able to do that. Little stuff you do like that, as a leader matters. It very much is that you put your own mask on first and be showy about the fact that you’re wearing it.

Leaders recognized the need to model behaviors for themselves, followers, and peers. Modeling behaviors presents leaders with opportunities to show through actions what effective well-being looks like. Given these opportunities, leaders still experience conflicts, where they, themselves, might not be particularly good at their own well-being management. Meaning, it appeared easier for leaders to attribute effective approaches to well-being in a more, generalized fashion. Leaders noted what “leaders should do,” recognizing where they were less successful with their own well-being. Leaders identified challenges in modeling behaviors, “I felt like, well, I have to walk the talk here, because I can’t be saying this, and then not have them do it.”

Finding: Shifting from individual to community and beyond

The leaders’ individual well-being stories, support narrative inquiry, seeking understanding and meaning making. Recognizing the importance of each of the LWB experiences, lends itself to informing a larger collective leadership conversation.

First, leader’s role, identity, and self-conception often become rolled-up and muddled together. Leaders offered here, “a lot of leaders confuse their identity with their role or title, rather than what they bring to the role or the title.” I suggest when leaders mix, “I fill a leader role” versus “I am a leader,” their sense of identity and well-being are consumed by their role. Through the interview

dialogue, leaders offered how detractors from well-being are prompted by threats to status, power, conflict, changing ways of working, and navigating new spaces. Leaders are required to navigate new spaces without the experiences, equipment, skills, knowledge, or training to effectively do so. Recognizing the significance and complexities found in leadership, suggests driving needs for effective well-being. Leaders' complexities include various elements (perceptions, expectations, burdens, opportunities, exposure, visibility, landscape changes, technology disruptors, and COVID-19 experiences) exemplifying the needs for effective leaders' well-being management.

Figure 8

Developing Findings: Leaders' Well-Being

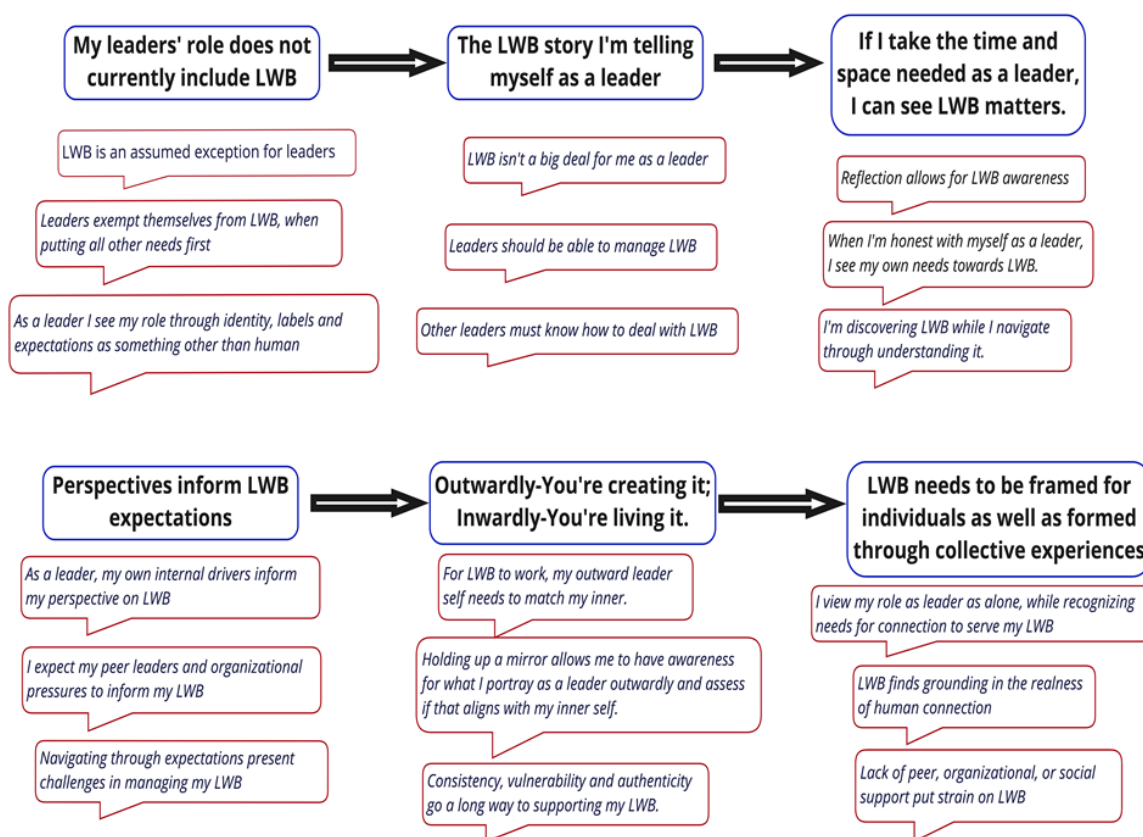


Figure 8: Developing Findings-Leaders' Well-Being

Each leader's uniqueness relates to their individualized well-being needs. Future study may further help to define leaders' well-being best practices. Based on this study's findings, a focus on leaders' individual needs starts to define how leaders describe their well-being needs, plus adding in the literature themes (mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources). Leaders offered

personalized methods for managing their well-being. Reflecting on their well-being experiences, leaders found useful methods to manage their well-being, including time and space, cultivating self-acceptance, offering permission, practicing self-care through meaningful application, sense of real or perceived autonomy, and seeking well-being understanding.

Each leader-participant spoke of their individual role as part of larger collective needs, viewing their role as part of a larger picture. Acknowledging leaders' exploration in the individual well-being space, leaders' well-being connections to teams, organizations, and larger social structures was just as important. LWB requires an individual and collective view to be fully comprehensive and implemented in practice.

Conversely, impacting well-being, separation of roles and spheres prompts added pressures and intricacies leaders feel forced to manage... One leader offered,

Balance implies there's these different spheres in our life and our job is to make sure we're spending enough time in each sphere. But, the reality is (we learned this over the last year and a half), they have always actually been overlapping and intersecting and so, to my mind, the only solution to that is to not try and come up with a policy that allows for work-life-balance, but to say and to make people in your organization actually believe you mean it that we trust you to do what is going to work best for you... to be effective here... and a decent parent, spouse, citizen, etc. outside of it.

Asserting ownership over various roles a leader must fill, within an organization, plus familial, and social structures, suggests LWB must encompass added holistic considerations.

Building on inter-relational aspects, leaders relayed well-being experiences seeking peer support, finding others to share with and form connections, and desires to cultivate relationships. Leaders offered contributions to well-being, emphasizing human needs for connection are not lost on leaders, inciting the importance of human connection. A leader stated,

You start to see that you need to include other people in a different way. You need to listen differently, and then you start a journey that is genuinely one of well-being, because you're now in the game of genuine human connection. You're in a much more creative game, because now, we're in the game of life.

Leaders did not jump at such conclusions, deeper connective discussions evolved through the seven interviews and progressive reflection. Commentary on leaders' need for connection offered added context resulting from COVID-19 related experiences, where this leader acknowledged,

COVID-19 has accelerated, it's always been there, but it's always been sort of underneath the folds. It's accelerated the visibility of how the increasing movement toward remote or hybrid working conditions exacerbates the need for humans to feel connection to the people that they are working with.

Leaders describing their well-being experiences offers insight into challenges with changing ways of working, plus how COVID-19 has exacerbated connection challenges. Leaders seized opportunities to state needs to "connect individual to collective" through well-being exploration, and how "that connectivity is really pointing to a cultural need." Findings suggest the LWB conversation is broader than a single individual and must encompass individual needs plus connection to others through team, organizational, and social structures. Leaders who view themselves and other leaders as standalone "heroes" position leaders to carry burden all on their own. Recognizing resources, capabilities, and training, as positive contributions to leaders' individual well-being, leaders' connections, peer-support, organizational relationships, and social, collective opportunities must not be forgotten. Finding leaders connection to feel less alone in their well-being, encourages assumptions to wash away, raising visibility to other leaders' strife and further provoking well-being conversations.

Discussion

Central contributions to HRD include the development of LWB along with leaders' characterization of their well-being experiences. For purposes of this research, I used Russ-Eft's (2000) definition of HRD: "a systematic and planned intervention to develop individuals for leadership positions and to ensure current and future organizational performance. This definition implies examining both individual and organization benefits of the intervention" (pp. 52-53). Examining leaders' well-being in the HRD context and with this definition emphasized the nature of leadership being impactful across individuals and organizations.

Study contributions to HRD and leadership development, may be considered relevant, given recent events including the COVID-19 Global pandemic, political and social events, and increased focus on well-being. Developing LWB through narrative inquiry and thematic analysis provides progressive transition through leaders' stories (see Figure 8). The findings demonstrate an initial

exempting for leaders, proffering disclaimer for study participation and realization of expertise, with leaders' forsaking knowledge of well-being. Moving beyond initial exceptions, leaders started to share and explore their well-being experiences, while still downplaying and diminishing their significance. Leaders showed courage by acknowledging their LWB experiences and starting to discover the meaningful impact of those experiences on their own well-being understanding.

Through discovery, leaders recognized their participation in well-being experiences and their relevance to inform LWB as an area of development, theory, practice, and application. As a researcher, I appreciated leaders sharing their experiences and further provoking the question as to why LWB was not previously found in scholarly literature. Leaders' stories offer insights into possible reasoning, including varied perspective taking, positioning leader lens to look inward and outward, and considering leaders' selves from an external viewpoint. Added offerings suggested leaders' burden of responsibility on resources, placed strain on well-being, and limited permission for leaders to find time for well-being exploration. Complexities are compounded by viewing leadership solely as a self-concept, plus adding the communal and collective needs. These complexities suggest leaders must find ways to explore well-being for oneself and as part of a larger leaders' community.

Implications for HRD Policy and Practice

The lack of standardized leadership development implemented through HRD practices suggested continued perpetuation of labels placed on leaders. Through leaders' stories, each participant found a path through the well-being waters. Leaders steered to a point of human connection and needs to recognize the importance of social relationships. Several leaders spoke to the importance of teams, focused on organizational and peer support, and expressed need for community and social connections. Through reflection, leaders' awareness grew. I also believe it important to recognize where several of the leader-participants stood in terms of their career. Viewed through my lens, I saw their position as a potentially privileged point in their career, allowing for benefits such as flexibility, choice, autonomy, and financial freedom. This desirable aspect may have bolstered the participants ability to pause and reflect and feel grateful for their placement. Recognizing earlier challenges, provokes these leaders to accept well-being needs. However, recognizing that explicit leaders' well-being exploration was previously lacking for each leader interviewed. The lack of prior LWB exploration provides justification for this study and informs LWB development (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). The findings provide opportunity to inform and provide important input towards future HRD research and practice.

Implications for policy and practice include potential addition of well-being to program content, cultivating holistic leadership development approaches. Understanding and applying LWB to grow and develop future leaders may allow for LWB to propagate and further cultivate awareness across leaders and HRD circles. Leveraging the development of LWB and exploration into LWB experiences, provides leaders a safe space for peer-to-peer leaders' development and a growing awareness towards acceptance.

Added future research areas include exploring LWB from a non-leader's perspective, seeking outsider viewpoints and further elaborating perspective-taking. Assessing LWB in varied organizational structures or industries provokes conversations on micro versus macro cultures and concept embedding within, as relevant for organization development. Investigating demographics or characteristics of leaders related to findings may further provide input to LWB experiences.

Conclusions

Viewing this study as exploratory, provokes excitement and intrigue for future learning yet to come. Rich interview data informs and requires HRD and leadership development researchers, scholars, and practitioners to consider LWB as part of future study and application. COVID-19 and transforming ways of working provide opportunities for embracing concepts of LWB and leveraging leaders' insights, enabling effective learning and development for leaders and organizations alike. Leaders may not yet fully understand LWB; however, HRD can recognize its' necessity and importance. Acknowledging the SDT lens, also requires an assessment of leaders to successfully cultivate the three essential needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Leveraging these three needs can further build leaders' well-being capacity. Further appreciating leaders' connection to followers' well-being implores a continuation down a path seeking meaningful LWB experiences and using learnings to inform future HRD research and practical application.

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Chapter 4: Manuscript 3—Findings

Chapter 4 presents the third and final manuscript, for the purposes of this dissertation. This manuscript focuses on thematic analysis, digging deeper into the data and methodically following thematic analysis steps and protocol. Manuscript 3 has not yet been submitted to a conference or scholarly journal, at the time of this dissertation writing.

Scott, H., & Holyoke, L. (2022). *Exploring leaders' well-being experiences: A thematic analysis driving towards understanding*. [Unpublished manuscript]. University of Idaho.

Abstract

Analyzing leaders' experiences provokes discovery into their well-being. This discovery happens through the interview dialogue and leaders' opportunity to reflect and share their well-being experiences. Leaders acknowledge the impact they have on followers' well-being; yet appear to be less proactive when acknowledging their own well-being needs. Use of thematic analysis allowed for deeper exploration of leaders' well-being experiences. The main research question asks, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* The supporting sub-question probed, *how do leaders practice well-being?* These questions sought to address the study purpose, to identify leaders' practices of well-being. Understanding what well-being means for a leader embraces an individualized approach, complemented by generalized needs for connection. Acknowledging the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being requires leaders to effectively model well-being behaviors. In addition, behavior modeling necessitates leaders' consistent alignment of their outward portrayal with their inner selves. An integrative literature review conceptualizing the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being recognized leaders' intrinsic needs driving well-being, while also stimulating this investigation into leaders' needs for interrelatedness. Gaps in leadership development programs provide opportunities for including well-being as a programmatic concept and element. Additions to program content and approaches can inform holistic leadership practice, embracing leaders' well-being as an added and required competency. Finally, promoting and engaging in the leaders' well-being conversation enables constructive dialogue to further develop leaders' well-being, removing associated stigma and allowing leaders to feel connected and heard.

Keywords: thematic analysis, leadership, well-being

Exploring Leaders' Well-Being Experiences:

A Thematic Analysis Driving Towards Understanding

This manuscript leveraged thematic analysis, digging deeply into qualitative interview data, seeking understanding of leaders' well-being experiences. Through interview dialogue, leaders offered reflections on their well-being experiences, contributing a perspective for lack of scholarly evidence on leaders' well-being. Leaders acknowledged needs for consistency in actions and words and the impacts of inconsistency on followers' well-being. Accepting accountability for their role in followers' well-being, reminds leaders of the importance of managing their own required human well-being needs of connection, acceptance and awareness.

Research Goals and Purpose

This manuscript was part of a larger study. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. This study is built on an integrative literature review (Scott & Holyoke, 2021), supported by narrative inquiry focused on methods used for the empirical study (Trochim et al., 2016). The integrative literature review identified scholarly literature support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being; however, it did not define well-being for leaders themselves (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). The lack of definition for leaders' well-being suggested a need to investigate further.

The next step in the investigation was an empirical study. While the integrative literature review laid an important foundation, there was still a need to hear from leaders directly. The empirical qualitative study captured observations through interview dialogue, soliciting leaders' experiences through the narrative. The qualitative inquiry and interview methods for collecting data, provided rich input to developing the leaders' well-being concept. Recognizing the impact leaders have on followers, organizations and institutions drive the development of leaders' well-being.

Seeking to explore the collected data more deeply through thematic analysis draws codes towards categories and categories into themes. The purpose of thematic analysis aimed to discover themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021a) useful for informing future research in the study of leadership and for application in leadership practice. Thematic analysis is used to analyze leaders' responses from qualitative interviews, asking the main research question: *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* The purpose of this study was to identify leaders' practices of well-being. The supporting research question, related to this study specifically, asked, *how do leaders practice well-*

being? This purpose and question aimed to understand from leaders what their well-being practices looked or felt like, as described by leaders themselves.

Integrative Literature Review

An integrative literature review set the study's foundation. Finding support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being provoked inquiry into well-being for leaders themselves (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Leaders must manage their behaviors for known implications on followers' well-being. However, there is little scholarly evidence for conception of leaders' well-being.

From the integrative literature review, four key themes of mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources were captured as informative to the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). Present moment awareness through mindfulness suggested opportunity for leaders to embrace practices with positive potential well-being benefits. Viewing self-care as a responsibility, shifted leaders' mindsets, eroding their weariness of outward perception and allowing leaders to exemplify self-care activities as important for themselves and to model for their followers. Self-actualization contributed to leaders' well-being by embracing Ryan et al.'s (2008) element of competency and driving towards intrinsic goals. Resources amplified a need for understanding pressures of leadership, recognizing the interplay between supply and demand and encouraging leaders to effectively manage their resources in an aim to preserve their well-being. These four areas came forth from the literature as potential contributory concepts to developing the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. Leaders' well-being must include both intrapersonal and interpersonal needs.

The integrative literature review findings supported the lack of scholarly depth for leaders' well-being as a concept. The integrative literature review revealed a gap, implying affirmation of leaders' and followers' well-being relationship, continuing to suggest leaders' well-being needs to be developed for leaders themselves (Scott & Holyoke, 2021).

Methodology

Following a qualitative design, this study leveraged empirical study observations, built upon an integrative literature review. Qualitative research was selected and aligned with "social research that is aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 11). This study purported to investigate through the research question, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences*. The integrative literature review

informed study construction, focused on needs for developing leaders' well-being, through narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry sought to elicit rich data through leaders' well-being experiences. Thematic analysis aimed to analyze the data, drawing out themes useful for understanding leaders' well-being and for informing future research and leadership practice. The applicability and flexibility of thematic analysis provided a useful data analysis method and constructive input to the study of leadership.

Participants

Participants were selected based on leadership TED Talks with millions of views. Initial selection criteria were based on a population of TED Talks with the topic of leadership and garnering over 2 million views. Five participants were selected by critical-case sampling as a form of a purposeful sampling strategy (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). The other two leaders were snowball participants referred by colleagues from the initially selected critical case sample. There was a total of seven interview participants.

Data Collection

Data was collected over ten weeks. The University of Idaho IRB (see Appendix A) approved interview protocol. Participant consent was given verbally in the Zoom recorded interviews lasting 30 to 90 minutes, with 60-minute average interview sessions. Interview questions were open, allowing leader-participants to drive the conversation and to encourage flexibility through questions and prompts. Interviews focused on eliciting rich data, seeking deep exploration of leaders' well-being experiences. Findings from the integrative literature review helped inform the interview protocol and diligence was applied in not letting these learnings influence the interview process itself. While interviewing, the lead interviewer was keenly aware of the need to allow participants to lead the dialogue, allowing their experiences to drive conversations and using appropriate prompts only where necessary. The goal was rich data collection through effective listening (McClelland, 2017). Interview dialogue sought to capture data representing leaders' true voices and their genuine well-being experiences.

During interviews, the interviewer made notes and observations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and stored in shared files only accessible by the research team. Transcriptions were created from the Zoom recordings, YouTube transcript, then re-reviewed for Intelligent Verbatim Transcription. Coding data and analysis were also captured in shared files, accessible only by the research team.

Data methods

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021b) thematic analysis six phases process (see Figure 9) aimed at discovering themes. The first step incorporated becoming familiar with data, transcribing interviews, reading and re-reading, and noting down initial ideas. The doctoral student conducted and transcribed the interviews using intelligent verbatim transcription and reviewed interview recordings for accuracy. Added reviews enhanced data familiarity and called attention to initially forming patterns and potential codes.

Figure 9

Six-Step Thematic Analysis Process

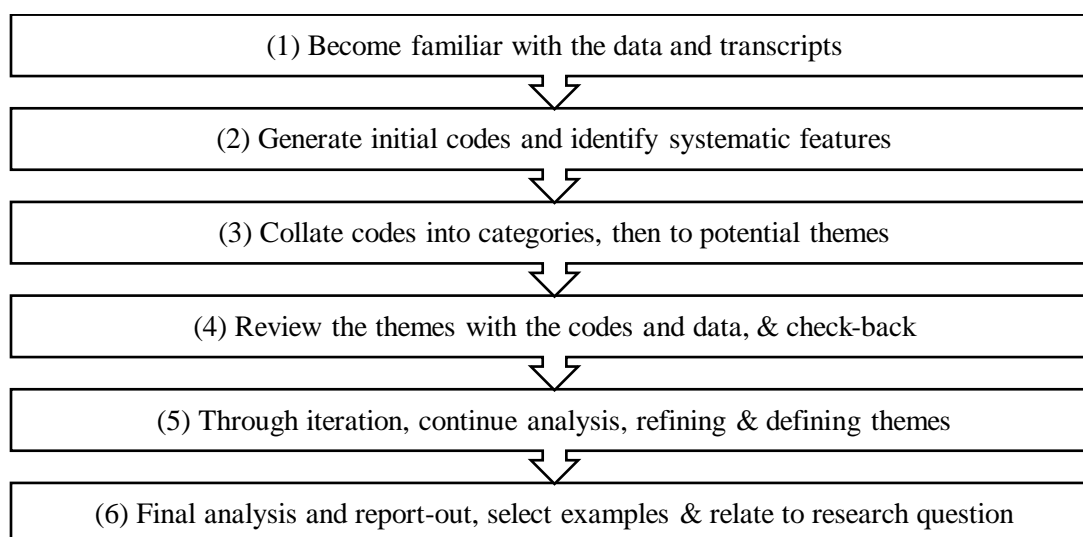


Figure 9: Six-step Thematic Analysis Process

Transcription included using virtually recorded video interviews, associated audio files and full recordings, then leveraging YouTube transcription for initial data transcription. Each researcher read and re-read the transcripts, independently noting initial findings and observations via excel matrices, word document notations, and electronic white board and Scapple (Literature & Latte, 2019) visuals. One researcher printed transcripts, noting findings and observations in the margins. The other researcher conducted virtual reviews, capturing notes and observations in online documentation. Comparing notes through multiple working sessions, the research team discussed findings, validated notable quotations, and generated dialogue through collaborative coding. These noted approached supported interrater reliability.

Figure 10

Excerpt from Excel matrix of initial words and phrases captured from interview data

fame and competition	self-care is just one more thing to do	emotionally that stuff is draining	part of a broader sense of purpose	need for emotional energy	well-equipped	connecting individual to collective
“a narrow version of what it means to be different”	“The rule” – has to say “yes” (a pressure to show how committed you are)	to protect, to shield – is part of the (leaders) job... be the defender of the team	deeply engaged... fully engaged... in something that matters	leaders’ health and role – wellness may be something they don’t need to worry about	we have to sacrifice but we believe it is worth it	haven’t prepared leaders (for these types of (well-being) conversation
sense of intimacy	calm head	because we’re human	“Be showy”	help balance	overlapping spheres	leadership tied to identity
existential sources (meaning, purpose)	how would approach differently in the future	how to help everyday leaders in their roles	impression management ... “little stuff you do”	looking back can see when was unwell	the game is a losing game – played it differently	suffering – and no one knew
“threshold” to cross (in becoming a leader)	how we are viewed by others vs ourselves	don’t want to burden others with your (burden)	well-being may be “assumed” for leaders	escalation of commitment and a pressure to stay	might view self differently	“Looked pretty shiny on the outside”
one who projects everything is fine	not feeling in a formal capacity	it is “go, go, go” ... long hours, long workday	autonomy – perceived control / felt control	there’s always going to be someone who wants to take	made this commitment > can’t step away	“Not a fabrication issue... it’s a trust issue”
Management of the team	Inter-relatedness	“Leadership mentality”	willing to pick fights	embrace questions	emotional regulation	needs to be meaningful
crisis moment / ah-ha moment	view others as put together	how we are framing	carry the burden (on your own)	how safe are you... protect each other	versus physical health	gap between “do” and “say”
vacation time... medical leave	know being active does well	Walk the talk – show and tell	discussion and sabbaticals	more boundaries sooner	imperfect game... called being human	knowing ‘isn’t doing
“Best being”	seeking ideas	hunch	...if ...then	“Be the pillar”	bottlenecks	trust
“Tough to sustain”	change inertia	check the box activities	“no one size fits all”	unlimited vacation time	courage stubborn	individualistic vs interrelated

Figure 10: Initial Words and Phrases Captured from Interview Data

The second step generated initial codes, identified systematic features across the entire data set, and collated relevant data for each code. Relevant data included stand-out words or phrases, direct quotations, repeated codes, and shared ideas across participants. Braun and Clarke (2021a) suggested, “coding, for example, is a process not of simple identification, but of interpretation—and researcher subjectivity fuels this process” (p. 7). Each researcher compared initial notes, recognizing similarities in initial coding and findings, then using these initial codes to propel forward into categories and themes.

The third analysis step focused on collating codes into potential categories and then creating themes based on meaningfulness. The initial codes were captured in a spreadsheet and visualized in Scapple (Literature & Latte, 2019) mind maps. Reviewing the codes for possible categorization allowed the researchers to discuss initial findings and gather relevant data useful to inform themes. Steps four and five aimed to check themes with extracted codes, and through iteration, worked to refine and rename the themes by returning to the data set, revisiting the research question, and validating findings. Step six led to results presented in this manuscript. The study’s research question asked, *how do leaders practice well-being*. The purpose of this study was to identify leaders’ practices of well-being.

Data Analysis

Recognizing the complex nature of qualitative approaches, thematic analysis was selected as a foundational and flexible approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). “Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Thematic analysis methods included identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns; then, organizing, describing, and interpreting the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Seeking to develop themes, acknowledged researchers’ judgement, aimed for prevalence and depth, and searched “across (the) data set to find repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Exemplifying thematic analysis goals, this manuscript aimed to “not only make visible the various elements that need to come together for successful qualitative analysis, characterized by integrity, but also to consider how they connect and build on each other” (Braun & Clarke, 2021a, p. 2). Themes are not solely based on number of occurrences or quantifiable measures.

Each researcher independently used thematic analysis to elicit codes. These codes were independently analyzed and categorized, then the two researchers came together to discuss, analyze and validate. After coding, then categorizing, developed themes aimed to capture the essence of leaders’ well-being experiences, informing the study of leadership and practical application. Using

Scapple (Literature & Latte, 2019) as a mind-mapping and visualization tool, allowed the research team to visualize codes and categories. Scapple figures evolved into the Word-based figures as represented throughout this manuscript. Visuals aimed to convey the progression of analysis as well as the research team's thought process and used logic. While each section explains the logic and data analysis, the supplied visuals aim to bolster representation and rigor of analysis.

Step 1: Reading the data, noting initial ideas

From the data and transcript review, ideas emerged based on key words and phrasing used by the leader-participants. As leaders shared their well-being experiences, the doctoral student interviewer observed and captured words, terms, phrases, and notes. The doctoral student entered these initial terms and phrases into an Excel matrix table in (see Figure 10). Captured observations are listed in no particular order. Notations from step 1, led to preliminary formation of codes for step 2.

Figure 11

Top Identified Codes and Corresponding Count of Coded Leaders' Quotations

Codes	Quotation Count	% Of Total
Challenges with LWB	24	21.05%
Becoming a leader... shift in mindset	23	20.18%
No one size fits all - find what works for the individual leader / complexity of well-being	17	14.91%
Methods to manage LWB	17	14.91%
Expectations of being a leader	13	11.40%
Interrelatedness	10	8.77%
We don't train leaders on well-being	5	4.39%
Underplaying - diminishing the leaders experience / qualifying answers / offering disclaimers	5	4.39%
Grand Total	114	100.00%

Figure 11: Top Identified Codes and Coded Quotation Count

Step 2: Generating initial codes

The next step in thematic analysis generated codes from the data. Codes were generated from reading and re-reading the transcripts and reflecting on the initially captured words and phrases from step 1. Coding captured key quotations from participants' interviews and logged in Excel with a tab for each participant. The quotations were reviewed by the research team, walking through each interview transcript and discussing the consummate quotations. Then the research team coded each quotation in a separate matrix tab in Excel, bringing all quotations together in one tab, for all seven participants. The separate matrix listed the participant number, direct quotation, generated code, coding comments, and a column for added description and observations.

Figure 12

Top Three Codes

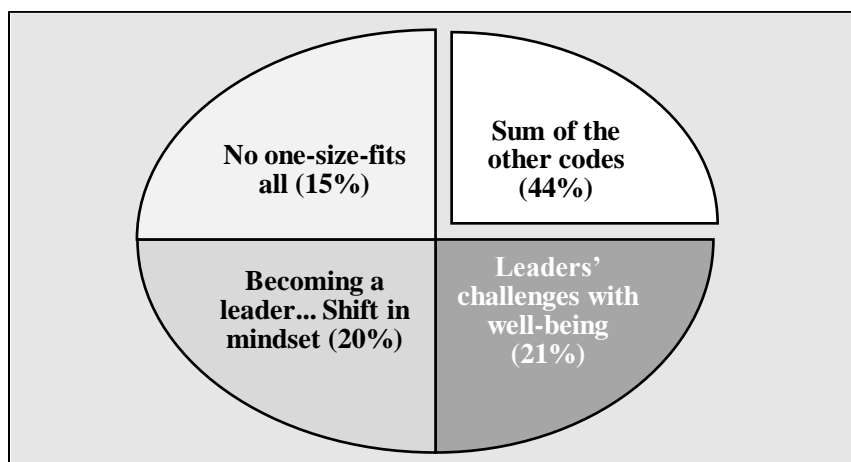


Figure 12: Top Three Codes

Each researcher independently coded and then reviewed and discussed codes for feedback and validation. Over one hundred quotations were reviewed and coded. The top three codes had a contributing quotation from each leader-participant: (1) challenges with leaders' well-being, (2) becoming a leader...a shift in mindset, and (3) no one-size fits all... a recognition of the complexity of well-being. These top three codes contributed to over half of the quotations (56% of total coded quotations). Figure 11 reflects the top identified codes and their corresponding quotation count.

Further, with an aim to exemplify transparency and support for the top three codes, Figure 12 displays distribution of quotations for the top three codes. Analysis showed how all seven leaders offered quotations supporting challenges with well-being, becoming a leader imposes a shift in mindset and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Codes started to inform categories and contribution

from all participants suggests the analysis was headed down an appropriate path. For the top 3 codes, participants contributed at least one supporting quotation.

On average, leaders contributed 16 coded quotations (see Figure 13), with one participant only contributing eight (the minimum count of coded quotations by a participant) and another leader contributing 24 (maximum count of quotations coded by a participant). As a qualitative study, counts do not necessarily suggest prevalence, however, it is interesting to consider how the entire case-sample of leaders offered support for the top three key codes (see top three codes in Figure 12).

Figure 13

Total Count of Coded Quotations by Participant

Participant #	Count of Quotation	% Of Total
Participant 1	8	7%
Participant 2	21	18%
Participant 3	10	9%
Participant 4	13	11%
Participant 5	20	18%
Participant 6	18	16%
Participant 7	24	21%
Grand Total	114	100%
average	16.29	
minimum	8.00	
maximum	24.00	
standard deviation	6.02	

Figure 13: Total Count of Participants' Coded Quotations

Step 3: Collate Codes into Categories, Then to Potential Themes

Viewing the coded quotations as the initial exploration into understanding the data, further analysis drove the research team to categorization, in continued refinement search of themes. Re-reading the transcripts and re-reviewing the data, provided another look into the codes, we then organized codes into categories looking for possible themes. For step 3, the data was analyzed visually, representing findings through connected nodes, allowing for assessment and potential synergies. The visual nature of analysis is reinforced throughout the provided visuals in this dissertation and for the purposes of explicit representation of methods used. Reviewing the data, aimed at deeper analysis and an iterative approach towards saturation, brought forward the following categories:

- *How do leaders describe their well-being experiences?*
- Expectations placed on leaders (from internal and external sources)
- Resource implications on leaders' well-being
- Modeling behaviors
- Self-management for leaders
- When leaders' well-being is missing (what leaders' well-being is NOT)
- Why leaders' well-being matters

Figure 14

Category of Findings: How Leaders Describe Their Well-Being Experiences

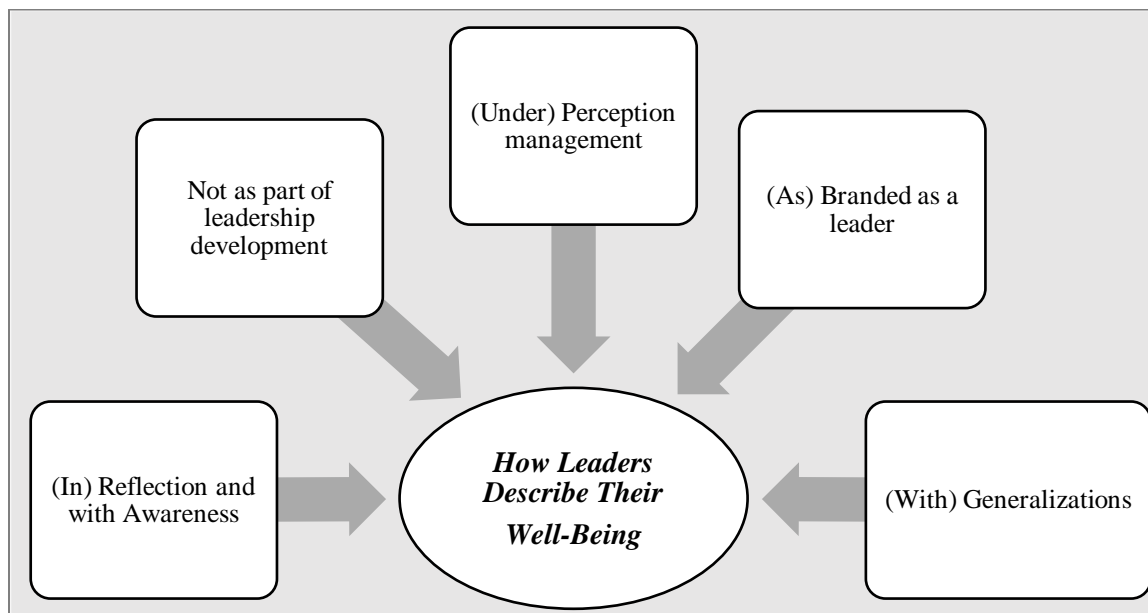


Figure 14: How Leaders Describe Their Well-Being Experiences

How leaders described their well-being experiences.

Leaders described their well-being experiences throughout the interview process. Leaders described their well-being experiences was by qualifying their statements and downplaying or diminishing the importance. Leaders offered generalizations towards leadership as a study, removing focus from themselves. Leaders offered insights, sharing how leadership development did not prepare leaders for all the complexities of leadership, inclusive of managing their well-being. Through growing awareness, leaders offered reflections showing expanding recognition of their need to understand and manage well-being. However, leaders acknowledged well-being was something not

often previously thought of or effectively managed. Sub-categories from *how leaders describe their well-being experiences* included the following areas and as depicted in Figure 14.

In reflection and with awareness. Leaders offered reflections through describing their well-being experiences, sharing how “at some point, it has to stop working for you, for you to make a change,” “we start to feel compassion,” “you start to see.” Through these reflections, leaders also shared moments of learning, “you need to include people in a different way,” “I would have loved to learn earlier.” These interview responses suggested moments of clarity for leaders, seeing well-being experiences as informative to their leadership experiences and moments as instrumental to understanding well-being.

Not part of leadership development. Leaders shared how leadership development programs provide technical skill and training, and for management concepts and practices. They characterized leadership development as “archaic,” “trying to be changed,” and “focused on... getting feedback, having a difficult conversation, and technical skill development.” Leaders offered how we do not train leaders on well-being, nor the mindset shifts required when becoming a leader.

The second thing that COVID has exacerbated, is that the requirements of a leader or a supervisor... in the shift from being a manager of process or task... to a developer of performance, requires a different kind of mindset... a different kind of approach... and both of those we haven't spent a lot of time preparing people for....

Leaders reinforced how a lack of preparation holds wellness implications,

The well-being of the leader... and how the leader, or the manager, or the supervisor... how that person is being asked to perform differently... without having the larger motivations, incentives, or environment change—around him or her...and may or may not get any scaffolding, training, or development for the knowledge, skills, behaviors, they're being asked to do....

Opportunities for incorporating well-being into leadership development practices are further explored through recommendations and proposed next steps.

Perception management. How others see leaders and how leaders see themselves, can impact their well-being. Preoccupation with perceptions, of oneself and from others, provoked leaders to make choices, potentially counter to their well-being, recognizing alternatives as “this is what I should be doing.” Additionally, leaders' felt worried with judgement from peers, “one of my fears if I

do that, is people think (I'm) prioritizing myself over everybody else." Preoccupation with perception management also related to the leaders' description of well-being experiences as generalized and distanced from self. Leaders showed worry to share too much about their own needs, they may not be seen as a "good leader," too much self-focus could be seen as detracting from leaders' needs to serve others.

Branded as a leader. The pressures of leadership are compounded when leaders mix their role with their identity. Leaders acknowledged seeing themselves as a leader and questioning their capabilities to fill this role. Leaders recognizing the intermingling of role and identity, often representing their comments, qualified with "as a leader..." These comments were balanced by leaders speaking to their need to remember they are "human first," while also recognizing the pressures and "ideas of power" associated with being a leader. Leaders described implications of mixing their leader role and identity with added complexities in managing well-being. Leaders described "being a leader is like being a traffic police person... basically rearranging stuff at high speed... doesn't engender a sense of well-being." The added implications of being branded as a leader relate to perception management and "comparing our inner self with our outer shell of appearance." From mixing leaders' role with persons' self or identity, leaders find challenge with thinking versus showing, actions versus words, knowing versus doing and the pressures of, as a leader, "this is what I should be doing." Trying to meet the expectations set for the role of a leader, blurred the human needs with organizational. Pausing to reflect on how best to untangle these expectations, led leaders to describe how important well-being was for themselves, for their followers' and even for organizational performance.

Generalizations. Examining implications of being a leader and impacts on well-being, caused participants to generalize in a manner attributing to the study of leadership by removing self-imposed implications. Leaders spoke generally, suggesting, "the best thing leaders can do," or referring to "one of my colleagues." Stated deflection removed self-pointed reflection. Outward generalizations removed the human element as part of leaders' well-being exploration. Focusing outward, also lessened inward focus for leaders when describing their well-being experiences. It appeared easier for leaders to speak more generally, talk about leadership as a collective, and remove any stigma associated with their own well-being challenges.

Qualifying well-being as of lesser importance, or should not a big deal to manage, one leader offered, "I think about self-care... I mean, it's true, I really don't. I mean, it's clearly a thing, it's clearly happening, but I'm not thinking of it, in the intentional way that I make others do." This

leaders' statement suggests how the leader realizes how well-being might be important and acknowledges how others are encouraged to manage well-being, yet not intentionally managing well-being for themselves. One leader explained why well-being may not be part of their toolkit, suggesting "well-being cannot be one more thing, self-care cannot be one more thing and so when we say... 'leaders take care of yourselves...'. How or what is the organization going to do to make sure I can actually do that?" This leaders' assertion exemplifies the need for intrapersonal well-being management, complemented by organizational support for those individual self-care needs.

Figure 15

In Leaders' Own Words: How Expectations Impact Well-Being

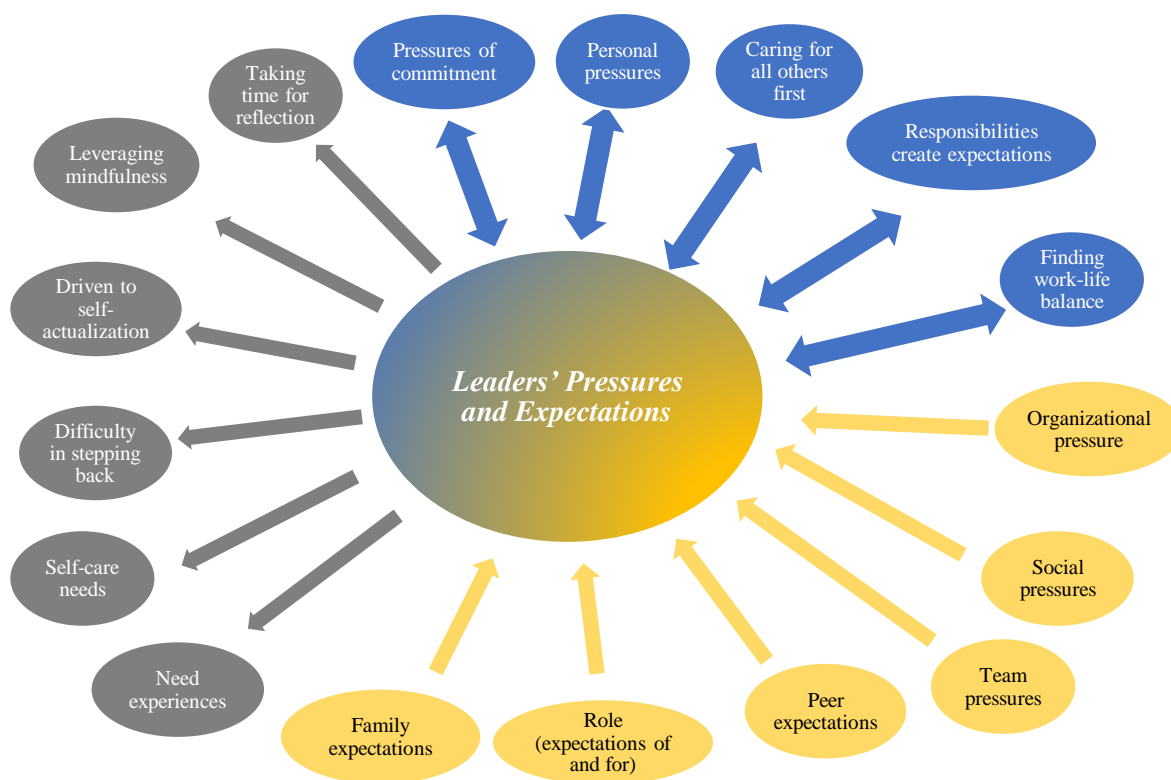


Figure 15: In Leaders' Own Words-How Expectations Impact Well-Being

Expectations placed on leaders (from internal and external sources)

Leaders spoke of the pressures from expectations of being a leader (see Figure 15). Recognizing a leadership position has added expectations, leaders acknowledged how we may not view these expectations cumulatively, nor understand the entirety of impact of these expectations on leaders' well-being. Acknowledging expectations addresses the need to question leaders'

assumptions. Where we place expectations on leaders, do we ever question their capacity or ability to manage set expectations? If leaders fail to meet expectations, is this seen as a failure of leadership or something else? Acknowledging leaders' well-being as an important input to managing expectations allows leaders to prepare to respond to expectations and recognize their own pre-requisites in effectively acting as a leader (Tafvelin et al., 2019).

Leaders characterized how expectations to “carry it all alone,” placed burden on their well-being. Viewing leaders with a “hero mentality,” and where “leaders are here to save the day” forsakes well-being. Positioned under these pedestal views, participants offered “leaders’ health is just kind of assumed.” Leaders feel pressure in their role, “this is your responsibility, and it’s your place to do it,” and its “the leaders’ role to take care of everybody else.” While stating the importance of putting your own mask on first, what happens in leadership practice seems to be vastly different. Leaders added, “sometimes the expectation is unstated, but it’s still there,” and “there is just this perverse expectation.” Recognizing the unstated nature of leadership pressures, leaders also shared how these pressures impacted their well-being. Figure 15 captures phrases and statements made by leaders exemplifying the pressures of leadership impacting their well-being.

Figure 16

Sources of Resources Relating to Leaders’ Well-Being

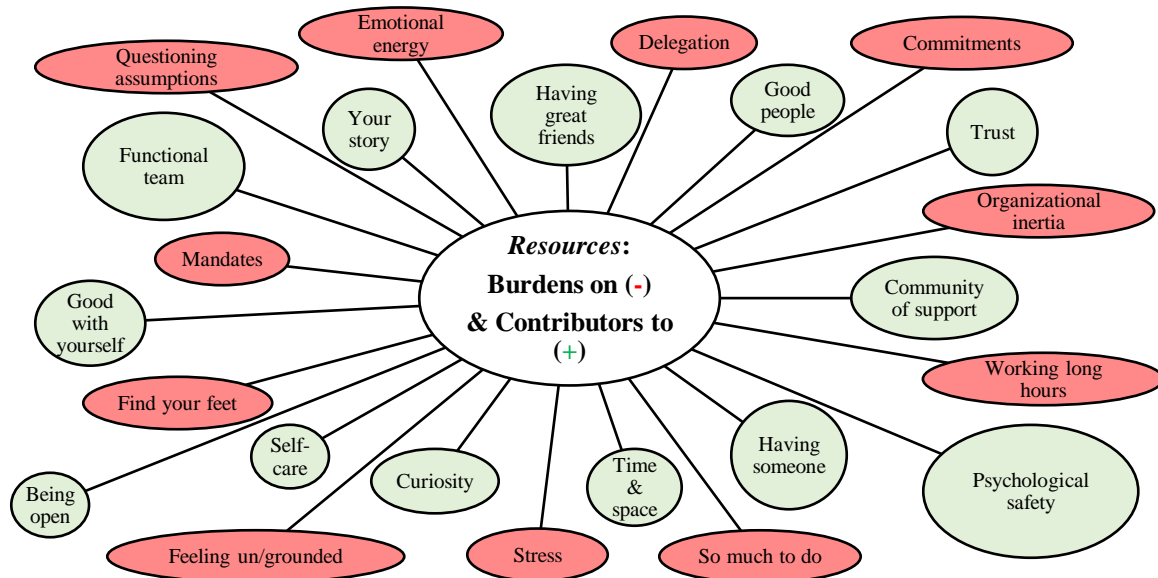


Figure 16: Sources of Resources Relating to Leaders' Well-Being

Resource implications on leaders' well-being

Leaders spoke of resources and their detraction from or contribution to well-being (see Figure 16). Leaders' resources come from internal and external sources. Internal resources, positively impacting leaders' well-being included self-care, acceptance, and emotional energy. Pressures of having so much to do, finding time and space to think, and feeling stressed or ungrounded all showed as diminutive to leaders' resources and well-being. External sources complementary to leaders' well-being included having "great friends," "community of support," a "good well-functioning team," and "being a decent parent, spouse, citizen." External sources diminishing leaders' well-being included "working longer than I wanted," the "pressure to show how committed you are," and "organizational inertia." Figure 16 represents the words heard from the leaders' interviews, as relating to resources. Leaders noted the phrases, words, and comments below and the research team captured these terms as standing out from the interviews. These terms are captured in this model to visually show the breadth and depth of data offered by the leaders, and to qualify the findings with both negative (red) or positive (green) contributions to leaders' well-being.

Desires for connection seemed to implicate both leaders' internal and external resources. Connection to oneself and ones' well-being experiences seemed to provoke awareness and reflection useful for behavior adjustments and openness to well-being learning. External connections through relationships and peer support added benefits, contributing positively to leaders' well-being. Figure 16 captures a visual look at the various terms and phrases used by leaders to characterize the sources impacting their resources and well-being.

Modeling behaviors

Leaders offered awareness of their need to show and model well-being behaviors (see Figure 17), stating, "you have to be showy," "we have to walk the talk here," "make people actually believe you mean it," and "setting that example." Leaders seemed to recognize the relationship between their behaviors and followers' well-being, where leaders are "creating this environment where people are going to feel like they have to." Leaders offered understanding to model behaviors for others, they must have well-being themselves, recognizing "you project what you have." Leaders discussed challenges with modeling well-being behaviors, acknowledging a disconnect, "there's the policy and then there's what's actually expected." Leaders feel challenged to navigate these gaps, while still modeling the appropriate behaviors to enable their teams for success and to positively impact followers' well-being. Appropriateness may be dictated by the organization in which the leader works as defined by Bollman and Deal's lenses (structural, human resources, political, and symbolic).

Leaders themselves may also set the tone for appropriate modeled behaviors, supported by individualized well-being needs, and recognized through implications on followers' well-being.

Figure 17

Leaders Recognize the Need to Model Well-Being Behaviors

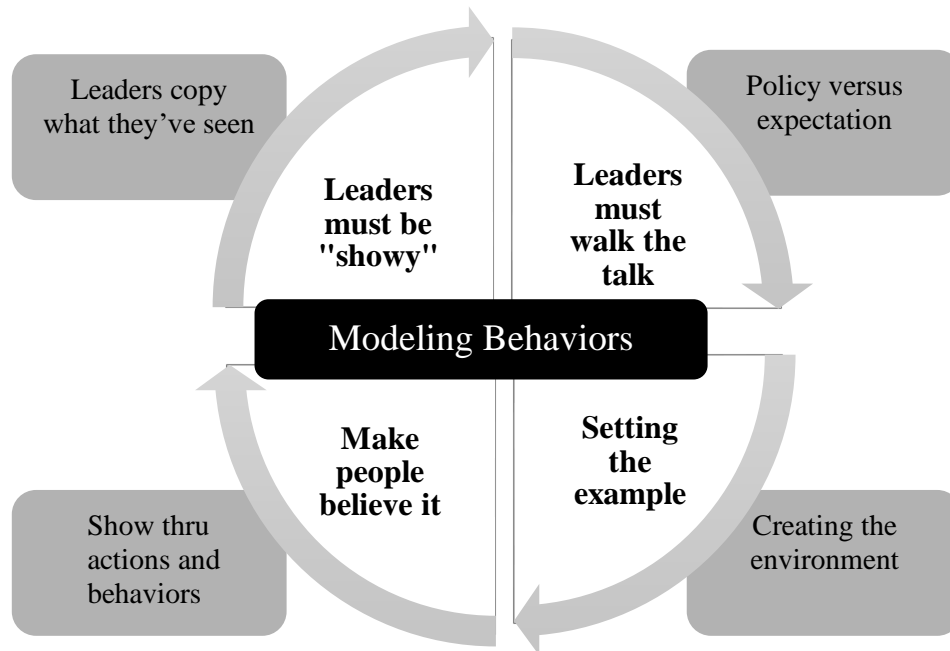


Figure 17: Leaders Recognize the Need to Model Behaviors

Self-management for leaders

Self-management (see Figure 18) was another aspect of well-being leaders described through the interviews. Self-management relates to the care and feeding of internal resources and their relationship to leaders' well-being. Leaders explored self-care and its individualized nature, ensuring effectiveness through integration. Leaders stated, "self-care cannot be one more thing," conversely offering, "leaders' wellness is just another thing that they need to worry about." While self-care should not be an additional task on their to-do list, leaders also recognized well-being requires thoughtfulness, reflection, and action. Leaders emphasized the importance of self-management as, "a gift to yourself to be able to lead from who you are... not who you're reacting as," and an ability to leverage time and space to "give everything some time just to settle down." This gift of self-management can positively inform leaders' well-being.

Figure 18

Leaders Ability to Self-Manage Through Self-Care Relates to Their Well-Being

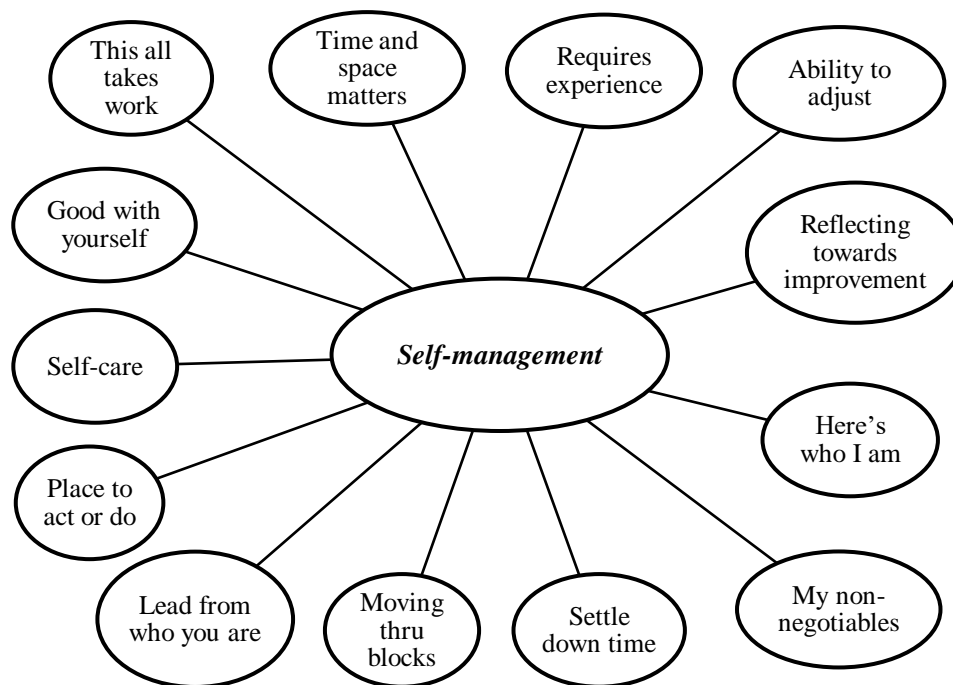


Figure 18: Leaders' Self-Management and Self-Care Towards Well-Being

When leaders' well-being is missing (what leaders' well-being is NOT)

Leaders spent a sizable portion of their exploration describing what it is like when well-being is missing (see Figure 19). Leaders recognized they were most aware of their well-being experiences when they were negative or had less than desirable consequences, "well-being became relevant when it wasn't there," and "never really thought about leader well-being until it left." Leaders referenced well-being experiences affirming leadership assumptions ("it's lonely at the top...the old adage is true") or finding awareness through reflection ("I realized there were moments I didn't have what I needed"). Leaders touched on internal and external needs, including having time and space to think, inviting varied perspectives, and finding peers to lean on. Leaders shared when their well-being was not present including trying to play power games, being manipulative or domineering, being tightly wound, working longer than wanted, or feeling stressed and ungrounded. Being disconnected from oneself and from others negatively impacted leaders' well-being. Leaders characterized negative well-being experiences as thoughtful learning opportunities and those informing their understanding

of their own well-being. The less-than-desirable well-being experiences seemed to make leaders aware and from there, their thoughts and behaviors changed.

Figure 19

When Leaders' Well-Being is Missing... What Leaders' Well-Being is NOT.

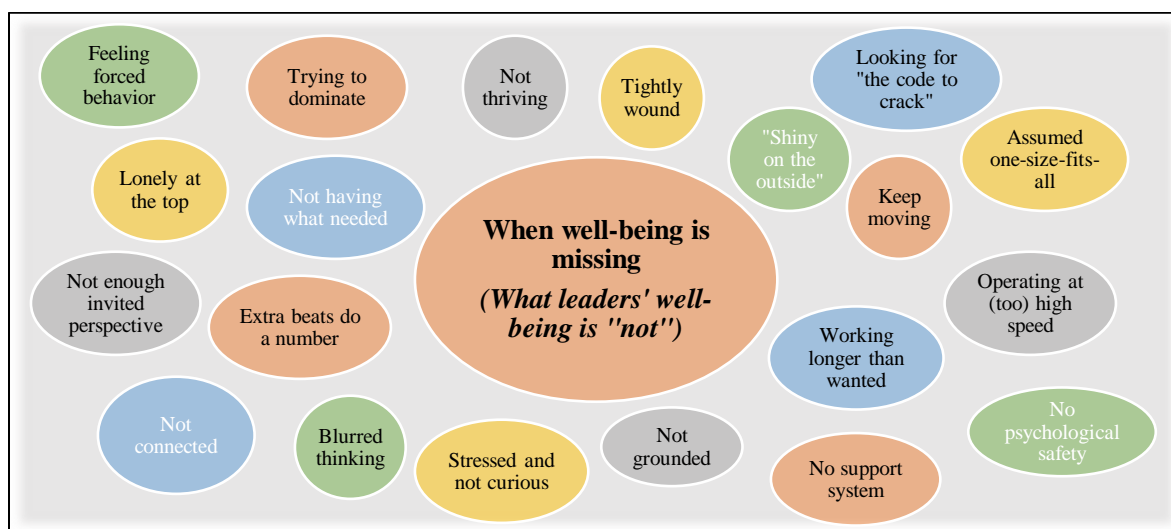


Figure 19: When Leaders' Well-Being is Missing... What Leaders' Well-Being is NOT.

Why leaders' well-being matters

Leaders started to realize through transparent description the importance of their well-being. Forgiving earlier lack of awareness, and hesitancy in willingness to discuss leaders' well-being, leaders finally conceded well-being is important (see Figure 20). Leaders' well-being has potential to inform "leadership development programs, approaches, content." Acknowledging a lack of well-being exploration in current leadership development programs, provides an opportunity to integrate wellness into leadership development approaches and learning, cultivating leaders as whole persons.

Further supporting an integrative leadership development approach, participants recognized how "leaders are humans" and their human development would be just as important as their leadership styles, methods, competencies, and behaviors. Accepting the leaders' and followers' well-being relationship, leaders offered how the importance of well-being implicates "the consequences for everybody that touches that leader...(and) the consequences for (everybody that) the leader touches too." These statements support the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers and importance of well-being across systems and organizations.

Figure 20*Why Leaders' Well-Being Matters*

Figure 20: Why Leaders' Well-Being Matters

Step 4: Reviewing themes

Acknowledging the analysis steps in phases 1 through 3, step 4 seeks to check themes with the codes and explore their connections and opportunities to refine. From step 2, key codes include the following:

- challenges with LWB
- becoming a leader... shift in mindset
- no one size fits all (what works for individual leaders / complexity of well-being)
- methods to manage LWB
- expectations
- interrelatedness
- we don't train leaders on well-being
- underplaying (diminishing the leaders experience / qualifying answers / offering disclaimers)

Step 3, key categories:

- *how leaders describe their well-being experiences*
- expectations placed on leaders (from internal and external sources)
- resource implications on leaders' well-being
- modeling behaviors
- self-management for leaders

- when leaders' well-being is missing (what leaders' well-being is NOT)
- why leaders' well-being matters

Viewing the key codes and categories together, the researchers found synergies and opportunities for further analysis to capture themes (see Figure 21). Developing themes are shown in Figure 21, walking through the progression of each step of analysis. Exemplifying ideas of earlier found codes, themes embrace key categories. Iteration allows for themes development.

Steps five and six aim to further refine the themes from their initial definition here in step 4. The figure below reflects a table view of the themes explored as part of step 4. The themes from step 4 embrace the contributory codes from step 2, and the evolved categories from step 3. The table displayed in Figure 21 exemplifies how the themes were informed by the categories as informed by the codes. The “themes” column on the far left shows the refined themes from the fifth step. The next column displays the themes in their developmental state, from step 4. Walking further to the right, step 3 is shown in the next column, capturing key categories that were used to develop themes. Finally, in the column furthest to the right, lists the key codes that informed the building of categories and eventually informed the themes. The aim of Figure 21 is to visually represent the themes and how through the analysis, the research team arrived at the themes. The fifth step, refining themes was informed by all the prior steps of analysis, which is the reason for it being depicted first in the table. The Findings Section of this manuscript more explicitly explores each of the five themes, supported by a visual and further explanation. This fourth step, brings readers to the table as depicted in Figure 21, displaying the analysis leading to the developing themes and seeking to tie the steps together in a cohesive, visual representation.

Figure 21

An Evolving Analysis: How Developing Themes were Informed by Categories and Codes

Step 5: Refining Themes	Step 4: Developing Themes	Step 3: Key Categories	Step 2: Key Codes Highlights
Theme 1: <i>Understanding What Well-Being Means for a Leader</i>	Understanding what it looks like or feels like when leaders don't have well-being is the first step in driving awareness to LWB.	When Leaders Well-Being is Missing (What Leaders Well-Being is NOT)	Challenges with LWB (<i>how leaders describe their well-being experiences</i>)
Theme 2: <i>Acknowledging the Relationship Between Leaders' and Followers' Well-Being</i>	Leaders acknowledge how their behaviors and well-being relate to followers' well-being; through acknowledged relationship, leaders see importance of their willingness and ability to model behaviors, for their own well-being and for others' well-being. Why Leaders' Well-Being Matters (Leaders are humans, for the relationship with followers' well-being, and as related to Leadership Development)	Modeling Behaviors	Becoming a leader... shift in mindset How leaders describe methods to manage well-being and learnings from their well-being experiences
	Leaders' need to be explicit in understanding their own self-care needs, addressing those individualized needs and modeling self-care as a useful behavior for well-being for themselves and for their followers.	Self-Management for Leaders (including self-care)	No one size fits all - find what works for the individual leader / complexity of well-being
Theme 3: <i>Developing Internal and External Sources to Support Leaders' Well-Being</i>	Internal and external pressures place burden on leaders, leveraging resources from internal and external sources can help leaders effectively respond to these pressures while maintaining their well-being.	Expectations placed on leaders (from internal and external sources)	Expectations
	Leaders need to effectively manage their internal resources in support of their well-being. Interrelatedness, connections and relationships are essential external sources for leaders to effectively manage well-being.	Resource Implications on Leaders Well-Being (Internal and External Sources)	Interrelatedness
Theme 4: <i>Including Well-Being in Leadership Development Programs</i>	Understanding and developing leaders' well-being is a useful addition to leadership development programs and content, allowing for effective development as the leader as whole person and human.	Leaders Well-Being is not found (currently) as a part of Leadership Development	We don't train leaders on well-being
Theme 5: <i>Promoting and Engaging in the Leaders' Well-Being Dialogue</i>	Promoting and embracing the leaders' well-being dialogue diminishes the associated stigma and encourages acceptance of leaders as whole persons and humans. Continued discussion allows further development of leaders' well-being, useful to informing application in leadership development programs and in organizational settings.	<i>How Leaders Describe their Well-Being Experiences</i>	Underplaying - diminishing the leaders experience / qualifying answers / offering disclaimers

Figure 21: How Developing Themes were Informed by Categories and Codes

Findings

Findings and Refining Themes

The fifth step of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021b) thematic analysis six phases process focused on refining themes. For purposes of this manuscript, the developing themes are the findings and results. The analytic processes outlined in the data analysis sections above contributed to the findings as informative to the developing themes. Reviewing the themes from step 4 allowed further opportunity to refine and define. The themes captured in Figure 21 are connected and informed by the codes and categories from the prior thematic analysis steps. The themes are further refined in step 5 focusing on iterative analysis. Each step aimed to contribute to the generation of clear definitions and names for each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Theme 1: Understanding What Well-Being Means for a Leader

Theme 1 incorporated constructive methods leaders use to positively contribute to their well-being, less detractors taking away from well-being (see Figure 22). Understanding what well-being means for a leader, embraces self-care and the specificity of individual needs. Driving towards understanding, leaders strive for awareness of their well-being, "we've been talking about coming to a place where you're good with yourself, by yourself, and that takes work." Leaders acknowledged required efforts to attain understanding offering, "I think for me, that self-care is being able to say here's who I am. Here's my non-negotiables." Adding to understanding, leaders offered methods most useful to their well-being, including, time and space, keeping a calm head, having a sense of control over their environment, consistency between outer presence and inner self, and finding a sense of purpose.

While the well-being experiences were described by the leaders interviewed, opportunities are ripe to generalize and apply to leaders as a whole. How or what exactly individual leaders choose to do with certain aspects of managing their well-being, may be unique; however, these well-being ideas may be universally applied for learning opportunities and garnering leaders' well-being awareness. Leaders were also keen to describe negative well-being experiences and what well-being is not. One leader offered how, "looking back now, I realized there were moments I didn't have what I needed, and it would have been better if I did." Another leader offered, "there's a lot of organizational inertia that adds stress and this was even before I was overly stressed... just little stuff." The negative well-being implications appear to be just as important in informing leaders' well-being as positive well-being experiences.

Leaders spoke explicitly about what it looked or felt like when well-being was not present. Acknowledging and capturing these sentiments was just as important as understanding a positive well-being scenario. Recognizing the perceived lonely nature of leadership allowed leaders to lean into their internal sources of strength contributing to self-care needs awareness and striving to form connections with peer leaders. Appreciating the impact of stress on curiosity (“if you are stressed, it’s very hard to be curious”) and the pressure of speed under which leaders operate, allows awareness and a recognized need to pause and find time to consider how best to respond to pressures. Through promoting awareness, one leader offered, “we are asking more and more of people in general, just as humans, and leaders are no exception” leaders may be able to allow a little grace and patience in navigating complex challenges.

Figure 22

Evolution of Theme 1: Understanding What Well-Being Means for a Leader

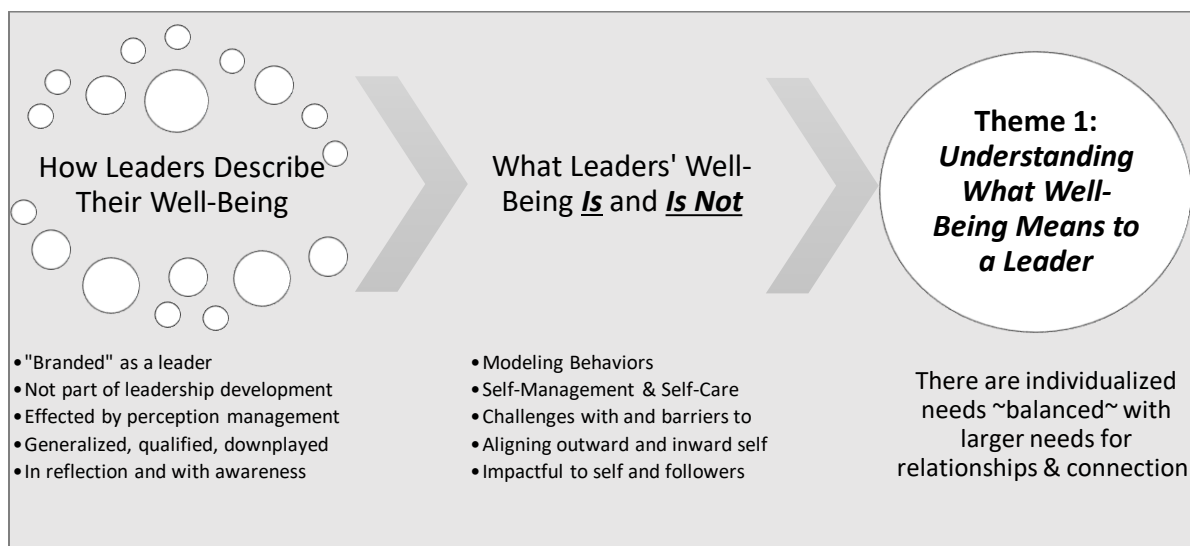


Figure 22: Understanding What Well-Being Means for a Leader

Where leaders can start to understand the derived perception, one leader offered in their interview, “the leaders’ role is to maybe take care of everybody else, themselves last or their wellness is just another thing that they need to worry about,” they can start to undo assumptions, challenging perspectives and removing stigmas. Recognizing where leaders are “not coming from a malicious place, (they are) coming from this place where people are just trying to do what they’re asked to do, they just get their blinders on, and don’t realize it.” Allowing leaders to take off blinders, will raise awareness for meaningfully well-being engagement.

Theme 2: Acknowledging the relationship between leaders' and followers' well-being

By building their own well-being understanding, leaders acknowledged the relationship between their well-being, and with their followers' well-being (see Figure 23). One leader shared,

If you're just leading a team, it takes setting that example. That means don't send the email at 11:30, even though you say, 'oh I want us to prioritize nights and weekends,' you have to be showy on that. Figure out how to schedule it to send later... Or even better, take the night off. You need to be able to do that.

Figure 23

Evolution of Theme 2: Acknowledging the Leaders' and Followers' Well-Being Relationship

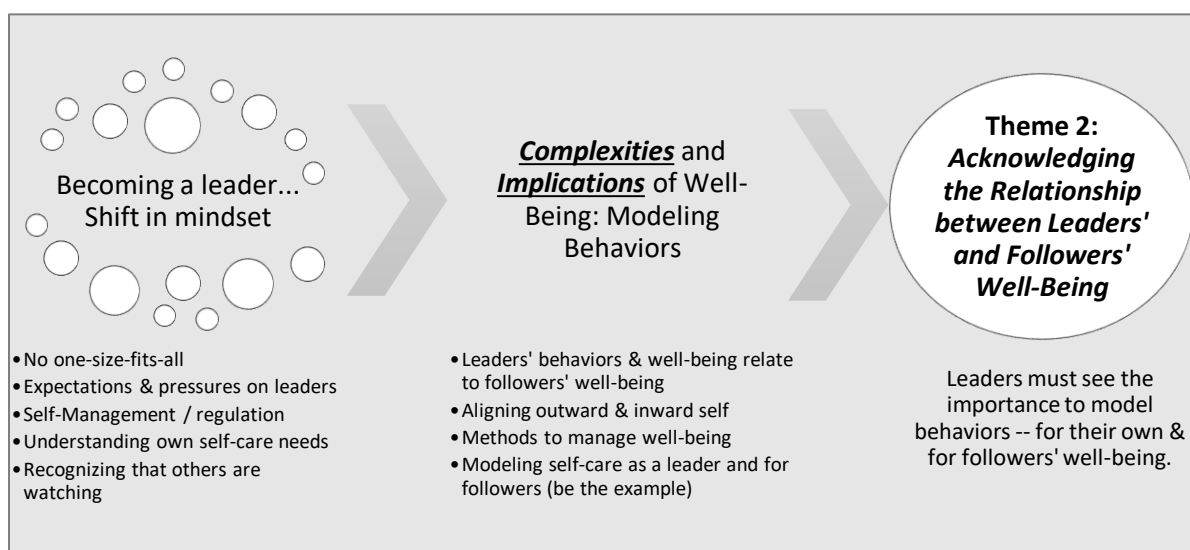


Figure 23: Acknowledging the Leaders' and Followers' Well-Being Relationship

Leaders described challenges with managing expectations and pressures, finding disconnects between what is said versus what is done, recognizing leaders must model appropriate well-being behaviors. One leader offered, "I felt like, well, I have to walk the talk here, because I can't be saying this, and then not have them do it." Leaders realized the importance of managing their own well-being then showing through their behaviors what well-being looks like in leaders' practice. Another leader reinforced behavior modeling, by sharing,

As I got into leadership roles, I recognized, 'I'm responsible for creating this environment for everyone. If I'm doing that, other people are going to do that. I send an email on the weekend, and say 'you don't have to read it,' you're still creating this environment where people are going to feel like they have to...

Leaders who effectively model behaviors can reinforce expectations for followers, inclusive of expectations to manage well-being. Leaders recognized how an expectation to model behaviors exemplifies the shift in mindset from becoming a leader, and burden of expectations further intensified by circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 Global Pandemic,

COVID has exacerbated, is that the requirements of a leader or a supervisor... in the shift from being a manager of process or task... to a developer of performance, requires a different kind of mindset... a different kind of approach... and both of those we haven't spent a lot of time preparing people for....

Another leader shared the importance of the mindset shift in becoming a leader and well-being implications, "I think it should matter for lots of reasons, leaders' well-being, as humans, and also the consequences for everybody that touches that leader and that the leader touches too." Further, leaders offered explicit examples of when they felt pressure to show through their actions, appropriate well-being behaviors,

As I got into leadership roles, I recognized, I'm responsible for creating this environment, for everyone... if I'm doing that, other people are going to do that... I send an email on the weekend, and say you don't have to read it, like you're still creating this environment where people are going to feel like they have to...

Leaders acknowledged the importance of modeling behaviors through words and actions, cultivating consistency when setting expectations for their followers. Leaders must explicitly show their followers how they embrace established rules of engagement (see Figure 17, be "showy"). One leader characterized outward modeling with a need to align with inner self as "outwardly you're creating it; inwardly you're living it." Continued, "leaders' well-being is two-fold... It's the environment you're creating... The other part of it, is yourself, because what you do matters."

Theme 3: Developing internal and external sources to support leaders' well-being

Leaders touched on sources of well-being, driven internally and externally (see Figure 16, Figure 24). Internally, leaders discussed their self-care, self-management, and needs for autonomy. One leader offered, "I think for me, that self-care is being able to say here's who I am. Here's my non-negotiables." One leader offered how, "I think the more autonomy you have; I think that could be a huge protective factor." Building on autonomy and focusing on the need for leaders' well-being to be flexible to accommodate individual needs, another leader shared, "I don't think the solution for

any organization is going to end up being a one-size-fits-all policy. It's going to have to be grounded in a sense of trust and autonomy at all levels." Another leader shared,

The best thing leaders can do for their own well-being is have that control over their schedule and their time and have that sense of autonomy, and unfortunately, the culture in most organizations, is that we don't promote those people, we fire them.

Externally, leaders explored their needs for connection, fostered by relationships and human interaction. One leader shared their perspective on challenges towards connection,

I think we've come to believe that there is some sort of code that we've got to crack. People don't think that they are allowed to thrive. They don't expect to thrive, so they settle for power and money... And the sadness about that, is that they don't really connect to each other. They throttle the flow of life energy through them... They throttle their creativity... Their love... Their connection... heartbreaking.

Amid the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, leaders' increased challenges, with needs for connection countered by isolation, all impact well-being. Leaders described their own desires for autonomy, competency and relatedness and the relationship with these elements and their well-being. While leaders described benefits from internal sources contributing to well-being, these descriptions did not forsake the impacts from external sources. A leader explained their needs for interrelatedness, sharing,

Well-being, in some ways should always be thought of in a collective sense, not only just an individual sense... And the problem is—is that, in its common construct, we think of it as, 'this guy's (gal's) stressed out, we need to actually work on this person's stress, etc.' Which is an individual need... That connectivity is really pointing to a cultural need.

Lack of connection can degrade leaders' well-being, despite great attempts to foster well-being through internal measures. Evolving the conversation, one more leader talked about key needs for well-being, including,

(I'm) making a lot of money and I'm very important, and so, if I think that's my game, being important, and making a lot of money... I'm going to play this kind of game. And I'm, by the way, going to have a lot of sense of autonomy, a lot of sense of competence, at this game. Not too much interrelatedness but let's not worry about that because, we're playing a good game that we're winning. As soon as you start to realize that there's a broader perspective in the

world, that the planet is in a in a critical situation, that the world that we're leaving to our children, is something that we should at least have some thinking about, if not be outraged at. And as soon as we start to feel compassion for the human beings that are not winning this game, everything changes. And then, you start to see that you need to include other people in a different way. You need to listen differently. And then you start a journey that is genuinely one of well-being, because you're now in the game of genuine human connection. And you're in a much more creative game. *Because now, we're in the game of life* [emphasis added].

Figure 24

Evolution of Theme 3: Developing Internal and External Sources to Support Leaders' Well-Being

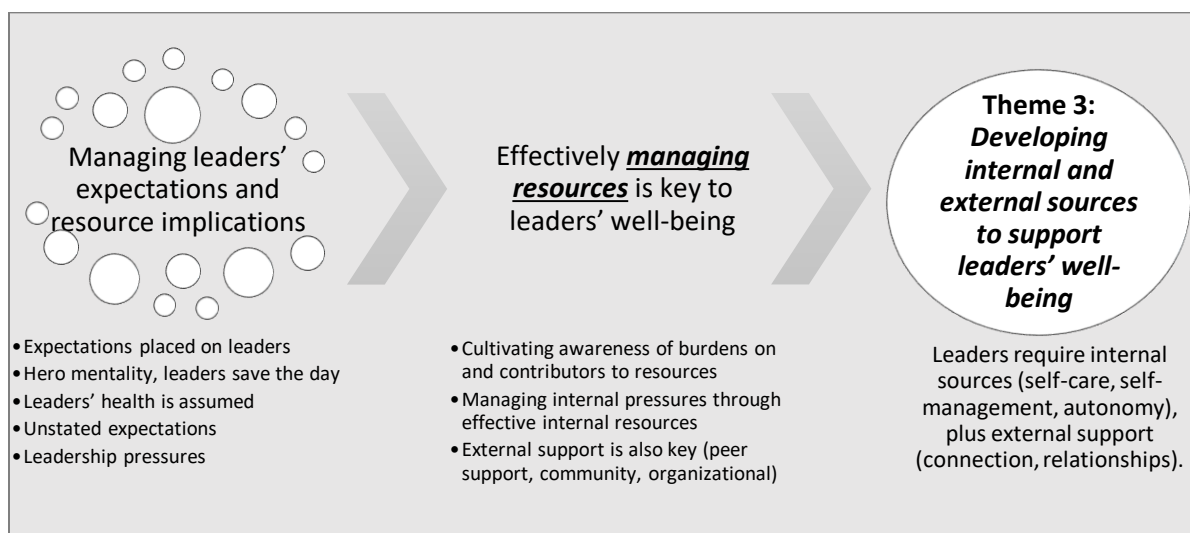


Figure 24: Developing Sources to Support Leaders' Well-Being

While offering appreciation for leaders' needs of autonomy and competency, those two elements alone, are not enough. Aspects of relatedness, connection, and relationships are often overlooked or undervalued. Through the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, impacts of limited connection are realized through impacts to leaders' well-being. Another leader shared complementary perspective,

COVID-19 has accelerated... it's always been there, but it's always been sort of underneath the folds... It's accelerated the visibility of how the increasing movement toward remote or hybrid working conditions, exacerbates the need for humans to feel connection to the people that they are working with.

Again, assuming leaders find autonomy and competency, there is still a void to fill with relatedness. Leaders discussed their feelings of being alone at the top and a leaders' "hero mentality." Leaders who realize they are not alone in their aloneness, provide opportunities for connection and breaking-down barriers to productive well-being conversations.

Theme 4: Including well-being in leadership development programs

Leaders touched on opportunities to add well-being to leadership development programs, contributing to Theme 4 (see Figure 25). Offering their perspectives, leaders shared thinking on opportunities to improve and modernize approaches to leadership development. One leader shared,

I think some of it, is just, the leadership development is archaic... And I say that as someone that's in the field trying to change it... Because the focus is always like, 'let's have a difficult conversation,' or 'get feedback,' and not on enough of the other things... And it's definitely not on 'let's start with you yourself.' I think if someone is so naturally inclined or motivated, they might have gotten it, but from that whole path and stuff, it's just most people end up in a role without anything and they just copy what they've seen, and that's not helpful

Characterizing leadership development as "archaic" and focused on "having a difficult conversation" or "technical skill development" leaves leaders at a deficit. Instead, cultivating the leader as a whole person, allows for inclusion of well-being in their development. Leaders offered how not including well-being in leadership development programs, leaves leaders in a disadvantaged position, having to navigate challenging well-being waters, all on their own. One leader revealed, "you end up in this place, is you feel incredibly awkward, and you don't want to act like a corporate robot, but the corporate robot that you are trained to act like, is actually safe, because you won't step on any landmine." Including well-being content and methods for leadership development may be useful and beneficial. Recommendations in Chapter 5 expand on the useful benefits of adding well-being to leadership development. One leader offered their perspective on how a lack of well-being inclusion in leadership development can impact leaders' experiences,

The well-being of the leader... and how the leader, or the manager, or the supervisor... how that person is being asked to perform differently... without having the larger motivations, incentives, or environment change—around him or her... And may or may not get any scaffolding, training, or development for the knowledge, skills, behaviors, they're being asked to do... so, in some ways, they're being asked to operate in a place that's

uncomfortable... or unforgiving... and the view is going to feel awkward... And it's going to feel, in some ways... threatening...

Leaders shared how lack of well-being content in leadership development programs poses a threat to success in their role, further driving the stigma associated with wellness conversations and further isolating leaders to navigate well-being on their own. Leaders realized how threats of disconnection impair well-being, and recognized needs to connect with others, “that connectivity is really pointing to a cultural need.”

Figure 25

Evolution of Theme 4: Including Well-Being in Leadership Development Programs



Figure 25: Including Well-Being in Leadership Development Programs

Therefore, the addition of well-being content to leadership development programs (“what”), plus an engaging and collective approach to leadership development programs (“how”) can constructively inform leaders’ well-being. Meaning, both the content and manner in which we train leaders fosters the well-being conversation. If we are able to cultivate a connective experience (through cohort-based or team-based development engagement), well-being may improve. Collective well-being improvement could allow leaders to accept well-being as part of their required leadership toolkit. Elements to include in leadership well-being development may include ideas on how to define self-care as a leader, how to model behaviors (and why important), focus on connection needs and fostering peer relationships, exploring development of leaders’ well-being from leaders own experiences.

Recognizing the evolutionary nature of our changing times, I recommend that well-being must be incorporated into leadership development programs, yet not left stagnant, unchanging, or stale. Instead, just as COVID provokes changing ways of working, leaders' well-being should be positioned as an evolving concept, being refined and improved based on learning, changes and through leaders own experiences and input.

Figure 26

Evolution of Theme 5: Promoting and Engaging in the Leaders' Well-Being Dialogue

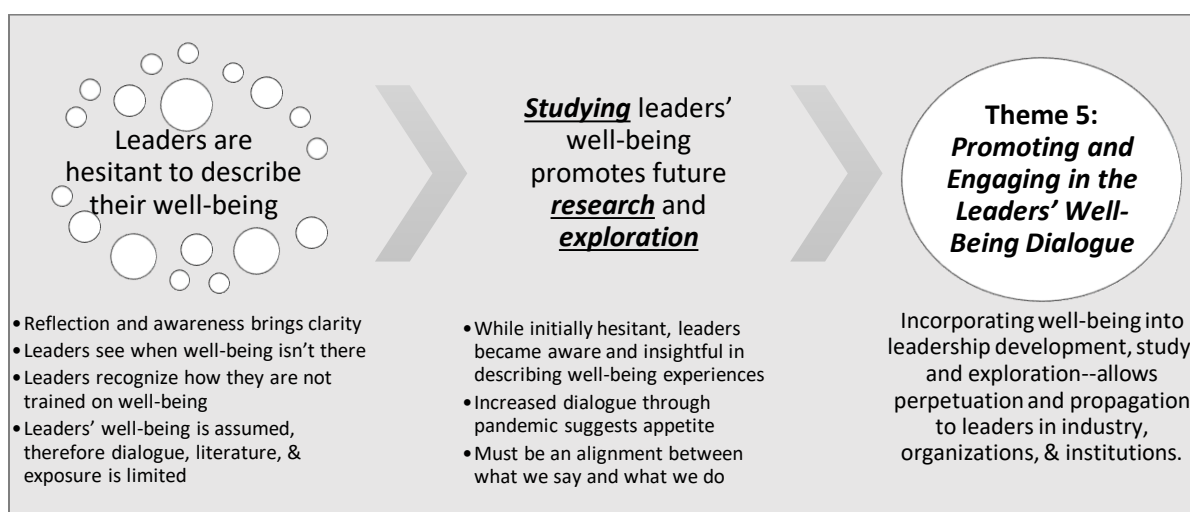


Figure 26: Promoting and Engaging in the Leaders' Well-Being Dialogue

Theme 5: Promoting and engaging in the leaders' well-being dialogue

This research intended to discover and disseminate Theme 5, promoting and engaging in the leaders' well-being dialogue (see Figure 26). Further, incorporating well-being into leadership development programs, allows perpetuation and propagation to leaders and trainers in industry, organizations and institutions. Finding methods to insert well-being into leadership conversations may be further supported by future research, policy and practice, informal writings and study exploration.

Through added prevalence, comfort with leaders' well-being may grow, suggesting acceptance to the idea and modeling well-being behaviors for followers and leader peers. Lack of leaders' comfort with describing their well-being experiences may be alleviated through optimized engagement. More discussion and visibility brought to leaders' well-being, enhances its transparency

and acceptance, allowing leaders to feel more comfortable with the topic and with describing their well-being experiences.

Producing a Scholarly Report of the Analysis and Findings

The final and sixth step in Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021b) thematic analysis process was to craft a scholarly report. This manuscript sought to provide a scholarly report of the thematic analysis, inclusive of the findings through themes. The report captured deep analysis from empirical study observations (Trochim et al., 2016), synthesizing findings through analysis. Findings through themes suggested this study is only the start of the leaders' well-being conversation. Growing prevalence on well-being in workplace conversations, with added considerations from the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, suggest an appetite for well-being dialogue. It remains unknown if the dialogue will effectively evolve into necessary research and practice.

The leaders interviewed touched on gaps between words and actions, suggesting organizations may defer to wellness through conversations, however not truly embracing wellness through practice. One leader characterized our current state of affairs as, "there's a lot of happy words about how organizations are doing this or investing in that... The distance between the do-say-ratio has never been worse than it has been now." Gaps between actions and words suggest reasoning to continue the leaders' well-being conversation and ensure its implementation is thorough and measured.

Recognizing how COVID-19 has further implicated the importance of leaders' well-being, requires that we do not forget all that we have learned over the past few years. Acknowledging the surgency of literature and popular business culture dialogue on well-being and resilience, provokes us to promote the leaders' well-being dialogue. In seizing this opportunity to develop and understand leaders' well-being as a concept, starts to wash away leaders' stigma and include leaders in the necessary well-being conversations. Leaders' well-being is important for leaders and followers alike. Longer-term and larger reaching implications come from programmatic and systematic analysis and implementation broadly touching the study of leadership and implicating future leadership research, development and practice.

Discussion

Connecting back to the research question and integrative literature review provides opportunity for further analysis and discussion. The research main question asks, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* The integrative literature review focused on the intrapersonal

nature of leaders' well-being and found four key elements contributing to its conceptual construction: mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). The focus of the integrative literature review was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, answering the supporting research question of, *what is leaders' well-being*. The purpose of this discussion section is to examine findings from thematic analysis in context of the research question and framed under the integrative literature review with added context from the COVID-19 Global pandemic.

Answering the research question is a key aim of this thematic analysis. Seeking to understand and characterize *how leaders describe their well-being experiences* allows initial development of leaders' well-being and contributes to future research. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. *How leaders describe their well-being experiences* is exemplified by the five themes from thematic analysis.

Theme one focuses on understanding what well-being means for a leader. Well-being meaning for leaders focuses on personalized approaches while recognizing needs to generalize and apply to the study of leadership as a whole. Understanding what well-being means for a leader also touches on the cautious, sensitive nature of well-being discussions. Viewing my role as a researcher, positions me as a potential outsider, where the leader-participants may be hesitant to share their well-being experiences with an outsider (Holmes, 2020). Additionally, one leader offered, "in some ways, they're (leaders are) being asked to operate in a place that's uncomfortable... or unforgiving... and the view is going to feel awkward... and it's going to feel, in some ways... threatening."

Emphasizing the personalized nature of well-being, and this potentially uncomfortable space, leaders were hesitant and cautious to explore the topic. It is important to capture leaders' hesitancy when answering the research question. This recognition is important because it captures how leaders describe their well-being experiences, through the construction of the concept, and in how it is described. The cautious, qualified manner in which leaders describe their well-being experiences, is one of the key findings from this study and important in answering the research question.

The main research question asks, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* Thinking about how leaders cautiously described their well-being, suggests a need to bring leaders along in the well-being dialogue. While organizations continue to promote wellness programs and speak to work-life balance, there actually appears to be limited practical experience in well-being, based on the interviews. Through dialogue, the interviewed leaders had much to offer the developing

leaders' well-being concept. Yet, acknowledged, even for themselves as leaders, a true opportunity to engage in and promote well-being conversations. Kaluza et al. (2020) touched on starting points for the leaders' well-being conversation, "besides health-promotion programs aiming to improve leaders' individual well-being, one starting point could be to support open communication about leader stress and to avoid treating it as a taboo topic" (p. 49). Kaluza et al. (2020) also commented on leaders' hesitation with discussing well-being, based on worry to "avoid appearing weak and hence unsuitable for the leadership role" (p. 49). Further, Kaluza et al. (2020) encouraged how "acceptance and destigmatization are a prerequisite for leaders to be able to talk openly about their own well-being and seek help when they notice early warning signs of exhaustion" (p. 49).

Connecting themes back to the literature, shows support for well-being needs associated with mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). These connections and components exemplify the intrapersonal development of leaders' well-being. Mindfulness through present moment awareness, found in the interview discussions, recognized how leaders may not have taken the time previously, to reflect on well-being experiences, or at least, not as explicitly as done in the interview dialogue. Roche et al. (2014) characterized mindfulness as "an open, receptive, and nonjudgmental orientation to the present" (p. 477). Recognizing leaders' earlier apprehension to holding well-being conversations emphasizes opportunities found through mindful awareness, and to promote well-being improvements.

Through describing their well-being experiences, leaders exemplified growing well-being awareness, examining prior well-being experiences and now seeing those as learning opportunities. Di Fabio (2017) connected meaningfulness with adult learning and how through reflection, perception, and experiences there is relationship to well-being. For leaders this holds importance, recognizing the need to take the time and commit to actually reflecting on well-being experiences and using these reflections as meaning-making experiences informing their well-being. The leaders' reflections offer insights to identify leaders' practices of well-being.

Self-care from the literature connects to personal well-being approaches and a need to find tailored methods working well for each leader. Leaders were clear on how other leaders may do well at self-care yet found it hard to sustain self-care for themselves. The literature suggests leaders view self-care as selfish or indulgent. Su (2019) offered how "when I speak to leaders about self-care or restoration, they often share that somehow it feels selfish or too risky to change" (p. 13). While self-care may be universally applicable, what self-care means to each leader and how self-care is applied—is unique and personal. Several literature sources acknowledged the multi-dimensional

needs for self-care, and impacting well-being, including mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, relational/ connection-based/ social, autonomy/ choice, financial/ occupational (Ghossoub et al., 2018; Richards, 2013; Su, 2019).

Leaders described pressures to find time for self-care, and how pressures detracted from their well-being. The literature implicates effects of pressures on leaders' well-being, suggesting that self-care can help to mitigate against intense pressures or at the least, to aptly prepare for leaders' pressures. Kenney (2018) described how leaders often deprioritize their self-care when they need it, then when they are under the most intense pressures, it is too late to build well-being capacity,

When the demands, pace and schedules intensify, leaders often deprioritize their physical wellbeing (e.g., exercise, nutrition, sleep), time for mental recovery (e.g., vacation days), and quality time with the people who matter most to them. They may even turn to unhealthy behaviors to help cope with the stress... A leader's emotional intelligence and strength of character cannot truly be measured until subjected to intense pressure, which is often too late. (p. 34)

Leaders offered how other leaders might be better at self-care, recognizing self-application was difficult to implement and sustain. Allowing self-care as acceptable in other leaders, perpetuates the branded stigma where leaders must self-sacrifices. De Cremer and van Knippenberg (2004) offered how "leader self-sacrifice may elicit favorable leadership perceptions" (p. 141). Whether knowingly (or unknowingly) pursuing favorable perceptions, leaders negate self-care, at the expense of their own well-being. Understanding self-care challenges through *how leaders describe their well-being experiences* provides a springboard to embracing well-being conversations and fostering approaches leaders can select from and apply to their own well-being. Leaders explored resources as essential to well-being.

Touching on internal resource needs, bolstered through self-care and mindfulness, leaders discussed connectivity as essential for external resource support. Resources are one of the common components of leadership development programs. Discussing how to manage, delegate and effectively allocate resources is often covered in leadership development. While acknowledging resources, leaders did not spend a significant amount of time discussing resources, almost "given" there are hardly ever enough resources. Leaders recognized part of their role as "traffic cop" was to move things around so teams and organizations could perform. Appreciating how policing is impactful to leaders' well-being, it was implied for leaders and unlikely to go away.

Leaders learning how to effectively maintain their well-being, while directing and allocating resources, may be best served when leaders are in an optimal well-being state (Roche & Haar, 2013). This representation becomes a cycle of examining predecessors, by which, one must ask, what comes first? If leaders care for themselves, they can care for others, they can effectively manage, organizations can perform. If at one point in the chain, a link is defective or not optimized, leaders' well-being and organizational performance can suffer. Byrne et al. (2014) asserted the importance of seeking answers to these questions through leaders' well-being research, specifically,

This research offers important implications for leaders and organizations alike. From a leadership standpoint, our findings suggest that personal resources are an important part of effective leadership. While leaders are often focused on facilitating conditions that encourage follower well-being, they may not always consider their own resources or state of psychological health, perhaps for fear of appearing weak or ill-equipped to perform their role. These findings suggest that it is essential for leaders to be mindful of their own well-being, and to do what they can to bolster their personal resources or seek aide in cases where resources have become depleted. (p. 353)

Understanding the relationship among all links in the chain is essential to recognizing the impact leaders have on followers' well-being and conversely the impact felt by leaders from organizational, social, team, and role pressures. The multi-directional relationship with leaders' well-being is critical to recognize, showing the traffic moves in multiple directions.

Impacts from and to well-being for leaders contributes to (or detracts from) organizational performance, followers' well-being and leaders' ability to sustain themselves. Captured through the integrative literature review and reinforced throughout study evolution, leaders become aware how their own well-being can impact their performance, their followers and the organization. Tafvelin et al. (2019) stated,

In addition to supporting previous findings that leadership (i.e., what the leader does) influences follower burnout, the findings also show that what the leader has (i.e., resources) has implications too. Whereas the importance of leadership has rightly been in focus in both practice and research, these findings firmly emphasize that leadership does not happen in a vacuum. The leader's pre-requisites matter. This implies that in order to unleash the benefits that good leadership can have for followers' well-being, more focus need to be put on leaders' context. Efforts that increase leader's experience of vigour and peer support thus

may have an indirect effect on followers' burnout, in addition to the potential positive impact vigour and peer support may have on the leader. (pp. 166-167)

Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was the selected lens through which to view the integrative literature review. Interestingly, findings from the empirical study observations (Trochim et al., 2016) relate back to SDT and leaders' well-being. SDT holds three elements essential for well-being: autonomy, competency, and relatedness.

Connection needs relate to Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Roche et al. (2018) wrote, "SDT suggests that well-being is facilitated through engaging in autonomous action, seeking challenges, and connecting with others" (p. 28) and where "SDT suggests that well-being is gained by the fulfillment of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness" (p. 30). Each of these three elements came forth in the interviews as relevant and important to leaders' well-being. Martela and Sheldon (2019) reinforced the importance of autonomy, competency, and relatedness, suggesting they have "the best support so far" to fulfill the psychological need satisfactions category, aimed to "identify basic psychological needs that are essential for human well-being, growth, integrity, and long-term success in various life dimensions" (p. 468). Applying these needs to leaders' well-being may be appropriate and necessary, as reinforced through the literature and qualitative interview participants' responses.

Autonomy revealed through comments on leaders' sense for real or perceived control, and autonomy over their environment, decisions, and leaders' role. Leaders commented on needs for autonomy, and where, even feeling a sense of control, can lead to fostered well-being. Interpreting findings through thematic analysis shows how leaders who believe they have autonomy may have improved well-being. Ideas of control over leaders' environments and decision-making can allow leaders the necessary time and space to effectively manage well-being. Spaces where leaders have no control or lessor control, leaves leaders feeling pushed and pressed, with little room for well-being awareness or development. Berger et al. (2019) suggested organizations should look at job design to include opportunities for autonomy in tasks and in support of well-being. Conversely, passivity in leaders "increases job demands and reduces job resources" (Berger et al., 2019, p. 12). Finding methods to allow leaders to have a sense of control over their role, job or environment, may positively contribute to both their leader and their followers' well-being (Berger et al., 2019).

Competency comes forth through the leaders' interviews as well. Leaders commented on their drive to find a sense of purpose, fulfillment, goal attainment and achievement. Recognizing the

interviewed leaders as qualified high achievers, it is not surprising goals for achievement were part of their well-being conception. Stoloff et al. (2019) suggested meaning through role and work positively relates to well-being, capturing elements of conviction, fulfillment, importance, impact, and confidence. Viewing these elements through SDT's competency aligns meaning with achievement and supports leaders' well-being development. Stoloff et al. (2019) portrayed meaning under self and encapsulated this category as a key element for understanding professional well-being. Further, supported through added literature and the study's interviews, intrinsic goals provide most connection to well-being attainment, with external goals contributing less to well-being (Roche & Haar, 2013). Leaders commented on intrinsic needs to finding meaningful purpose and striving for purpose caused shifting of roles and career decisions driven by past well-being experiences. Sense of purpose in decision making also aligns with leaders' desire for autonomy, having control over career trajectory and alignment with a path to achieve purpose.

Relatedness is an essential, yet supplemental concept. For the integrative literature review, it was a conscious choice to focus on the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being, recognizing the added complexities required for interpersonal conception. A conscious choice for the purposes of completing a clearly defined, scoped, and focused integrative literature review, yet recognizing the importance of both intra- and inter-personal needs in developing leaders' well-being (Scott & Holyoke, 2022).

While the integrative literature review was essential to forming the foundation for the research study, findings through thematic analysis recognize the integral nature requiring both intra- and interpersonal leaders' well-being. Martela and Sheldon (2019) offered, "it is important to acknowledge that well-being can be examined on many levels, from individually experienced well-being to interpersonal and community well-being to societal well-being" (p. 469). While leaders spoke to their own personal, individualized needs, there was also clear and common deference to needs for connection and relationships. Häggman-Laitila and Romppanen (2018) noted how well-being interventions often focus on the individual leaders' intrapersonal needs, however, offering how complex well-being truly is,

Well-being at work is a multidimensional phenomenon. It is influenced by several factors involved in working life, such as the quality and safety of the physical and the psychosocial environment, workplace culture, workers' feelings about their work, their working environment, the atmosphere at work and the organization. (p. 42)

There is solid evidence suggesting relatedness is part of developing leaders' well-being. Participants offered support for needed peer-relationships, familial, social, and organizational connections. Overall, leaders did not forsake the essentiality of human connection. Recognizing their pedestal position, leaders stated clearly, how their needs as leaders, were comparable to human needs. Observers of leadership forget this connection. When seeing leaders only through their role, one forsakes their humanity. To preserve and protect leaders' and their well-being, seeing humanity along with leaders' performance, allows for a more holistic leader picture.

The literature supports a need to embrace human needs along with the leaders' role and the relationship with well-being. Solansky (2014) suggested how "human behavior should always count in management and the theories should reflect this sense of personalism" (p. 40) and "to dehumanize and desensitize management theories and leadership as not connected to social well-being is to completely disregard common sense" (p. 40). Based on these assertions, inclusion of well-being in leaders' development and competencies may also support a "common sense" approach. Kaluza et al. (2020) supported these "common sense" assertions, suggesting a need "to raise leaders' awareness of the leader well-being-leadership behavior link... through leadership development programs" (p. 49).

Ultimately, answering the research question through referenced literature and qualitative interviews, shows how leaders uncertainly describe their well-being. The research question asks, *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences*. Leaders characterize their well-being experiences as important learning opportunities when allowing for the necessary reflection. These are the key contributions from this study. Literature references the need to address leaders' well-being, yet fails to do so (Scott & Holyoke, 2021). This study captures how leaders describe their well-being, cautiously, hesitantly and seeks to understand and provide some explanations for why this is so. Leaders acknowledge how peer-leaders are "better" at well-being, than they may be themselves, suggesting opportunities to improve their own well-being.

Leaders were aware of when well-being was missing, it appeared easier to characterize moments where well-being was missing, what it looks like, feels like. Articulating optimal well-being was more difficult. Leaders offered how well-being is not a singularly defined thing, nor is it a culminating point. Just as leaders evolve on their career and personal journeys, well-being appears to ebb and flow, developing in response to faced opportunities and challenges. Leaders who create opportunities and allow moments for self-reflection appear better positioned to understand and apply well-being in response to challenges. Leaders who effectively learn from their own behavioral modeling and impacts on followers' well-being, may also be more aware of their own well-being.

Leaders who accept themselves as vulnerable humans, may also be more capable of evolving and optimizing their well-being. A leaders' sense of openness and invitation to personal and professional capabilities, appears to be essential to cultivating well-being.

Implications and Conclusions

Thematic analysis brought forth rich findings and interesting themes. This study's purpose was to identify leaders' practices of well-being. Assessing leaders' well-being appears to be a complex opportunity for concept development and application towards leadership research, development, and practice. Research implications include opportunities for defining and applying leaders' well-being to leadership development programs, incorporating a rich, humanized view of leadership. Encouraging well-being conversations within leadership circles, embraces human ideas of leadership, balanced with performance and execution. Added research into well-being of leaders may elicit additional elements useful to the concept's construction and to inform leadership development programs and practice. Recognizing initial hesitation from leaders to participate in the study suggests leaders are not often encouraged to embrace ideas of well-being for themselves.

Reinforcing the gap between actions and words, leaders offered how this gap can cause impact to their well-being. One leader emphasized the importance of exploring the leaders' well-being concept, sharing the need to align knowing with doing,

Is there an appetite in the general market for resilience or well-being? So, in well-being, yes. Although, it's a hodgepodge... and what people really mean by that, changes [with] each person you talk to... In resilience, yes, but oftentimes it's a check the box activity, and it's not a very meaningful. In both of these cases, there's a difference between awareness and action. Knowing isn't doing, in short.

Eliminating gaps between words and actions can help leaders understand for themselves and model for others, appropriate and practical well-being behaviors. One leader emphasized, "there's a lot of happy words about how organizations are doing this or investing in that... The distance between the do-say ratio has never been worse than it has been now."

Acknowledging leader and follower well-being reciprocity allows leaders to remember the importance of what they say and do and how it is impactful to all those around them. This reciprocal nature of the leaders' and followers' well-being relationship adds considerations for the multi-directional implications on one another. One leader stated the importance of leaders' well-being implications, "I think it (LWB) should matter for lots of reasons... leaders' well-being... as humans

and also the consequences for everybody that touches that leader and that the leader touches too.” Including leaders’ needs for peer relationships may also bolster the leaders’ well-being dialogue, adding relational aspects, fostered through connection. Emphasizing intrapersonal elements of well-being, can be further supplemented with peer, community and social support structures.

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study and process has been incredibly rich from a personal and professional perspective, as well as to inform future leadership research and leadership practice. Chapter 5 is the bookend and closing chapter for this three-manuscript dissertation. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. In this chapter, I aimed to address strengths and limitations, qualitative study quality, recommendations, and implications.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths – Qualitative Quality

For the purposes of a strengths section, this section focused on study quality. Study refers to the three-manuscript dissertation as a whole. Seeking qualitative quality, this study embraces Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Reinforced by Nowell et al. (2017) and originally cited to Braun and Clarke (2006), the insightful findings born out of rigorous thematic analysis can be trustworthy and rich. Forero et al. (2018) embraced Lincoln and Guba's (1985) approach to trustworthiness, exemplifying an approach to the four-dimension criteria (credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability). This study strived to achieve rigor as demonstrated in the following sections.

Credibility. Forero et al. (2018) suggested the purpose of credibility is to establish credibility in results, through engagement, interviewing process and techniques, collection of materials, and peer debriefing. Interviewing processes were thorough and aimed at deep, rich data collection. Open-ended questions sought to elicit leaders' experiences, aimed at developing leaders' well-being. An average of 60-90 minutes spent with seven leader-participants on video interviews, over 10 weeks, captured seven hours of interview data. Notes, coding, insights, mind mapping exercises, excel matrices, and captured quotations were stored and protected in shared files and drives, accessible only to the research team. Regular team sessions were held to assess and debrief research progress. Tracy (2010) suggested "credible reports are those that readers feel trustworthy enough to act on and make decisions in line with" (p. 843).

This research aimed to capture and show readers through thick description and "the triangulation of data sources, methods and investigators to establish credibility" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 256). This study provided credibility by focusing on the reality residing in the minds of

leaders and using this reality to tell the stories of leaders' well-being experiences. Seeking to capture what leaders said, what was not said, and *how leaders describe their well-being experiences*, exemplified an effective assessment of tacit knowledge, questioning assumptions and delving deeply below the surface. The convincing and consistent nature of leaders' well-being stories asserted their believability and trustworthiness. The depth of storytelling in the interviewing process also supported credibility by nature of stories told and transparency revealed through story-telling processes. Leaders' journey through the interview process, also revealed an opening, exemplifying transparency and vulnerability, lending to rich data collection.

This study aimed to embrace and demonstrate effective use of theoretical constructs, deep and rich interview data, appropriate sampling, and thorough data analysis. Collecting data with "a rich complexity of abundance" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841) demonstrated high-quality qualitative research. Through narrative inquiry in qualitative interviews, this study explored deeply ideas of leadership and well-being, hearing well-being experiences from leaders themselves. The richness of the data was further bolstered through thematic analysis, digging deeply into the narrative of leaders' experiences, as well as codes, categories, and developing themes.

Research team collaboration allowed for effective coding, exploration of categories and rich discussion on developing themes. The primary researcher highlighted quotations from each interview participant. The major professor also independently read the transcripts and captured stand-out quotations. Interestingly, in most cases, the captured quotations were consistent and provoking. The research team discussed the selected quotations together and leveraged these epiphanies to define categories and capture developing themes. The research team met regularly throughout the research process, discussing in working sessions, leveraging online, shared collaboration tools, and revisiting interview transcripts to understand and analyze data. The corroboration through peer-review, and interrater reliability, was complemented by the integrative literature review. The elicited interview data provided multiple sources of information useful to inform the study and to present credibility of these research findings.

The evolution of this research, as demonstrated by this three-manuscript dissertation, also suggested credibility. An iterative approach, revisited the research topic and question, added to the growing dataset, and questioned findings to inform each subsequent step and manuscript. The study started with an integrative literature review, moved into an empirical study, and delved deeply into data through thematic analysis, embodying a rigorous and thorough approach. Attaining data saturation, through evolved iteration, supports this study's rich contribution to the literature and

informs opportunities for future research and application. Assessment of research products through manuscript blind peer-review, allowed added feedback and external audit.

Transferability. This study strived to be generalizable, emphasizing the important nature of the inquiry for leadership research, practice, and development, extending applicability to other cases. Extended applicability could include management training programs, masters' degree programs, organization development programs and well-being theoretical development and applicability for leaders across industry and practice. This study's inquiry sought to provide rich data with thick descriptions and attaining data saturation through an iterative approach (Saunders et al., 2018). Sampling employed a purposeful critical case sampling strategy, aligning depth with qualified leader candidates. Braun and Clarke's (2021a) ongoing, iterative interpretation process supported the adequacy of participant sample size. Participant sample size and saturation are "iterative, context-dependent decision(s)" (Braun & Clarke, 2021a, p. 13). The aim of participant selection was to ensure leaders were representative of the potential variety of well-being views across various settings (Forero et al., 2018).

Acknowledging the ambiguous nature of "leader" for study purposes, suggested extended generalizability to leaders across organizations, institutions, private, public and government, plus informal leadership roles through community and social organizations. The interviewed leaders filled a variety of leadership roles, suggesting the findings from their rich data contributions have broad generalizability. Applicability of well-being for leaders across diverse instances incites general social needs to care for self, regardless of positionality and for sake of the greater good.

Findings on leaders' well-being informs knowledge to be transferred and found "useful in other settings, populations, or circumstances" (Tracy, 2010, p. 845). Recognizing the broad nature of the study of leadership, understanding well-being for leaders is useful to inform organizational practices, leadership development programs, human resources development and higher education curricula.

Leaders' well-being is a relevant, timely, significant, and interesting topic. Relevancy shown by the amount invested in leadership development programs, and the understood relationship between leadership and followers' well-being. Supporting relevancy, Subramony et al. (2018) stated that U.S. firms spent an estimated \$13.6 billion on leadership development programs in 2012. Further supporting relevancy, Ardichvili et al. (2016) offered that only 15% of Human Resource (HR) professionals rate their future leadership bench strength as satisfactory. These significant findings (of

investment “fund-ings”) show how organizations are investing in leadership development. Conversely, the remaining gap shows that despite significant funding and investment in leadership development, there is still a mismatch in developing future leaders and actually being satisfied once these leaders are on the bench. Inclusion of well-being in leadership development may further support transferability and close the gap to position leaders for success. Adding well-being to leadership development may bolster the development of leaders as whole persons and provided added resonance for leaders completing development programs. Finding positive outcomes through measured response and including well-being in leadership development may further support study’s relevance and provoke added inquiry to these leaders’ well-being areas.

In terms of timeliness, the beginnings of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic in 2020 exacerbated a need to focus on well-being for leaders and followers. Over the course of 2020-2022, changing ways of working and remote workplaces have intensified the focus on workers experiencing isolation, well-being challenges, and seeking connection. Running a search (as of November 03, 2021), shows a growing number of results for “well-being” in peer-reviewed journals over the past ten years (see Figure 27). There is a 24% increase in well-being search results from peer-reviewed journals, comparing 6-year interval periods (2004-2009, 2010-2015, and 2016-2021).

Figure 27

Updated Search Results

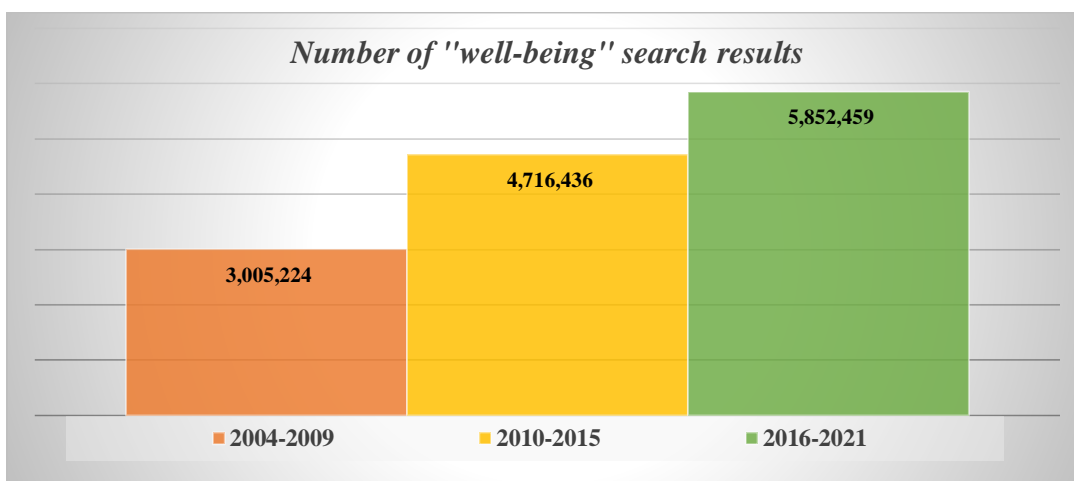


Figure 27: Updated Search Results

The significance of leaders’ well-being was amplified by the global pandemic; however, the gap in the literature provoked the initial inquiry into leaders’ well-being. Finding solid scholarly

support for the relationship between leadership and followers' well-being, provoked a need to understand well-being for leaders themselves. The importance of leaders influencing their followers' well-being, places leaders in a place of great responsibility. This "place" begs understanding of the implications of leadership and how leaders shall navigate these well-being waters. Helping leaders to be accountable for themselves and for their followers requires that leaders understand, model, and deliver behavior reflective of effective well-being. Recognizing the considerable number of leaders across organizations and institutions proliferates the impact. The exponential impact supports the significance of leaders' well-being research for me as a researcher, and for practical leadership.

Leaders' well-being is interesting due to its applicability for scholars and practitioners alike. The study of leadership spans across educational and functional boundaries, across disciplines, organizations, and institutions. A person is a leader themselves, works for a leader, or knows someone who is a leader—or likely, all three scenarios occurring simultaneously. Well-being touches our human side, integrating workplace with personal concepts, and embracing a resurgence of interest into mindfulness. Leaders' well-being interestingly brings together both sides of this human coin (the professional and the personal), integrating concepts and questions assumptions of traditional leadership approaches. Exploring well-being for leaders, brings ideas of well-being into the workplace, showing how "worthy topics just as easily grow from timely societal or personal events" (Tracy, 2010, p. 840).

Dependability. With an aim to achieve dependability, the research team documented thoroughly and consistently throughout the research process. Detailed tracking established an audit trail aimed at transparency. Intercoder reliability (Forero et al., 2018) was fostered through independent coding, then converging for peer-debriefing and coding comparison. The research team independently coded transcripts, capturing key epiphanies and quotations. Throughout coding, the research team came together at regular intervals to review notes, memos, and stand-out quotations they selected in reviewing the transcripts. In comparing notes, the researchers learned of consistency in the selection of quotations, affirming reliability. A shared Excel workbook was used to capture quotations for each participant, one tab per participant, and then coding each quotation for discussion. Codes from the quotations were then visualized in Scapple (Literature & Latte, 2019) mind maps and excel tables. Next, codes were categorized independently by each researcher and then together for validation, seeking commonalities and differences.

Throughout the course of this research, documentation of steps, methods, and thought processes aimed at achieving dependability. For this study's purposes, dependability "occurs when

another researcher can follow the decision trail used by the researcher” (Thomas & Maglivi, 2011, p. 153). Each manuscript provided supplemental progression for each piece of the process, with clear and transparent documentation throughout. Techniques to affirm dependability included having the major professor participate in the analysis process, doctoral committee reviews, and blind peer-review processes in manuscript submissions.

Confirmability. Through reflexivity and perspective taking, the researchers sought to bring confirmability to the study. The iteration of review and analysis lent itself well to both data saturation and confirmability (Saunders et al., 2018). The explicit nature of documentation and transparency throughout the process also contributed to confirmability. Regular researcher meetings, documenting codes, findings and observations from the transcript review, provided reflexivity. In addition, reflexive writing throughout the interview process, and follow-on discussions provided insights into research processes and the research teams’ investigation. Examination of the investigation found value in peer-debriefing methods, documentation of findings, and shared files and notations. Regularly scheduled discussions promoted constructive dialogue, complemented by shared online collaboration leading to, “establishing an audit trail and effectively keeping track of emerging impressions” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 7).

Confirmability can be recognized through established credibility, transferability, and dependability (Thomas & Maglivi, 2011). A reflexive approach, strives for confirmability, recognizing my role to play as researcher, and accountability throughout this process. Connecting back to my researcher positionality statement, demonstrated a goal of viewing myself as the research instrument and recognizing the lens through which this research is viewed. This connection also required my awareness and ability to have a “self-critical attitude... about how one’s own preconceptions affect the research” (Thomas & Maglivi, 2011, p. 154). My goal throughout the interview process, was to ensure that I followed leaders through their interviews, not lead them, yet asked for clarification where needed. This open approach aimed to elicit interpretation, insights, and reflections, generated from leaders themselves. One goal of this three-manuscript dissertation is to develop confirmability of the research, “leading the reader(s)... to have a sense of trust in the conduct and credibility of findings and applicability of the study” (Thomas & Maglivi, 2011, p. 154). I aimed to provide rich data informing future research and leadership practice.

Limitations – Methodological Integrity

This study demonstrated methodological integrity, however, for the purposes of discourse, I use this section to challenge the methodological integrity by exploring limitations and with the intention of provoking continued research into leaders' well-being.

Adequacy. The study strived towards adequacy through the rich nature of qualitative data elicited from the interviews. The goal was to “capture forms of diversity most relevant to the research question,” (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 98). The main research question asked *how do leaders describe their well-being experiences?* The research built on an integrative literature review that sought to conceptualize the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being. Through literature and interviews, I captured a variety of leaders' perspectives, relevant to characterizing leadership well-being experiences. The interview data achieved iterative saturation, embracing an evolving and additive approach where data became richer and more contributory, not reaching a pinnacle, yet showing added support for developing findings and themes (Saunders et al., 2018).

The leaders were from a diverse background of experiences including organizational leadership, academic and institutional leadership, and informal leader roles in their communities and through social leadership engagements. Recognizing data adequacy captured through these three manuscripts and dissertation, there is, of course, the question as to if more data can be captured from here. Added data can only bolster the leaders' well-being concept, further contribute to the well-being conversation, and potentially inform leadership development programs and content. Exposing more data through interviews with larger or different participant samples may elicit added data contributions, complementing or contradicting findings and themes. Alternatively, a focus group or varied participant sample within a certain industry or population may also drive supplemental data, contributing to the leaders' well-being concept and provoking dialogue about leaders' well-being.

Researchers' perspectives. Transparency aimed at methodological integrity, underscored by researchers' perspectives. Acknowledging the doctoral students' perspective and in partnership with the major professor, allowed open documentation regarding study approach and the lens through which data was viewed. Recognizing this lens is unique to this study's researchers and findings, it is useful to recognize how other researchers may hold alternative or complementing perspectives. Other researchers can follow this study's methods, demonstrated by the qualitative quality strengths noted in the above sections on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013).

Given this asserted dependability, other researchers can follow this study's methods yet use their own, unique perspectives to analyze data through their own interviews and contribute to findings. Added perspectives will recognize the need to take a diverse approach to building leaders' well-being, driven by interdisciplinary approaches to the study of leadership, as well as need for diverse application. Different and complementing perspectives are useful to leaders' well-being conversations, accepting ideas, and where there is "no one size fits all" approach to leadership, nor to leaders' self-care. Embracing a diversity of approach, also embraces diverse perspectives and drives added study needs for leaders' well-being.

Groundedness. The supplied quotes and notations demonstrated how the findings are grounded in data evidence. The thoroughness of thematic analysis provides a progressive view of the data, documenting how data was transformed from codes to categories to themes. The provided data figures and visuals aimed to enhance groundedness, displaying data in various ways to accommodate readers acceptance and interpretation of the findings. Quotations from the integrative literature review complemented interview statements from the leader-participants. Collecting a variety of perspective aimed to provide support for the need to build the leaders' well-being concept. Exploring leaders' experiences and capturing noted comments, quotes and excerpts informs well-being for leaders, adding usefulness to provoke future research. While striving for groundedness, implied here is finding balance between supplying a sufficient number of quotes, both from the literature and from interviews, while not having too many, and using an interpretative lens to ensure the data is explained appropriately. Added study may elicit complementing quotations or varied interpretation of the noted quotations. Additional research can add to the leaders' well-being concept, not undoing what is presented here, instead growing the concept and body of research.

Meaningfulness. The goal of this qualitative study and open question interviews included insightful and meaningful contributions. Seeking the storied nature of leaders' experiences, recognized the personal nature of this inquiry and evoked sensitivity to the representation of those experiences. This sensitivity also recognized the importance of reflexivity and the role I played as a researcher, bearing influence on the research process (Holmes, 2020). The personal and professional experiences of the research team also contribute to the meaningfulness of the data and the lens through which data and findings are interpreted and represented. The interviews were rich with stories, experiences, and leaders' reflections. Seeking depth, the interviewing researcher allowed and encouraged the participants to lead the interviews, using prompts, yet not leading the dialogue. The leaders supplied examples from their own well-being experiences, enhancing meaning, as presented

from their own individual perspective. Through independent review of the transcripts, then collaborative examination of findings, the researchers explored meaning-making of those leaders' well-being experiences, recognizing this meaning-making is viewed through the researchers own lens. Therefore, opportunities to further replicate this study may enhance its meaningfulness. Accepting dependability, another research team could follow the steps and a similar methodology, yet through their own lens, evoke meaningfulness based on their own data collection and interpretation. It may be useful to have a collection of studies with varied leader participant populations driving towards data validation and meaning making understanding. Due to the individualized nature of well-being, bolstered by internal and external factors, exploring meaningfulness through other researchers' lenses could further help drive understanding of well-being for leaders and how best to leverage those learnings for generalizability.

Context. Context is well-established through transparent documentation. Setting of the study was formed by the integrative literature review and virtual interviews. Interviews were leaders' opportunities for telling stories of their well-being experiences. Information about the participants included their leadership roles and millions of speaker views, generated by presentations at TED Talk conferences. Guiding interview questions and protocol are captured in Appendix D. Figures throughout Manuscript 3 (Chapter 4) capture noted phrases, codes, categories and themes. Contextual information surrounding the study is also useful to support methodological integrity. This contextual information includes the timing of this research, happening during the COVID-19 Global Pandemic (2020-2022), as well as my experiences as a leader and my role as a researcher.

Of course, there are always limitations with presented context, recognizing the confidentiality of participants, through informed consent. I also removed any references to organizational and institutional affiliation, recognizing these connections may be useful context to inform future research and participant selection; however, may provide too much transparency regarding participant identities. I made attempts to contextualize the participants' response, without revealing identifying information. The transcripts capture all the questions and responses, yet these are kept secure and only accessible by the research team. Future studies' context may be similar or different to the study represented through these manuscripts and dissertation. Depending on progression of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and other, associated implications, context for future studies must be considered and captured as part of the findings, documentation, and analysis processes.

Coherence. The findings from the integrative literature review in Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) fed the study methodology in Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3) and informed thematic analysis for

Manuscript 3 (Chapter 4). Parsing these inputs together, presents a cumulative inquiry into leaders' well-being. Findings from the integrative literature review, sought understanding of the intrapersonal nature of leaders' well-being developed themes including mindfulness, self-actualization, self-care, and resources. These themes elicited from the literature embrace the intrapersonal nature of well-being. Reinforced through the interviews, leaders discussed their individualized needs for self-care, goal driving towards purpose, achievement through self-actualization, burdens on well-being from lack of resources, and well-being improvements through mindful present moment awareness.

Figure 28

Research Progression Visualized

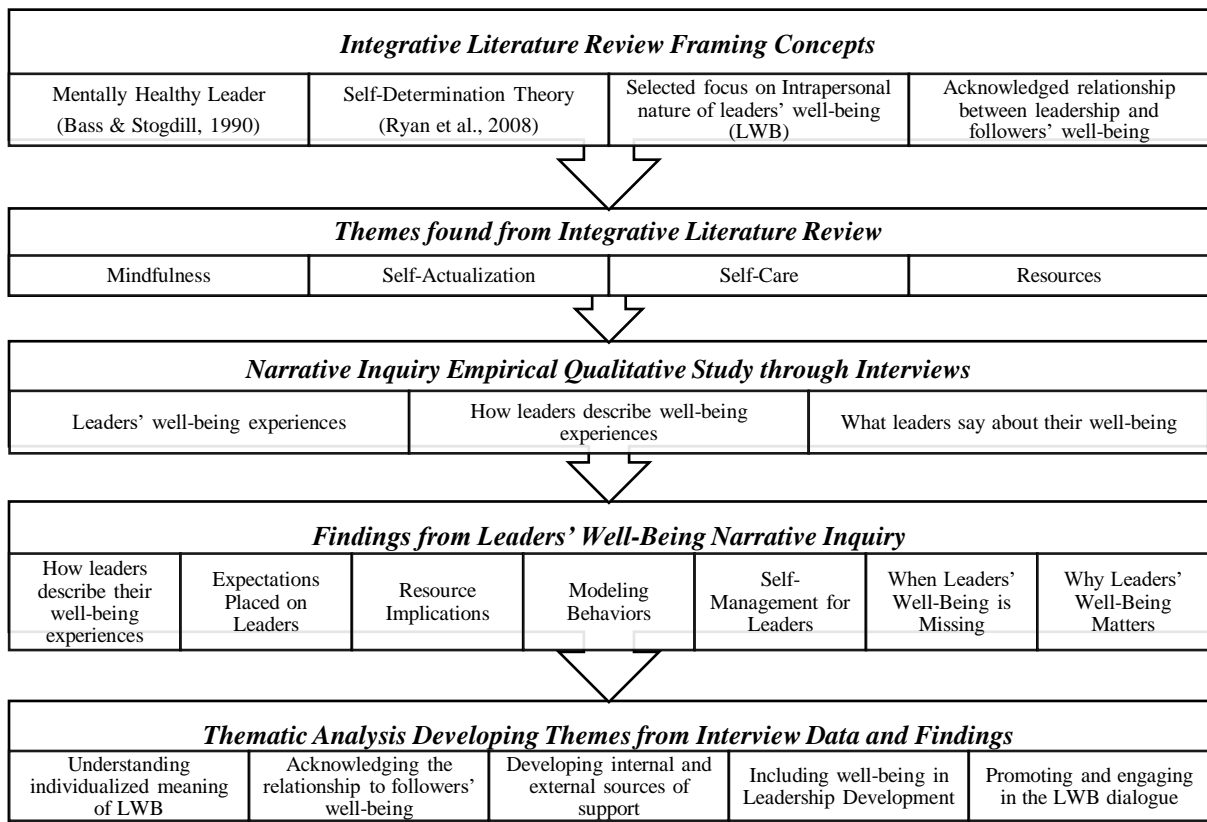


Figure 28: Research Progression Visualized

Further, leaders described their interpersonal well-being considerations, including peer-support models, organizational pressures, role implications, and leadership perceptions. Marrying these inter-relational aspects from the interviews, with the intrapersonal nature of well-being, allows leaders to understand the complex dynamics informing their own leaders' well-being construction. Thematic analysis dug deeper into the study findings, capturing developing themes. Complementing

the narrative, themes developed from analysis presented coherent findings consistent with the preceding manuscripts. Manuscript two focused on the manner in which the leaders describe their well-being experiences (the “how”). Manuscript three elaborated on the findings by exploring the content of leaders’ well-being experiences (the “what”). These collective perspectives informed a useful construction of leaders’ well-being, embracing value in understanding what is contained in the concept, as well as how it is described. Figure 28 visually represents the progression of this study.

Consistency. Consistency is brokered by use of the same research team throughout the three manuscripts. Foundational understanding from doctoral coursework and study also supported consistency. The doctoral student and major professor research team was consistent throughout the study. The doctoral student acted as primary on each manuscript. The methods for analysis and context of external events are also consistent. Engagement models also leverage consistent approaches, including virtual Zoom meetings and working sessions. Intercoder reliability (Forero et al., 2018) is brokered through use of the same research team and acknowledged positionality. The research team held regular and consistent analysis working sessions throughout the course of study. Virtual meetings allowed for consistent assessment of progress, findings, and next steps.

The use of the three-manuscript dissertation also promoted consistency through targeted milestones and delivery dates. Doctoral committee expectations remained consistent throughout the dissertation study progress. I strived to promote transparency and iteratively embrace and accept feedback to inform subsequent steps. Added support for methodological integrity (American Psychological Association, 2020) through consistency included:

- sharing transcripts and interview recordings (audio and full zoom recording) with the research team,
- consensus building (through regular analysis working sessions),
- data displays (through excel / scapple / virtual whiteboarding),
- structured methods of researcher reflexivity (documenting memos, notes, reflections and findings),
- and regular checks on the utility of findings (discussing attempts towards saturation, participant count, manuscript approach with blind peer-review).

These bulleted actions drove at consistency, recognizing there is always an opportunity to improve. This approach suggests the attainment of methodological integrity through these supplemental checks and by documenting the three-manuscripts in this dissertation.

Recommendations

Future research

These three manuscripts provided a solid foundation for developing the leaders' well-being concept and opportunity for future research. Replicating the integrative literature review could provide added scholarly input through more recent literature contributions. Years have passed since the initial integrative literature review. Plus, implications from the COVID-19 Global pandemic, provoke the opportunity to revisit the literature and determine if new insights may contribute to developing leaders' well-being. Added perspective from the pandemic and changing ways of working, may find relevancy and added literature contribution.

Conducting a new surface-level search for "leaders well-being" found over 115,000 peer-reviewed journal results for the years 2020-2022 (as of November 29, 2021). Looking at the top three results, provides additional insight that may be useful to provoke future research.

Figure 29

Relationship between leaders' and followers' well-being with perceptions, behaviors, and traits

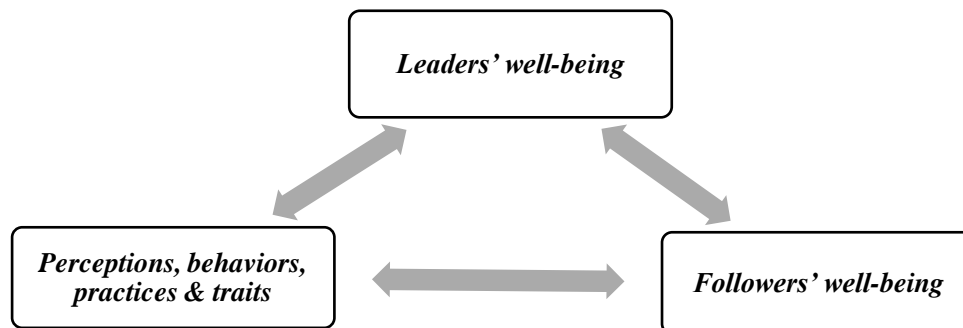


Figure 29: Multidirectional Relationship Between Leaders' & Followers' Well-Being with Perceptions, Behaviors, & Traits

The first result from Zheng et al. (2021) explored the relationship between followers' well-being and implications on leaders' stress and well-being during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I focused on the unidirectional relationship between leaders' behaviors and followers' well-being (from leader to follower). Conversely, Zheng et al. (2021) asserted followers can impact leaders' well-being (Figure Y). Reinforcing the driving need to study leaders' well-being, Zheng et al. (2021) added, "leader well-being has been investigated in only a few studies focusing on the role of leaders' own behavior in shaping their well-being... We go beyond a resource perspective and focus on leaders'

perception” (Zheng, et al., 2021, p. 4). Leaders’ perception was a key finding from both the literature and interviews. Various perceptions suggested how leaders view themselves and how leaders view (and are viewed by) other leaders, can significantly impact well-being.

The second article from this new “leaders’ well-being” search, explored leaders’ self-perception, follower-judged reputation, and attributed charisma (Hirschfeld et al., 2021). Through this exploration, Hirschfeld et al. (2021) found that leaders who hold both self-perceived and reputational identity, associated with the Dark Triad traits, may have less social worth and job satisfaction (Hirschfeld et al., 2021). Hirschfeld et al.’s (2021) reference to the Dark Triad traits includes narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Volmer et al. (2016) suggested connections between The Dark Triad traits and well-being. There may be opportunities to associate leaders’ perceptions of worth with satisfaction of well-being. These findings supported connections between inward and outward leaders’ perceptions and resulting well-being. Leaders’ perceptions were key findings from the interview data. Additional future research could further explore the multidirectional relationship between leaders with Dark Triad traits, and implications on/by follower well-being, and leaders’ well-being (see Figure 29).

The third peer-reviewed journal article from this new search related ethical culture with leaders’ well-being. Huhtala et al. (2021) found “ethical culture has significant cumulative effects on well-being, and these longitudinal effects can be both negative and positive, depending on the experienced strength of the culture’s ethicality” (p. 1). Huhtala et al.’s (2021) findings reinforced the need to look at external factors influencing leaders’ well-being. Connecting leaders’ interpersonal needs with their well-being, embraced needs to understand social, communal, and organizational implications. The integrative literature review also found support for leaders’ ethical considerations, relating to well-being (Burns, 1978; Crane and Ward, 2016; Fry and Slocum, 2008; Pignatelli, 2015; Yang, 2014). Huhtala et al. (2021) embraced Hobfoll’s (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), also referenced in Manuscripts 1 and 2. Leaders’ struggle to effectively manage the impact from gain or loss of resources impacts well-being. Finding three new articles from 2021, suggested opportunity and value in revisiting the literature. Through added literature review, there is potential to find additional current scholarly sources contributing to the development of leaders’ well-being. Adding the lens to view the literature, through impacts from change (COVID-19 Global Pandemic, changing ways of working, remote workers, technology and innovation implications, well-being and resiliency prevalence) adds insights useful to constructing the leaders’ well-being concept.

Additionally, researchers may select alternative lenses through which to view and build the leaders' well-being concept. These lenses may be different from the selected leaders' view in Bass and Stogdill's (1990) "mentally healthy leader" or from the well-being view informed by Ryan et al.'s (2008) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Added exploration through current interest in mindfulness and resiliency provide further opportunities for scholarly research to delve into building the leaders' well-being concept.

Another empirical study (Trochim et al., 2016) with a separate set of participants may provide additional observations to help further form the leaders' well-being concept. Selecting a different target population may allow for additional data collection and contribution to leaders' well-being exploration. Potential target participants may include leaders specific to certain industries, organizations, or institutions. Non-leader participants could also be selected to obtain an outward view of leaders' well-being. Collecting data about leaders from followers and from those who observe leaders may further contribute to building the leaders' well-being concept. Reconnecting with the original participants for a longitudinal study allows for additional data collection. Added reflection and revisiting earlier responses could provide for member-checking and increase awareness. Full member-checking could provide useful validation. Revisiting the original participants after this study, allowing time to pass, may provide added insights and reflection.

Survey data through quantitative study could supplement the qualitative data from these three manuscripts. Emotional intelligence surveys could be used to further leaders' well-being exploration, potentially using instruments including Emotional Quotient Inventory (Ghossoub et al., 2018), or Maslach's Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al., 1996). Leadership related questionnaires may also be useful supporting instruments, including Oyinlade's (2006) Essential Behavior Leadership Qualities Model (EBLQ), Bass and Avolio's (1995) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), and Avolio's (2005) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Joo & Nimon, 2014). A different qualitative approach such as portraiture may also be useful for future research exploration.

Implications for policy and practice

Exploring leaders' well-being elicits opportunities to probe at assumptions, embracing adult learning ideas of continuous learning and questioning previously "known" (assumed) leader "truths." Applying learnings from this study may inform human resource development, leadership development, as well as leadership research, policy, and practice.

Embracing an interdisciplinary approach (Eisenhart & DeHann, 2005) invites diverse perspectives from leaders' experiences. Recognizing the broad nature of the study of leadership, it is necessary to consider constructing leadership development programs allowing for broadness, while also embracing individual needs. Ardichvili et al. (2016) suggested there is value in leadership development that includes personalized and customized approaches, while also embracing collective leadership capacity. Leaders' well-being holds similar requirements. Developing leaders' well-being as a broadly generalizable concept, must also leave room for individual needs. Incorporating well-being into leadership development programs and content provides rich opportunity, spanning across disciplines, industries, and functions. Reflecting well-being awareness through leadership development recognizes needs for developing the leader as whole person, in tandem with skills and technical competency development. These reflections aim for inclusion and require that leadership development embrace individualized, intrinsic needs, complemented with external, collaborative, and social needs. In this comprehensive approach, an open mindset invites a variety of experiences informing well-being as part of leadership development.

Next steps

To implement the recommendations and address the implications, several steps are required to help in moving this leaders' well-being research forward. Completion of this scholarly product allows for publication and potential proliferation to the academic community. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences. Additional research products and publications would provide support and move these leaders' well-being ideas forward even further.

From a leadership development perspective, we must first include the dialogue on leader as whole person in learning and development situations. Promoting acceptance through active acknowledgement allows leaders to be seen as whole persons and allows leaders to view self as whole person. Viewing leaders' self as whole person, acknowledges well-being needs, where well-being becomes part of a leaders' role. This approach includes well-being with comparable importance to leaders' competencies, technical skills, and managerial aptitude. Adding self-care, mindfulness, and well-being to leadership development content helps to initiate the leaders' well-being dialogue.

Accepting well-being into the leaders' development conversation also requires an embracing of an interdisciplinary approach. We must accept added contribution to leadership development, from fields including social sciences, adult education, business, and psychology. Bridging business with

education allowed me to evolve my perspective through this doctoral program. There is key opportunity to leverage this approach in how we develop content and approaches for leadership development programs. Part of interdisciplinary engagement requires invitation of diverse perspectives, ideas, people, and experiences, contributing to the leaders' well-being dialogue. Ensuring ideas are not developed in isolation, allows for future applicability, spanning across disciplines, research, and practice, as well as across cultures and people.

Elaborating on the need for breadth and continuity between research and practice, enables exploration into how to connect the scholarly literature with actual practical application. Where I find a continuous and cyclical relationship between followers' well-being, leaders' well-being, and perceptions, behaviors, practices & traits; I believe we also must demonstrate useful continuity between research and practice. This continuity shall include integration and reception from both scholars and practitioners, embracing input from various perspectives and experiences, and using input as an impetus to perpetuate continuous research. Scholarly research must reflect actual organizational or institutional practice. Practical application should consider implementing findings and recommendations emanating from scholarly literature and academic research. I believe for this approach to be successful; scholars and practitioners must embrace a healthy acceptance for leaders as humans, recognizing a view spanning across industries, academia, research, and practice. A mindset and focus spanning the continuum, ensures findings through scholarly research, also parlay to practical application. Promoting the dialogue in research and practice also allows for timelier proliferation of ideas, testing of hypotheses, and challenging assumptions across the spectrum. Engagement through industry affiliation, scholarly organizations, professional associations, conferences and speaking events can spark ideas and approaches useful for research and practice.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval



March 22, 2021

To: Laura B. Holyoke

Cc: Heidi Scott

From: University of Idaho Institutional Review Board

Approval Date: March 22, 2021

Title: Dissertation: Leaders' Well-Being an Exploratory Study in the Narrative

Protocol: 21-032, Reference: 012697

Exempt under Category 2 at 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2).

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Idaho, I am pleased to inform you that the protocol for this research project has been certified as exempt under the category listed above.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review and this certification does not expire. However, if changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes through [VERAS](#) for review before implementing the changes. Amendments may include but are not limited to, changes in study population, study personnel, study instruments, consent documents, recruitment materials, sites of research, etc.

As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable FERPA regulations, University of Idaho policies, state and federal regulations. Every effort should be made to ensure that the project is conducted in a manner consistent with the three fundamental principles identified in the Belmont Report: respect for persons; beneficence; and justice. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that all study personnel have completed the online human subjects training requirement. Please complete the *Continuing Review and Closure Form* in VERAS when the project is completed.

You are required to notify the IRB in a timely manner if any unanticipated or adverse events occur during the study, if you experience an increased risk to the participants, or if you have participants withdraw or register complaints about the study.

IRB Exempt Category (Categories) for this submission:

Category 2: Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: i. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot

readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; ii. Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or iii. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by .111(a)(7).

Appendix B: AHRD Conference Proceedings Copyright Statement

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The research papers presented at these conferences are published by the Academy as well as being submitted to the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Individual authors retain the copyright to their papers.

From 1999 through 2005, the Proceedings were published in both hard copy and electronic format. Beginning in 2006, Proceedings have been published electronically only. Although hard copies are no longer available, CDs of the Proceedings may be purchased for \$25 USD.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Leaders' Well-Being an Exploratory Study in the Narrative Informed Consent for Interviews

Laura Holyoke, Ph.D., Interim Department Chair, Program Coordinator and Associate Professor, AOLL from the Department of Leadership and Counseling in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, is conducting a research study with her doctoral candidate, Heidi K. Scott. The purpose of the research is to explore and understand how leaders convey their leaders' well-being experiences. This inquiry seeks to explore leaders' experiences through narrative, seeking understanding and meaning making of these experiences to inform the leaders' well-being concept. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your TedTalk in the category of "leadership" received two million views (or more) and your talk holds relevancy in the area of leaders' well-being, spanning across interdisciplinary fields of participants.

Your participation will involve a three-sequence interview approach. The first interview should take about 60-90 minutes to complete. The first interview includes questions such as exploring your early leaders' well-being formation, through context, history, and background (early job and work experiences, and early leader well-being experiences). The second "interview" will actually request a narrative or a story of one of your own experiences. This second phase in the inquiry will ask you to author a story about a lived experience with your own leaders' well-being. This story should take an estimated 60-90 minutes to complete. The story should capture details of when and where the leaders' well-being experience took place, what was the participants role, detailing the situation or event or experience and capturing perceptions and responses to the experience. The third interview will aim to seek understanding of the storied experience or event as narrated in step two. Interview three will likely take 60-90 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with your responses, participant identities will be transitioned to pseudonyms and identifying information will be removed. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions. Data from the interviews will be stored in Zoom with access only to the interview team through password encrypted links.

The findings from this project will provide information on leaders' well-being as a concept, with the data from this study to help inform how to understand leaders' well-being, and potentially how to implement leaders' well-being through practice or teaching. If published, results will be presented attributable to pseudonyms and with personally identifiable information removed.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Laura Holyoke at 208-885-7606 or via email at holyoke@uidaho.edu. The doctoral candidate Heidi K. Scott may also be reached at 406-491-3460 or via email at heidikaepplscott@gmail.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the Office of Research Assurances at (208) 885-6340 or irb@uidaho.edu.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol and Questions

The interview protocol and questions outlined here provided the intended structure and interview questions. The interview followed natural progression, based on the participant responses, seeking alignment with a narrative inquiry approach, all questions were not specifically asked of each participant nor in the sequence noted below. The aim was to capture and understand the leaders' well-being experiences, allowing the participants to lead the inquiry and share their stories. The purpose of this study was to develop the concept of leaders' well-being, identify leaders' practices of well-being, and to capture the story of how leaders describe their well-being experiences.

- The main research question seeks to understand:
 - How do leaders describe their leaders' well-being (LWB) experiences?
- Supporting research sub-questions
 - Early formation of leaders' well-being:
 - What can leaders share about their early well-being experiences?
 - How do these experiences inform their well-being?
- Leaders' well-being lived experience and reflections through narrative:
 - What are leaders' experiences with well-being?
 - How do leaders describe their well-being experiences?
- Reflection and meaning making of the leaders' well-being experiences:
 - What do leaders share when reflecting on well-being being experiences?
 - How do these reflections inform their well-being?

The interview intended to explore the details of the leaders' lived well-being experiences. Leaders were asked to describe an experience with their own well-being, narrating the story in their own words and then verbally reflecting on the experience. The following captures questions or prompts that were used or considered to guide the inquiry:

- Can you tell me about a well-being experience you had as a leader?
 - Where and when did this experience take place?
 - What was your role at the time...?
 - Role in the organization/industry/job?
 - Home role (in terms of family/personal life)?
- What may have been some of the influencing structures or external factors?
 - Organizational influences,

- Parental, spousal, or familial influences,
 - Peer support (or lack thereof),
 - Financial or political considerations
- What was the situation / event / or experience?
 - Please be as detailed as possible.
 - Convey the experience as if you are telling me the story.
 - Please use color and detail.
 - Names and places will be removed/omitted/replaced by pseudonyms to support anonymity.
- Perceptions and responses to the experience
 - How did you feel before / during / after the experience?
 - How did others react to the experience?
 - How did you react to the experience at the time?
- In thinking about the experience as you shared in your story...
 - What do you understand now as happened because of this experience?
 - Did something change in your role?
 - What changed in structure?
- Tell me about any resulting actions.
 - What was their impact to your family or your career as a result?
 - Why do you think these changes occurred?
 - Are there changes that you expected, yet did not occur?
 - If so, please tell me about those expected changes.
- Was this one event in a series of events, or a single disorienting dilemma?
 - If it happened once, what allowed for it to be a one-time occurrence?
 - If it was a series – what allowed, it to go on or repeat?
- Did this experience cause change in any of your...?
 - beliefs (thinking),
 - self-concept (being),
 - actions or behaviors (doing)?
- Reflections on the narrated experience
 - Why do you think this experience caused change for you or led to change?
 - If you had not had this experience, what might be different today?
 - Reflecting now, what would you tell your earlier self?

- Knowing what you know now, what do you tell your “today self”?
- Building on this experience, what would you tell other leaders?
- Does this / did this dialogue change because of this experience? (Either with your earlier or your present self)
- If this experience happened earlier or later in your leader career – may have that changed the result or changed your reflections?
- How could other leaders use this experience and your reflections in support of their own leaders’ well-being?
- Leaders’ well-being today (for you)
 - What do you understand now about leaders’ well-being?
 - What do you wish you knew sooner or earlier about leaders’ well-being?
 - How did the story / experience influence your understanding of your own leaders’ well-being?
 - What do you find now as contributing elements to support your leaders’ well-being?
 - What do you find to be detractors or distractors from your leaders’ wellbeing?
 - How would you state the importance / characterize the necessity of wellbeing for leaders?
 - Why might (or might not) leaders’ well-being be an important or relevant concept for leaders?
- What may be reasons for talking about leaders’ well-being?
 - What may be the reasons for NOT talking about leaders’ well-being?
- What can we do to promote the leaders’ well-being dialogue?
- Help me understand your perspective on the leaders’ well-being dialogue and whether it should be discussed?
- What would you see to be an important part of this leaders’ well-being conversation?
 - What should be included?
 - What should be excluded?

Appendix E: 2021 AHRD Call for Submissions (excerpt)

Leaders' Well-Being an Exploratory Study in the Narrative Informed Consent for Interviews

Laura Holyoke, Ph.D., Interim Department Chair, Program Coordinator and Associate Professor, AOLL from the Department of Leadership and Counseling in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, is conducting a research study with her doctoral candidate, Heidi K. Scott. The purpose of the research is to explore and understand how leaders convey their leaders' well-being experiences. This inquiry seeks to explore leaders' experiences through narrative, seeking understanding and meaning making of these experiences to inform the leaders' well-being concept. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your TedTalk in the category of "leadership" received two million views (or more) and your talk holds relevancy in the area of leaders' well-being, spanning across interdisciplinary fields of participants.

Your participation will involve a three-sequence interview approach. The first interview should take about 60-90 minutes to complete. The first interview includes questions such as exploring your early leaders' well-being formation, through context, history, and background (early job and work experiences, and early leader well-being experiences). The second "interview" will actually request a narrative or a story of one of your own experiences. This second phase in the inquiry will ask you to author a story about a lived experience with your own leaders' well-being. This story should take an estimated 60-90 minutes to complete. The story should capture details of when and where the leaders' well-being experience took place, what was the participants role, detailing the situation or event or experience and capturing perceptions and responses to the experience. The third interview will aim to seek understanding of the storied experience or event as narrated in step two. Interview three will likely take 60-90 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with your responses, participant identities will be transitioned to pseudonyms and identifying information will be removed. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions. Data from the interviews will be stored in Zoom with access only to the interview team through password encrypted links.

The findings from this project will provide information on leaders' well-being as a concept, with the data from this study to help inform how to understand leaders' well-being, and potentially how to implement leaders' well-being through practice or teaching. If published, results will be presented attributable to pseudonyms and with personally identifiable information removed.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Laura Holyoke at 208-885-7606 or via email at holyoke@uidaho.edu. The doctoral candidate Heidi K. Scott may also be reached at 406-491-3460 or via email at heidikaepplscott@gmail.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the Office of Research Assurances at (208) 885-6340 or irb@uidaho.edu.

Appendix F: 2022 AHRD Call for Submissions (excerpt)

Leaders' Well-Being an Exploratory Study in the Narrative Informed Consent for Interviews

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Appendix G: AHRD Evaluation Criteria (excerpt)

Leaders' Well-Being an Exploratory Study in the Narrative Informed Consent for Interviews

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Appendix H: 2021 AHRD Virtual Conference Program Book (cover)



2021 AHRD Virtual Conference
February 17-19, 2021

**Innovating And Leading
In Times Of Rapid And
Unplanned Change**

www.ahrd.org

Appendix I: 2021 AHRD Virtual Conference Program Book (page 41)

Breakout Sessions F

Creative and Innovative Processes as Complex Adaptive Systems: A Multilevel Theory

Rose Baker, University of North Texas
 John Turner, University of North Texas
 James Washington, University of North Texas
 Jae Schroeder, University of North Texas

From Definition to a Core Theory of Human Resource Development

Greg Wang, University of Texas at Tyler
 Harold Doty, University of Texas at Tyler
 Shengbin Yang, Northwestern Polytechnical University

Thursday, February 18 | 1:30 - 3:00 pm

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REFEREED FULL MANUSCRIPT

Leadership and Well-Being

Conceptualizing the Intrapersonal Nature of Leaders' Well-Being: An Integrative Literature Review

Heidi Scott, University of Idaho
 Laura Holyoke, University of Idaho

Individual-level and Organizational-level Antecedents of Employee Well-being: An Integrative Literature Review

Yebin Seo, Ewha Womans University
 Chaemin Nam, Ewha Womans University
 Jisoo Kang, Ewha Womans University
 Namhee Kim, Ewha Womans University

Leader Well-Being in Organizations: A Multilevel Literature Review, Framework, and Opportunities for Future Research

Julia Bachman, Louisiana State University
 Lacy Dicharry, Louisiana State University
 Rachel Henry, Louisiana State University
 Corai Jackson, Louisiana State University
 Tyree Mitchell, Louisiana State University