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Master Thesis

Empowering Leadership: Its Link to Work Engagement Through Perceived Competence Mobilization, Organizational Cynicism and Motivational Climate

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Contents

Abstract

Empowering leadership has long been proven to have several positive effects on employee outcomes such as work engagement. However, researchers have stressed that previous studies on empowering leadership lack consistency. The need for a more balanced investigation to understand when and why empowering leadership leads to work engagement or sometimes disengagement has therefore been requested. Thus, the present study investigates empowering leadership's link to work engagement through the mediators perceived competence mobilization and organizational cynicism. Further, motivational climate was included as moderator between empowering leadership and the mediators to investigate its possible contextual influence.

We employed a cross-lagged design containing responses from 110 employees among 19 industries. The results of our analysis give support for organizational cynicism as a mediator between empowering leadership and work engagement. Thus, the findings suggest that empowering leaders can help to reduce employees' cynical attitudes and thereby reduce their work engagement. Further, the study found support for a moderated mediation effect in low to moderate levels of performance climates in the relationship between empowering leadership and organizational cynicism on work engagement. However, there was no support for perceived competence mobilization as a mediator between empowering leadership and work engagement. Further, no support was found for mastery climate as moderated mediation effect. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed, as well as limitations and directions for future research.

Keywords: *empowering leadership, organizational cynicism, perceived competence mobilization, mastery climate, performance climate, work engagement*

"Empowering Leadership: Its Link to Work Engagement Through Perceived Competence Mobilization, Organizational Cynicism and Motivational Climate"

Today's rapidly changing market has caused companies to transform their work design by increasing complexity in jobs and leaving more responsibility to lower levels in the hierarchy (Lee, Willis & Tian, 2018). Thus, empowering leadership has become more relevant as it refers to leader behaviors involving delegation of responsibility and authority, whilst boosting the employees' control of execution of tasks (Lee et al., 2018). It permits employees to influence decision-making (Zhang & Bartol, 2010), as well as it increases flexibility and makes employees more easily adapt to new work situations (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp, 2005). In turn, empowering leadership is shown to have several positive effects on employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, managerial effectiveness (Sparrowe, 1994; Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997), creativity (Harris, Li, Boswell, Zhang, & Xie, 2014; Zhang & Bartol, 2010), organizational citizenship behavior and task performance (Humborstad, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2014; Raub & Robert, 2010). On the other hand, a growing amount of research on the dark side of empowerment has emerged as empowering leadership has shown to have negative outcomes (Ahearne et al., 2005; Hui, Au, & Fock, 2004; Robert, Probst, Martocchio, Drasgow & Lawler, 2000; Wong & Giessner, 2018; Cheong, Spain, Yammarion & Yun, 2016; Cheong, Yammarino, Dionne, Spain, Tsai, 2019). For instance, Wong & Giessner (2018) demonstrated how empowering leadership can, in some cases, be perceived as the absence of leadership by employees, which questions its effectiveness.

Accordingly, empowering leaders' influence on employees' well-being has become a topic of interest (Tuckey et al., 2012; Cheong et al., 2016; Cai, Cai, Sun & Ma, 2018). More precisely, previous research has indicated a positive relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement, described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind (Tuckey et al., 2012; Cai et al., 2018; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). However, little is known about when and why empowering leadership can lead to work engagement or in some cases disengagement. In other words, there is a need to understand how contextual factors link empowering leadership to employee outcomes, such as

work engagement or conversely, disengagement. Meta-studies and reviews show that empowering leadership triggers several psychological mechanisms such as psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, organization-based self-esteem, goal orientation, work effort, self-leadership, affective commitment and leader-member-exchange (Kim, Beehr & Prewett, 2018; Cheong et al., 2019). However, a recent study has also showed how empowering leadership can be viewed as a burden by employees with lower needs for autonomy (Cheong et al., 2016). Moreover, it is argued that empowering leadership often lacks effectiveness because it takes a "one-size-fits-all empowerment approach" (Lee, Cheong, Kim, & Yun, 2017, p.19), as some employees benefit from empowering leadership behaviors, while it may not suffice for others (Ahearne et al., 2005). Thus, the consequences of empowering leadership are complex, and it is therefore crucial to examine both its possible advantageous and damaging effects (Lee et al., 2018). (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Humborstad et al., 2014). In this regard, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the field by investigating the possible psychological mechanisms and contextual factors that might explain and trigger the relationship.

To further understand the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement, we will introduce perceived competence mobilization and organizational cynicism as mediators. The former describes the degree to which an employee perceives to have sufficient opportunities to exploit his or her competencies in a job (Lai & Kapstad, 2009), while the latter refers to negative attitudes' employees have toward their employing organization (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkaret, 1998). Further, we will include motivational climate, which refer to how employees view and define success in their workplace (Nerstad, Roberts, & Richardsen, 2013), as moderator. That is, we suggest that a workplace promoting either competition or learning can trigger experiences of perceived competence mobilization or organizational cynicism respectively, when facing empowering leadership behaviors, which in turn can affect the degree of work engagement.

By examining the proposed factors' link in the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement, we intend to contribute to the empowering leadership research by increasing awareness about how individual attributes and contextual factors can lead to increased or decreased work

engagement. Thus, the findings of the current study can provide a more balanced understanding of empowering leadership and how this is linked to work engagement. Additionally, it can help to explain why previous research on empowering leadership lacks consistency, and what factors prompt the contradicting outcomes (Humborstad et al., 2014). By including organizational cynicism, perceived competence mobilization and motivational climate in our model, our study will contribute to the rather limited research on motivational climate within the work setting (Nerstad et al., 2013). In addition, it will shed light on the research gap of perceived competence mobilization's possible related constructs (Lai, 2011). Moreover, the current study might also clarify the question of how empowering leadership responses are related to different attitudes and emotions (Kim et al., 2016). Along with the theoretical contributions, knowledge about what triggers the possible positive and negative effects of empowering leadership is valuable for organizations for practical reasons. When empowering leadership is implemented successfully, it can yield several positive employee outcomes (Lee et al., 2018). It is therefore vital to identify factors leading to such successful implementation and be aware of the possible downsides to prevent them. Hopefully, contributing to the field will help organizations implementing empowering leadership in a successful manner, which can be beneficial for both the employees and the future success of the organization.

1.0 Literature review

Based on the introduced inquiry, we propose to investigate the following conceptual model. The model shows the hypotheses presented in the following sections, including PCM and organizational cynicism as mediators between EL and work engagement. Further, mastery climate and performance climate are proposed as moderated mediation effects.
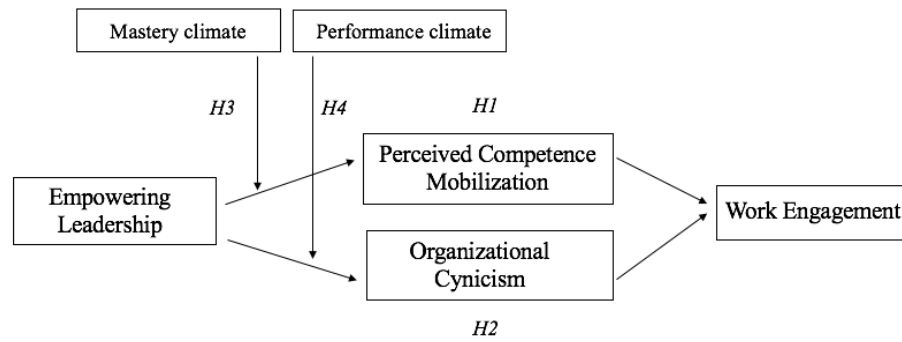
Figure 1. Conceptual model. *H* = Hypothesis.

1.1 Work Engagement

Work engagement is defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). The first characteristic, vigor, entails being energetic and being motivated to devote effort into work, as well as mental resilience when facing obstacles (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The second feature, dedication, concerns being strongly involved in work, and is associated with feelings of inspiration, excitement, and significance. Lastly, the third characteristic, absorption, is described as being strongly focused on and immersed in work, and it is hard to separate oneself from it (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Work engagement is a global state as it is not restricted to a specific object, person, or behavior. It is rather relatively stable, with only some potential daily variations (Sonnentag, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2002). In sum, work engagement emerges through motivational processes as employees perceive their job resources as sufficient to handle the demands of their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In turn, employees can invest their intrinsic energy and dedication into their work (Tuckey et al., 2012).

Accordingly, work engagement can be examined through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. Here, job resources are those "physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that may (...) (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development" (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001, p. 501), whereas job demands are those aspects of work requiring sustained physical or psychological (cognitive or emotional) effort (Demerouti et al., 2001). The effort

of dealing with job demands drains energy and leads to a range of physical and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to the model, work engagement occurs when there are sufficient levels of job resources to deal with job demands. This results in an elevated level of energy towards work tasks, increasing employees' effort and making them absorbed in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The consequences of work engagement have been linked to several positive employee outcomes. As the state of engagement is described as a positive experience, it has been associated with positive work-related effects as well as good health (Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). In turn, these positive emotions are linked to positive work outcomes, such as organizational commitment, job performance and extra-role behavior (Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). Furthermore, engaged employees are likely to experience a stronger connection to their workplace, which reduces their turnover intention (Saks, 2006). Given the promising consequences of work engagement, it is instrumental to investigate the construct's antecedents. More specifically, researchers seem to agree that leaders can impact employees' engagement towards their work (e.g., Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007; Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008). For instance, both the degree to which employees perceive to receive recognition and feedback from their organization or leader, are argued to play influential parts on employees' work engagement (Saks, 2006; Cai et al., 2018).

Moreover, previous studies suggest that different leadership styles and behaviors such as transformational, servant, authentic and charismatic leadership are associated with work engagement (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wersing & Peterson, 2008; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Alok & Israel, 2012; Aryee, Walumbva, Zhou & Hartnell, 2012; Jorge Correia de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2014). Still, little emphasis has been placed on the impact empowering leadership can have on work engagement, with few exceptions from Cai et al. (2018) and Tuckey et al. (2012). Since empowering leadership promotes autonomy and involvement in decision making for employees, it can increase motivation (Cai et al., 2018; Tuckey et al., 2012). There are, therefore, several reasons to assume a positive relation between empowering leadership and work engagement.

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1.2 Empowering Leadership and Work Engagement

Empowering leadership (EL) involves strengthening employees' autonomy, which refers to the employee's degree of control of the execution of his or her tasks, through delegation of power and responsibility to lower organizational levels (Kim et al., 2018; Cheong et al., 2019). This is done by encouraging involvement in decision making and supporting the employees to develop skills to work autonomously within the organization (Cheong et al., 2019). Consequently, employees can take initiative and make decisions in their daily work. Put differently, EL concerns giving influence to employees instead of having influence over them (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). Hence, autonomy is a key characteristic of EL which consists of the two sub-dimensions; autonomy support and development support (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014).

Firstly, autonomy support entails delegation of formal authority to employees, which in turn can strengthen their feeling of self-determination and perceived impact (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). Sharing work-related information is also an important part of autonomy support, as it can give employees a sense of meaning and purpose. Moreover, leaders should encourage employees to work towards self-defined goals which has proven to increase motivation and performance (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). The second sub-dimension, development support, concerns behaviors of modelling and guidance. Deriving from model learning (Ormrod, 2012), effective empowering leaders repeatedly demonstrate useful self-leadership skills and guide and coach their employees to handle the shift from being led to leading themselves (Kim et al., 2018).

EL has been claimed to be a promising leadership style as it facilitates for self-leadership, participation, and involvement in decision-making (Tuckey et al., 2012). This can strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation (Kim et al., 2018), which refers to the internal reward and joy of executing a task itself (Tuckey et al., 2012). Accordingly, EL is associated with positive outcomes including job satisfaction, creativity, and work performance, extra-role behaviors and engagement (Kim et al., 2018; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Humborstad et al., 2014; Raub & Robert, 2010; Tuckey et al., 2012), the latter being of interest in this study. More specifically, empowering leaders can directly promote work engagement by delegating power to employees and supporting them. This can

strengthen their autonomy and self-efficacy (Ahearne et al., 2005), which describes the employee's perception of being competent (Wong, Škerlavaj & Černe, 2016). This, in turn, can strengthen intrinsic motivation and motivation for task accomplishment (Tuckey et al., 2012). Empowering leaders can also affect work engagement indirectly by influencing employees' working conditions, helping them to generate enough job resources to manage job demands and meet their basic need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Tuckey et al., 2012). Moreover, empowering leaders can strengthen employees' sense of meaning, which is positively related to work engagement (Cai et al., 2018; Tucky et al., 2012).

Despite these promising consequences, an emerging field of research is contradicting these findings and points out several possible negative outcomes of EL (e.g. Ahearne et al., 2005; Hui et al., 2004; Robert et al., 2000; Wong & Giessner, 2018). For example, Cheong and colleagues (2016) suggest that EL can be perceived a burden when employees are provided with supplementary responsibilities. The authors emphasize that these additional tasks can cause role ambiguity, increasing confusion and stress around the employee's role (Cheong et al., 2016). A possible explanation for these claims is that high autonomy and task delegation are, in some cases, associated with task uncertainty and increased job induced tension, which in turn can lead to reduced performance (Kim et al., 2018). These inconsistent results indicate that EL alone does not necessarily lead to work engagement. Rather, how you perceive the work situation and your own job resources to handle work requirements might affect how you perceive and react to EL (Lee et al., 2018; Humborstad et al., 2014; Wong & Giessner, 2018). With the aim to understand when and why EL leads to work engagement we will, in the following sections, suggest how perceived competence mobilization and organizational cynicism can explain the proposed relationship.

1.3 Perceived Competence Mobilization

The concept of perceived competence mobilization (PCM) entails employees' evaluation of the extent to which they have relevant tasks and opportunities to utilize their competence and skills (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011). Hence, employees are mobilized if they perceive to have sufficient opportunities to use their competencies. Previous research has suggested that

PCM is closely related to intrinsic motivation (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). This is because highly intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to perceive more opportunities for utilizing their competence (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). This means that employees who enjoy executing their tasks are more likely to perceive that their competencies are mobilized. The link has also been suggested to be reversed, as employees that find ways to apply their competence are likely to fulfill the fundamental need for competence which can increase their intrinsic motivation (Lai & Kapstad, 2009).

Moreover, contextual factors can affect whether employee's experience their competence to be mobilized. For example, PCM can be linked to peer support as colleagues can help each other mobilizing competencies by supporting each other (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005) through exchange of knowledge and experiences in addition to giving each other emotional and motivational support. Also, PCM can be affected by employees' satisfaction with the pay system (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). This is based on social comparison theory (Greenberg, 2001), arguing that employees who feel under-compensated compared to their peers and colleagues might experience reduced PCM (Lai & Kapstad, 2009).

Additionally, PCM is closely related to self-efficacy, as it refers to employees' perceived competence (Lai, 2011). Here, a curvilinear relationship between the concepts has been found (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). More specifically, very low and very high levels of self-efficacy are linked to decreased degree of PCM compared to medium levels of self-efficacy (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011). This can be explained by how highly self-efficacious employees are more likely to be effective and eager when solving tasks and might demand more challenges to feel that their competencies are fully mobilized. On the other hand, employees with lower confidence in their own abilities can struggle more with finding their competencies being mobilized (Lai, 2011). Accordingly, employees are therefore dependent on job resources that provide them with opportunities to apply and mobilize their competencies. Here, leaders are suggested to have a responsibility as their support is found to have a significant impact on employees (Lai, 2011). Having responsibility, complexity in the job and problem-solving demands are instrumental for learning, skill utilization, and psychological well-being (Wall & Jackson 1995; Morrison, Cordery, Giardi and Payne 2005). These

aspects are also fundamental aspects of EL and work engagement, and there are therefore several possible explanations for PCM's mediating role between the concepts.

First of all, the EL behaviors autonomy support and development support are likely to promote employees' job resources (Kim et al., 2018), which further can promote PCM. For example, autonomy's effect on PCM can be explained by the fact that some employees might perceive it as an opportunity to develop and apply their competencies (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011). Moreover, development supportive behaviors such as giving direct feedback on employees' efforts and performance can contribute to recognize and fulfill the psychological need for competence (Amundsen, 2019; Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005). In addition, support from the leader is especially important when employees have a more advanced knowledge in their field of expertise, and the leaders' role is therefore to manage and develop this competence by providing opportunities to learn and mobilize competencies (Amundsen, 2019). In sum, since providing autonomy support and development support is essential in EL, it is logical to expect a positive relationship between EL and PCM.

Secondly, we suggest that employees perceiving their competencies to be mobilized is linked to higher degrees of work engagement's characteristics vigor, dedication, and absorption for several reasons. For example, as PCM is closely related to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Lai & Kapstad, 2009), we argue that employees might use this energy and motivation they gain when their competencies are mobilized to put more effort into work. They might, therefore, be more excited about work and keep working even if they meet obstacles, which are important aspects of vigor and dedication. Further, we suggest that if employees have sufficient opportunities to utilize their competencies, they will be more dedicated and absorbed in their work. This is in line with Lai's (2011) findings suggesting that high degrees of PCM are linked to high degrees of organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions (Lai, 2011). A reason for this can be how employees with high degrees of PCM are more satisfied with internal training and promotion opportunities and are therefore less likely to look for new job opportunities (Lai, 2011).

In sum, we suggest that employees can perceive EL as a job resource which can inspire employees to utilize the given opportunity to apply their

competencies. Consequently, when employees receive enough resources to mobilize their competencies, it can foster other job resources which can make them feel vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed in their work and thereby increase work engagement. We therefore hypothesize the following relationship:

H1: Perceived competence mobilization positively mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement such that empowering leadership is positively related to perceived competence mobilization and in turn perceived competence mobilization is positively related to work engagement.

1.4 Organizational Cynicism

Organizational cynicism is defined as "a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behavior toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect" (Dean et al., 1998, p. 345). It is linked to feelings of frustration, despair, and a lack of trust in decisions made by the organization's top management (Andersson, 1996; Davis & Gardner, 2004). Despite its negative intonation, organizational cynicism may have a functional value as it can help protecting people from being exploited (Dean et al., 1998; Neves, 2012). Even though it is argued to be a general attitude toward an organization, research has suggested that it can be generalized from one object to another, such as from a former employer to a new employer (Neves, 2012; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2003; Andersson, 1996).

Previous research has investigated the antecedents and consequences of organizational cynicism (Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks & Lomeli, 2013). For example, organizational cynicism has previously been linked to situations where employees are exposed to many job demands such as role conflict, workload and role ambiguity (Bakker, Demerouti, Sanz-Vergel, 2014). If the employees do not possess sufficient amounts of job resources to handle such situations (Bakker et al., 2014), it may lead to cynicism (Alarcon, 2011). Employees' negative attitudes can also be a consequence of leadership behaviors, as employees' feelings of disappointment can stem from leaders' inability to meet the employees'

expectations (Jiang, Chen, Sun & Yang, 2017). More precisely, lack of leader support has shown to be directly associated with employees' negative emotions toward the organization (Cole, Bruch & Vogel, 2006). On the contrary, research has also shown that leadership behaviors can have a negative impact on cynical attitudes, meaning that certain leadership behaviors can lead to lower degrees of organizational cynicism. More precisely, EL has previously been negatively related to employees' cynical attitudes (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017). A plausible explanation can be that EL can increase the quality of the relationship between employee and leader and thereby strengthen employees' productive actions (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and reduce their cynical attitudes (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017).

Based on previous research, we propose a negative link between EL and organizational cynicism. Firstly, it is suggested that leaders form relationships with their employees by providing them with resources such as development support or autonomy support (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017). Such EL behaviors can help the employees feel that they are trusted to autonomously perform meaningful work for the organization. In turn, this can increase the quality of the relationship, which can be beneficial to employees' attitudes toward the organization (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017) and thereby decrease organizational cynicism. Secondly, we suggest that EL behaviors can strengthen employees' job resources which might make the employees less vulnerable to negative attitudes such as organizational cynicism (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). More precisely, we argue that EL's development supportive and autonomy supportive behaviors can strengthen the employees' resources to deal with the requirements in their job (Tuckey et al., 2012; Schaufeli, 2015). A reason for this might be that autonomy support lets the employees choose when and how they respond to demands. A high-quality relationship with leaders may shield against the stress from job demands since employees receive sufficient help and emotional support from their leader (Demerouti & Vergel, 2014). Consequently, when employees are exposed to job demands which can lead to organizational cynicism, the EL resources can make employees feel better equipped to deal with the situation (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015) and EL resources might thereby serve as a buffer against organizational cynicism.

Furthermore, research presents evidence that can indicate a negative relationship between organizational cynicism and work engagement (Bellini, Ramaci & Bonaiuto, 2015). Firstly, previous research has negatively related organizational cynicism to employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chiaburu et al., 2013), which in turn has been related to work engagement (Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). A possible explanation for this is that employees with a positive perception of their leader and organization are more prone to react positively to different characteristics of their job and consequently, they are more likely to be engaged at work (Rai, Ghosh, Chauhan & Mehta, 2017). Further, research has suggested that a lack of job resources is linked to organizational cynicism whereas the presence of job resources is found to predict engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In other words, if employees have sufficient job resources available such as support from leaders and peers and are motivated for work, it can lead to work engagement. However, if such job resources are absent, it can lead to organizational cynicism. Further, it is found that an increase in organizational demands reduces work engagement (Taipale, Selander, Anttila & Nätti, 2011), while it can lead to organizational cynicism (Bakker et al., 2014). Based on this, we argue that if employees are facing job demands without being equipped with sufficient job resources to handle the situation, it can lead to cynical attitudes and further make it difficult for the employees to experience feelings of vigor, dedication and absorption. Therefore, the job demands might be associated with decreased work engagement.

In sum, we propose that EL behaviors can strengthen employees' job resources which might mitigate the negative influence of organizational cynicism on employee outcomes. Further, these positive experiences and resources from EL behaviors may support the employees in retaining their job resources and energy which consequently can be linked to increased work engagement. Thus, based on reviewed research, we propose the following:

H2: Organizational cynicism positively mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and work engagement such that empowering leadership is negatively related to organizational cynicism and in turn organizational cynicism is negatively related to work engagement.

1.5 The Moderating Role of Motivational Climate

Employees' work engagement may be seen as an outcome of the interplay between employees and the contextual environment of the workplace (Nerstad, Wong & Richardsen, 2019). Work is often associated with achievement and recognition, and the environment may therefore impact the availability of job resources to deal with job demands (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2007). The motivational climate at work concerns employees' perceptions of the present criteria of success and failure (Nerstad et al., 2013; Nerstad, Dysvik, Kuvaas & Buch, 2018). These criteria are conveyed through the policies, practices, and procedures of the workplace, which are often expressed through how the leaders choose the reward specific behaviors (Nerstad et al., 2018; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2012; Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011). Consequently, it can affect employees' understanding of what is valued and what it takes to be successful in a specific workplace (Nerstad et al., 2013; Kramer, 2010).

More specifically, motivational climate can be categorized into performance climate and mastery climate (Nerstad et al., 2018; Nerstad et al., 2013). Mastery climates concern work situations wherein success is defined on the basis of learning, growth, and effort (Nerstad et al., 2013). In such climates, employees perceive activities such as cooperation, sharing, and mastery of skills as valued (Nerstad et al., 2013; Ames, 1992). On the contrary, performance climates concern work settings with an emphasis on competition, social comparison and public recognition of competence, and the employees perceive that success is accomplished by showing superiority (Nerstad et al., 2013; Roberts, Treasure, & Conroy, 2007; Ames & Archer, 1988). Here, only the best achievers are accepted as successful (Nerstad et al., 2013; Ames, 1984).

According to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT), motivational climate may, in addition to the individuals' goal orientation, explain the individuals' achievement behavior (Nerstad et al., 2013; Roberts, 2007; Nicholls, 1989). Consequently, the different motivational climates are linked to various employee outcomes such incivility, creativity, work performance, turnover intention and work engagement (Nerstad et al., 2018; Birkeland & Nerstad, 2016; Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, & Škerlavaj, 2014; Nerstad et al., 2013). Hence, given their different value orientations (Nerstad et al., 2013), we hypothesize that mastery-

and performance climates are likely to play different roles in the relationships between EL and the mediators PCM and organizational cynicism, respectively.

1.5.1 The moderated mediation of mastery climate

We propose that employees in a mastery climate are more likely to experience a higher degree of PCM when exposed to EL behaviors and thereby increase work engagement. Firstly, we suggest that employees in a mastery climate are more likely to utilize the given autonomy support from empowering leaders to learn. Prior studies have shown that a mastery climate influences employees' motivation and that they can increasingly be encouraged to identify opportunities for learning and to take initiatives (Nerstad et al., 2016). It is therefore likely that the mastery climate can increase employees' PCM as it is closely linked to intrinsic motivation (Lai & Kapstad, 2011). Moreover, the link can be strengthened by the presence of empowering leaders. EL can foster opportunity thinking by showing autonomy and development supportive behaviors such as inspiring employees to see failures as a chance to learn (Tuckey et al., 2012). In other words, we argue that employees in a mastery climate are more likely to utilize EL's autonomy supportive behaviors to learn and develop, as this is expected and rewarded in such an environment (Nerstad et al., 2016). Consequently, if employees are satisfied with the challenges they are given with learning new skills and applying their existing competencies, it can strengthen their degree of PCM.

Secondly, employees in a mastery climate are likely to develop cognitive-based strategies, which are important for learning (Kitsantas, Kavussanu, Corbatto & Pol, 2017). More precisely, research has shown that a mastery climate is positively associated with metacognitive self-regulation, regulation of effort and adaptive help-seeking (Kitsantas et al., 2017). This can further be encouraged by the presence of EL which promotes employees' ability to lead themselves (Tuckey et al., 2012). Autonomy support and development support encourage employees to take initiative and control over their own learning and development (Tuckey et al., 2012). Thus, employees in a mastery climate with empowering leaders might be more prone to adjust their behavior towards their goals, put effort into their work and seek support when needed. Such self-regulation skills can help

employees learn and utilize their skills, which in turn can lead to a perception that the employees' competencies are mobilized.

Furthermore, since a mastery climate emphasizes the process rather than results, it can foster employees' feeling of being in control, which in turn can strengthen their feeling of energy and enthusiasm to create positive outcomes (Van Ruysseveldt, Verboon, & Smulders, 2011; Nerstad et al., 2019). This is because the climate can increase their available job resources which can be used to handle job demands (Nerstad et al., 2019). Here, employees with empowering leaders will have more responsibility, will be involved in decision-making and receive guidance in problem-solving which can fulfill their psychological need for relatedness, competence and autonomy (Tuckey et al., 2012). Consequently, we suggest that this process can support employees in developing job resources which can reduce job demands and rather facilitate for employees feeling vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. Conclusively, it is likely that employees with empowering leaders in a mastery climate can strengthen employees' level of PCM which can be associated with increased work engagement. We therefore hypothesize the following relationship:

H3: Mastery climate positively moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and perceived competence mobilization and thereby increases work engagement.

1.5.2 The moderated mediation of performance climate

We propose that employees in a performance climate may be more likely to experience a higher degree of organizational cynicism when exposed to EL behaviors, which in turn will decrease work engagement, for several reasons. Firstly, we suggest that EL behaviors such as delegation of decision making, autonomy and promotion of self-leadership might be perceived as challenging to employees in a performance climate. In such a climate, employees might have an increased probability to experience these situations as role overload and stressful, because they are less equipped with self-regulation techniques which in turn negatively affects their performance (VandeWalle, Brown, Cron & Slocun jr., 1999). In other words, as employees in a performance climate are less focused on mastery, they might be less inclined to engage in goal setting, effort, and

planning. In turn, this can negatively affect their performance (VandeWalle et al., 1999). Consequently, employees might be more inclined to "give up" and develop negative attitudes toward the workplace. In order to protect themselves from disclosure to stressful work contexts, employees might have an increased probability of demonstrating cynical attitudes as a defense mechanism (Nerstad et al., 2019).

Secondly, previous research has suggested that performance climates weaken instrumental job resources, such as autonomy, belonging, effort, competence, and learning (Nerstad et al., 2019). Initially, these job resources intend to reduce job demands and their related physiological and psychological costs (Crawford, LePine & Rich, 2010). However, if the employees in a performance climate do not perceive sufficient job resources, they might demonstrate maladaptive response patterns (Nerstad et al., 2019). This can be because individuals in performance climates have little job resources to protect themselves, which in turn can lead to disengagement. Additionally, when demands increase, it can become more difficult to be successful and appear superior (Lemyre, Hall & Roberts, 2008). Hence, we propose that when employees are confronted with EL behaviors in a performance climate, it might be perceived as a "burden" due to perceived lack of job resources (Bakker et al., 2014), which consequently can lead to organizational cynicism. Furthermore, if employees are facing job demands without being equipped with sufficient amount of job resources to handle the situation, it might drain energy. Consequently, employees' lack of energy and cynical attitudes toward the organization can make it difficult to experience feelings of vigor, dedication, and absorption toward their work and therefore, reduce work engagement. In sum, we hypothesize that when EL is strong, employees in a performance climate will be more cynical towards their organization and less engaged in their work:

H4: Performance climate positively moderates the relationship between empowering leadership and organizational cynicism and thereby decreases work engagement.

2.0 Method

A quantitative study with a two-wave cross-lagged design was conducted to test our hypotheses. Here, the researcher collects data at two or more specific points in time and is favorable when examining relationships between variables (Tyagi & Singh, 2014). It should, however, be addressed that the design lacks the controlling elements of the experimental design which makes it impossible to determine causality (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is a constraint that will be elaborated on later in the limitations section. Still, the aim of our study is not to establish direction as it is rather to examine associations. For this purpose, measuring independent and criterion variables separately can contribute to reducing common method bias (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, Podsakoff & Zedeck, 2003). Additionally, as the cross-lagged design's greatest advantage is to determine the stability of relationships between variables (Kearney, 2017), we consider the design to be suitable.

2.1 Procedures and sample

Initially, we had agreements with three companies for the data collection. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, two of the companies had to withdraw, and we therefore had to use our network to a greater extent to reach a larger group of employees. The survey was distributed through Qualtrics and in line with the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD), the partakers were provided with a cover letter informing about the purpose of the study, the rights to withdraw, in addition to guaranteeing that the data would remain confidential. To ensure that the respondents would not be biased when answering the questionnaires, they were not informed about the constructs being measured. The participants were not incentivized in any way to partake in the study. In the invitation, we also asked our network to share the questionnaire with their department in their employing organization.

The survey was collected in two waves with two weeks apart to reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this design, the mediating variables (PCM and organizational cynicism) and the outcome variable (work engagement) were measured twice. The independent variable (EL), the moderators (mastery and performance climate) and the control variables were only measured in the first wave. The Time 1 (T1) survey was

distributed throughout March and May 2020, and the Time 2 (T2) survey was automatically distributed two weeks after survey 1.

T1 survey was mainly distributed with an electronic link through one or more contacts in different departments in several organizations in Norway, who shared the link with his/her colleagues. The survey measured all variables: EL, PCM, organizational cynicism, work engagement, mastery climate and performance climate, in addition to the demographic information age, education, hierarchical position and gender. The partakers were also asked to provide their e-mail address at the end of the survey. They were assured that the address would only be used to send the T2 survey and would be replaced with an anonymous ID code when data collection was completed. T1 received 170 responses. Since the questionnaire was distributed through one or more contact person in the respective organizations, it was not possible to assess the response rate for the T1 questionnaire.

T2 survey was automatically sent out by email to respondents who answered T1 (N = 170). Of these participants, 117 completed the T2 survey. The T2 survey measured the mediators (PCM and organizational cynicism) and the outcome variable (work engagement). In sum, after accounting for missing data, the final sample consists of N = 110, resulting in a response rate of 65% (including only respondents who answered both T1 and T2).

The result of the data collection was a convenience sample with respondents from 19 different industries, mainly from three business areas (36%, 12% and 12% respectively), all belonging to the private sector with highly educated employees. The former industry provides services mainly in oil and gas and maritime, while the second industry provides banking services, and the latter industry provides technological solutions. The sample as a whole consists of individuals from various roles and departments, types of industries, from big and small organizations, in both private and public sector. Of the respondents, 51.8% were male and 48.2% were female. The majority of the sample belonged to the age group 26-35 years (49.1%). Further, the majority of the sample held a master's degree as highest completed education (57.8%), and 32.1% reported holding a bachelor. In our sample, 63.6% of the respondents held a position as an employee without a managerial role, 20% manager without direct reports and 15.5% middle manager with direct reports.

2.2 Measures

Previously validated measures were applied to all constructs. To make sure that all items were understood correctly by all respondents, both Norwegian and English versions of all of the questionnaires were provided. Most of the scales were originally developed in English with validated and accessible Norwegian translations. An exception from this was the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale which was not retrievable (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006) in addition to the Organizational Cynicism Scale that has not, to the best of our knowledge, been validated in Norwegian (Bellini et al., 2015). To reduce the risk of misunderstandings, we completed a back-translation process from the original language English to Norwegian (Cavusgil & Das, 1997). To validate the translation of the items, we consulted five individuals to approve our translation. Moreover, a pilot test of the questionnaires was conducted and sent to 20 individuals to ensure that the layout, language, and technical features were clear and worked correctly. Based on feedback from the pilot participants, small adjustments in phrasings and sentence structure were made in the cover letter and in the email with the T2 questionnaire to enhance clarity.

The following scales were chosen to reflect the constructs included in our conceptual model. Items phrased as questions were rephrased into statements to standardize and make it easier to follow for the participants. Cronbach's α for all scales in our study were all deemed as acceptable.

Empowering leadership. EL was measured using a 10-item version (Amundsen, 2019) of the original 18-item Empowering Leadership Scale (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). The 10-item version includes autonomy support (six items) and development support (four items). Example items include statements such as "my leader gives me authority over issues within my department" and "my leader guides me in how I can do my work in the best way". A Cronbach α of .91 has been reported by Amundsen (2019). Cronbach's α in our study is .85.

Perceived competence mobilization. This concept was measured using a five-item scale from Lai (2013). Statements include such as: "I am able to utilize my competencies as much as I expected with accepting my current job" and "The requirements in my job correspond to my competencies". A Cronbach α of .82 is previously reported (Lai, 2011). Cronbach's α in our study is .67.

Organizational Cynicism. Organizational cynicism was measured with Organizational Cynicism Scale, developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar & Dean (1999, cited in Bellini et al., 2015). The researchers developed the scale based on the following three dimensions of the belonging definition (Bellini et al., 2015): The cognitive (five items), the affective (four items) and the behavioral (four items) aspect. Sample items include: "I believe that my company says one thing and does another" and "I see little similarity between what my organization says it will do and what it actually does". Cronbach's α of .88, .90 and .75 for the different dimensions have been reported respectively (Bellini et al., 2015). In our study, the Organizational Cynicism Scale shows an overall Cronbach's α of .93.

Motivational climate. The two subscales Mastery Climate and Performance Climate were measured using respectively a six-item and an eight-item scale developed by Nerstad and colleagues (2013). This scale measures employees' perception of what it takes to be successful in their work setting. Sample items measuring mastery climate include "In my department/work group, each individual's learning and development is emphasized". Items measuring performance climate include "In my department/work group, it is important to achieve better than others" (Nerstad et al., 2013). Previous studies have found Cronbach's α varying between .79–.87 for Mastery Climate and .84–.87 for Performance Climate (Nerstad et al., 2019). Cronbach's α in our study is .82 for the Mastery climate scale and .80 for the Performance Climate scale.

Work Engagement. Work Engagement was assessed using a nine-items version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Nerstad, Richardsen & Martinussen, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Sample items include "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" and "I am enthusiastic about my job" (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Cronbach's α for the scale has previously been reported ranging from .89 to .97 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Cronbach's α in our study is .88.

Control variables. The variables age, gender, education, hierarchical position, and industry were included as control variables. Age was included as research has shown that older employees are more engaged compared to younger employees (e.g. James, Mckechnie & Swanberg, 2011). Respondents submitted their age on a five-item scale (16-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years, and 55 years or older). Moreover, gender has been argued to influence work engagement (e.g. James et al., 2011) and perception of motivational climate (e.g.

Abrahamsen, Roberts & Pensgaard, 2008) and was therefore included by asking what gender the respondents identified with among the three categories 'female', 'male' and 'other'. Education was also included as a control factor as previous studies have found it to impact work engagement (e.g. Beckers et al., 2004). Highest level of completed education was reported in the following categories: 'middle school', 'high school', 'bachelor's degree', 'master's degree', 'PhD' and 'other'. Further, as employees in higher positions have previously been found to report higher degree of work engagement (Rana & Chopra, 2019), this was included with five different categories from employee to senior executive. Lastly, industry was controlled for by providing 19 unique links based on their industry with surveys to different organizations participating in the study. During the analysis, the industries were categorically divided with a random number from 1-19 in order to ensure their anonymity.

2.3 Analytic procedure

The analysis was conducted in several steps, mainly using SPSS version 26 and STATA version 16.1. Initially, the data was inspected for missing values and outliers. Then, Cronbach's α for all measures were examined to make sure that all scales used were reliable, where values above .70 are commonly seen as acceptable (Field, 2009). Frequencies, mean scores, and Pearson product-momentum correlations were computed and assessed.

The internal structure and model fit of the measurement model was examined by running a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with all factors (Furr, 2011). As multivariate normality is assumed in CFA (Huck, 2012), a Mardia's multivariate normality test (1970) was conducted before running the CFA to detect possible skewness and kurtosis. Moreover, to evaluate the model fit, our hypothesized six-factor model was compared to five alternative models. For each comparison, the absolute goodness-of-fit indices root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) were examined. More specifically, values less than .10 for SRMR and .08 for RMSEA are considered as acceptable (Hair, 2013; Pituch & Stevens, 2016). However, some argue that values smaller than .10 for the latter should be accepted (Huck, 2012). Nevertheless, RMSEA should be interpreted cautiously as it is best suited when the sample size is above 500 (Hair, 2013). When the sample size is smaller, RMSEA often rejects true population models (Byrne, 2006). Moreover,

the relative goodness-of-fit indices comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis index (TLI) were assessed (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Here, a value close to .95 for TLI and a CFI value above .90 usually indicate a relatively good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hair, 2013).

Despite the common use of the mentioned goodness-of-fit indices, it should be noted that it can be hard to achieve values of CFI and TLI above the given threshold in the current study, since our proposed model can be considered as complex based on the many observed variables included (Hair, 2013, p.589; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, it is argued that χ^2 and its p-value provides less value when the model is complex (Hair, 2013, p. 578). Based on the recommendation to use alternative measures of fit when the model is complex (Hair, 2013), we examined the chi-square per degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) to determine model fit of our measurement model, acceptable if not exceeding two (Koufteros, 1999).

When model fit was assessed and deemed acceptable, reliability and validity of the scales were examined. Construct validity was examined based on the items' factor loadings on the belonging latent construct. Here, the commonly accepted threshold of .40 was applied (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Moreover, composite reliability index (CRI) and average variance extracted (AVE) were computed in order to assess convergent and discriminant validity (Hair, 2013). Although the cut-off for CRI is debated, CRI values above .60 in our study were accepted in line with recommendations by Fornell and Larcker (1981). For the AVE, values above .50 were considered as acceptable (Hair, 2013).

Further, multicollinearity diagnostics were conducted through calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient and the variance inflation factor (VIF) with the corresponding tolerance value for all predictor variables. As bivariate correlation of .70 or higher among variables is suggested to indicate problems with multicollinearity (Hair, 2013), this was applied as threshold. Additionally, a VIF value below 10 and tolerance value above .10 were applied as cut-offs, to indicate that multicollinearity is not an issue (Hair, 2013, p. 201). Though it is debated whether mean-centering of variables reduces multicollinearity (Field, 2009), all predictor and moderator variables were grand mean-centered to improve interpretability of the results.

In order to test the four proposed hypotheses, PROCESS macro version 3.4.1 was applied, as it allows for bootstrapping the results (Hayes, 2013). The bootstrapping method does not assume that the sample being normally distributed, and it therefore generates inferences that are more likely to be precise. Thus, it has been recognized for having more power than the Sobel test (Hayes, 2013). While EL was introduced as the predictor variable (X), the variables PCM and organizational cynicism were included as mediators (M1 and M2) in the analysis. Mastery and performance climate were introduced as moderators (W1 and W2) in the latter analysis, while work engagement (Y) was included as the outcome variable, throughout the analyses. Furthermore, age, gender, education, hierarchical position, industry, PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1) and work engagement (T1) were included as control variables when testing all four hypotheses to remove their potential confounding influences. Hypothesis 1 and 2 were tested through a parallel multiple mediation analysis, using PROCESS macro - model 4, while hypothesis 3 and 4 were tested separately through model 7 which allows for testing of the proposed moderated mediation.

As the data was collected around the same time as the COVID-19 situation, where contextual factors changed rapidly, the two weeks span between T1 and T2 could have made a difference. Therefore, additional testing was done with PROCESS macro model 4 and 7, excluding PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1) and work engagement (T1) as control variables.

3.0 Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics

When initially screening the data, respondents with less than 90% progress in their response were removed from the dataset. One outlier was detected and removed based on the z-score threshold of +/- 3.29 (Field, 2009). Reliability was examined with Cronbach α, where all measurements performed well above the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (Field, 2009), except from the PCM scale which was slightly below (α = .67). As a Cronbach α between .67-.87 is deemed reasonable (Taber, 2016) and removing items would not strengthen the alpha, the original scale was contained. Further, frequencies, mean scores and Pearson product-momentum correlations are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	2.66	1.152	1													
2. Education	3.64	.739	.192*	1												
3. Position	1.54	.786	.090	-.046	1											
4. Gender	.48	.502	.188*	.090	-.126	1										
5. Industry	7.50	4.599	-.231*	-.289**	-.207*	.030	1									
6. EL	3.71	.607	.111	.057	.011	.239*	-.128	1								
7. PCM (T1)	3.71	.547	.084	.155	-.003	.097	.016	.242*	1							
8. PCM (T2)	3.65	.549	.264**	.158	.032	.166	-.133	.324**	.456**	1						
9. OC (T1)	2.28	.721	-.304**	.168	-.126	-.087	.105	-.395**	-.140	-.240*	1					
10. OC (T2)	2.27	.749	-.272**	.089	.028	-.109	.106	-.490**	-.054	-.307**	.749**	1				
11. Mastery Climate	4.04	.577	.152	-.113	.181	.275**	-.138	.588**	.273**	.299**	-.517**	-.492**	1			
12. Performance Climate	2.26	.686	.042	-.088	.124	.042	-.168	.108	-.166	-.069	.150	.144	-.028	1		
13. Work Engagement (T1)	3.88	.668	.132	-.047	.155	.102	-.096	.368**	.417**	.491**	-.376**	-.288**	.338**	.038	1	
14. Work Engagement (T2)	3.93	.557	.156	.047	.024	.033	-.044	.304**	.305**	.476**	-.253**	-.343**	.269**	.008	.780**	1

Note. T1 = Time 1; *T2* = Time 2; Age: 1 = 16-25 years, 2 = 26-35 years, 3 = 36-45 years, 4 = 46-55 years, 5 = 55+ years; Education: 1 = 'middle school', 2 = 'high school', 3 = 'bachelor's degree', 4 = 'master's degree', 5 = 'PhD', 6 = 'other'; Position: 1 = employee, 2 = manager without directly reporting employees, 3 = middle manager with directly reporting employees, 4 = senior executive, 5 = other; Gender: 1 = female, 2 = male, 3 = other; Industry: assigned a random number from 1-19; *EL* = Empowering Leadership; *PCM* = Perceived Competence Mobilization; *OC* = Organizational Cynicism; *M* = mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, **p<.05, **p<.01*

3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Prior to running the CFA, both multivariate skewness ($b = 129.15$, $p < .001$) and multivariate kurtosis ($b = 4.09$, p < .001) were detected based on Mardia's test (1970), indicating a non-normal distribution. Therefore, the Satorra-Bentler scaling correction was used in the subsequent analyses to provide an improved estimate of the model fit (Satorra & Bentler, 2011).

Results for the series of CFA are presented in Table 2. The hypothesized six-factor model showed reductions in the chi-square statistics with Satorra-Bentler scaling corrections, when compared to competing models. Furthermore, based on the emphasized fit index, the model was considered as adequate to our data (χ^2/df = 1.86; CFI = .65; TLI = .64; RMSEA = .089; and SRMR = .180; Diamantopolous & Siguaw, 2000). More specifically, the RMSEA of our model can be considered as acceptable but not the CFI and TLI. As the complexity of our model in combination with low sample size can make it hard to obtain high cut-off values for CFI and TLI, alternative measures of fit were applied (Hair, 2013; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Therefore, the normed chi-square per degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was examined, showing an acceptable value of 1.86. Taking this into consideration, we consider our model to meet the requirements for being of adequate fit with the data.

Further, when assessing the construct validity, all factor loadings were significant and above the threshold of .40 (Pituch & Stevens, 2016), except from two PCM-items with factor-loadings under the set cut-off (PCM1: .27 and PCM3: .31). However, based on the importance of the items as the scale only contains five items and since the scale has previously been validated (Lai, 2009; Lai & Kapstad, 2011), the items were not removed. Moreover, convergent and discriminant validity were examined. The CRI of the six measures ranged from 0.80 to 0.93, which meets the acceptable level of 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Further, the AVE ranged between .30 and .50, and some variables were therefore below the recommended level of .50 (Hair, 2013). However, as it is suggested that AVE is a more stringent estimate of the validity, it is argued that the researcher can decide whether the convergent validity is adequate solely based on the CRI, even if more than 50% of the variance is caused by error (Fornell & Larcker,

1981). If AVE is below the threshold of 0.5, the convergent validity of the construct can still be considered as sufficient if CRI is higher than 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, as the CRI of the six factors were well above the recommended level, we consider the convergent and discriminant validity as acceptable. Moreover, all of the bivariate correlation values were below the recommended threshold of .70 (Field, 2009). The highest VIF value was 1.7, which is below the threshold of 10, while the lowest tolerance value was .57, which is higher than the .10 threshold (Field, 2009). Thus, multicollinearity was not evident.

Table 2. Comparison of Fit for Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	p	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	Δdf	$\Delta\chi^2$
1. Six-factor model	2271.205	.00	1224	1.86	.651	.637	.180	.089		
2. Five-factor model[a]	2324.212	.00	1224	1.90	.634	.618	.180	.091		
3. Four-factor model[b]	2544.398	.00	1225	2.08	.561	.543	.174	.099		
4. Three-factor model[c]	2751.485	.00	1225	2.10	.492	.471	.181	.107		
5. Two-factor model[d]	2832.955	.00	1224	2.31	.464	.442	.172	.110		
6. One-factor model[e]	3042.000	.00	1224	2.49	.395	.369	.129	.117		
Model comparisons										
Model 1 vs. Model 2									0	53.007
Model 1 vs. Model 3									1	273.193
Model 1 vs. Model 4									1	480.280
Model 1 vs. Model 5									0	561.750
Model 1 vs. Model 6									0	770.795

Note. n = 110. *CFI* = Comparative Fit index; *RMSEA* = root-mean-square error of approximation; *SRMR* = standardized root mean square; *TLI* = Tucker–Lewis index.
[a]Five-factor model with all items for mastery climate and perceived competence mobilization loaded onto a single factor.
[b]Four-factor model with mastery climate and perceived competence mobilization ratings loaded onto a single factor and all empowering leadership and organizational cynicism ratings loaded onto a single factor.
[c]Three-factor model with mastery climate and perceived competence mobilization ratings loaded onto a single factor, all empowering leadership and organizational cynicism ratings loaded onto a single factor and engagement rating and performance climate ratings loaded onto a single factor
[d]Two-factor model with mastery climate, perceived competence mobilization and engagement ratings loaded onto a single factor and all empowering leadership, organizational cynicism and performance climate ratings loaded onto a single factor
[e] One-factor model with mastery climate, perceived competence mobilization, engagement, empowering leadership, organizational cynicism and performance climate ratings loaded onto a single factor

3.3 Mediation

To test hypothesis 1 and 2, PROCESS model 4 was used to examine the parallel mediation. Hypothesis 1 predicts that PCM positively mediates the relationship between EL and work engagement such that EL is positively related to PCM and in turn PCM is positively related to work engagement. There was no

significant indirect link found between EL, PCM and work engagement ($b = .01$, 95% CI = -0.02 to 0.04). Thus, as the bootstrap confidence interval was not different from zero, hypothesis 1 is not supported. Further, hypothesis 2 predicts that organizational cynicism positively mediates the relationship between EL and work engagement. Here, we suggest that EL is negatively related to organizational cynicism and in turn organizational cynicism is negatively related to work engagement. The findings show a negative link between EL and organizational cynicism ($b = -.31$, $t = -3.45$, $p < .001$), and a negative link between organizational cynicism and work engagement ($b = -.23$, $t = -3.22$, $p <. 01$). Thus, the indirect link between EL and work engagement was positively mediated by organizational cynicism ($b = .07$, 95% CI = 0.02 to 0.14). Therefore, the results indicate that hypothesis 2 is supported.
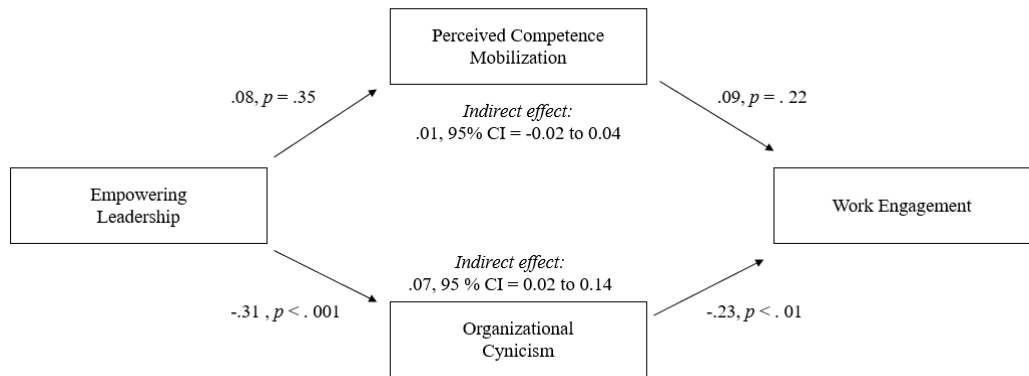
Figure 2. Mediation model

Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients with Confidence Intervals (Standard Errors in Parentheses): Estimating EL, Organizational Cynicism, PCM and Work Engagement

		PCM (M_1)			OC (M_2)				Work Engagement (Y)		
		Coeff.	95% CI.	*p*	*Coeff.*	95% CI.	*p*		*Coeff.*	95% CI.	*p*
EL (*X*)	a_1	.08 (0.08)	-0.09, 0.25	.35	-.31 (0.09)	-0.49 -.13	.00	$c´$	-.03 (0.065)	-0.16, 0.10	.70
OC (M_1)	a_2							b_1	-.23 (0.07) **	-0.37, -0.09	.00
PCM (M_2)	a_3							b_2	.09 (0.08)	0.06, 0.24	.22
Indirect effect ($X \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow Y$)								a_1b_1	-.00 (0.04)	-0.02, 0.04	
Indirect effect ($X \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y$)								a_2b_2	.07 (0.03) *	0.02, 0.14	
Total indirect effect ($X \rightarrow M_1 M_2 \rightarrow Y$)								$c´_1$	.08 (0.04) *	0.01, 0.16	
Gender (U_1)	a_4	.04 (0.09)	-0.14, 0.22	.67	.04 (0.10)	-0.15, 0.23	.67	b_3	-.09 (0.07)	-0.23, 0.04	.18
Age (U_2)	a_5	.07 (0.04)	0.01, 0.16	.08	-.04 (0.44)	-0.13, 0.47	.36	b_4	-.03 (0.03)	-0.04, 0.09	.39
Position (U_4)	a_7	-.02 (0.06)	-0.13, 0.09	.76	.12 (0.10)	-0.00, 0.24	.05	b_6	-.04 (0.04)	-0.13, 0.04	.31
Education (U_5)	a_8	.06 (0.07)	-0.07, 0.19	.36	.01 (0.70)	-0.17, 0.16	.93	b_7	.06 (0.05)	-0.04, 0.16	.23
Industry (U_6)	a_9	-.00 (0.01)	-0.03, 0.02	.68	.00 (0.01)	-0.02, 0.02	.87	b_8	.01 (0.01)	-0.01, 0.02	.28
WE T1 (U_7)	a_{10}	.26 (0.08) **	0.11, 0.42	.00	.00 (0.08)	-0.17, 0.16	.96	b_9	.67 (0.06) ***	0.55, 0.79	.00
PCM T1 (U_8)	a_{11}	.28 (0.09) **	0.10, 0.46	.00	.14 (0.10)	-0.05, 0.33	.14	b_{10}	-.06 (0.07)	-0.20, 0.08	.41
OC T1 (U_9)	a_{12}	-.01 (0.07)	-0.15, 0.14	.89	.69 (0.08) ***	0.53, 0.84	.000	b_{11}	.21 (0.07) **	0.06, 0.35	.01
Constant	i_M	-.04 (0.10)	-0.23, 0.16	.69	-.01 (0.10)	-0.20, 0.21	.96	I_Y	-3.81 (0.072) ***	-3.66, -3.95	.00
		$R^2 = .384$ $F_{(6.85)}, p = .000$			$R^2 = .634$ $F_{(18.94)}, p = .000$				$R^2 = .698$ $F_{(19.39)}, p = .000$		

Note. $N = 110$. *p <.05, **p <.01, ***p <.001. *Coeff.* = Unstandardized regression coefficient; *CI* = Confidence Interval; *EL* = Empowering Leadership; *OC* = Organizational Cynicism; *PCM* = Perceived Competence Mobilization; *WE* = Work Engagement.

3.4 Moderated mediation

To test hypothesis 3 and 4, PROCESS model 7 was applied to examine the moderated mediation. Hypothesis 3 predicts that mastery climate will positively moderate the relationship between EL and PCM and thereby increase work engagement. However, no link was found between the moderation of mastery climate on EL and PCM ($b = -.04$, $t = -.43$, $p > .05$), yielding a non-significant index of moderated mediation on the outcome variable work engagement ($b = -.01$, 95% CI = -0.04 to 0.03). Hypothesis 3 was therefore not supported. Hypothesis 4 predicts that performance climate will positively moderate the relation between EL and organizational cynicism and decrease work engagement. The results show that the moderating interaction between EL and performance climate on organizational cynicism indicated non-significant results ($b = .12$, $t = 1.12$, $p >. 05$). Thus, linking the moderation to the indirect link between EL and work engagement generates a nonsignificant index of moderated mediation ($b = -.03$, 95 % CI = -0.11 to 0.03), concluding that hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Nevertheless, the estimation of the conditional indirect influence at different values can be applied to "probe" the moderated mediation by investigating whether the value is different from zero (Hayes, 2015). Therefore, the interaction effects between EL and performance climate on work engagement through organizational cynicism were inspected which is shown in table 4. This can be done by examining the moderator at low, average and high levels corresponding to one standard deviation below the mean ($b = -.83$), the mean ($b = -.08$) and one standard deviation above the mean ($b = .60$). The results showed that the bootstrap confidence interval of performance climate's effect on work engagement did not include zero at low ($b = .10$, 95% CI = 0.04 to 0.19) and average levels ($b = .08$, 95% CI = 0.02 to 0.16). However, performance climate's effect on work engagement was not significant at high level ($b = .06$, CI 95 % = -0.01 to 0.15). This can suggest that the indirect link between EL and work engagement through organizational cynicism is significant at low and average performance climate. We therefore conclude that the results are partially significant at low and average values of the moderator.
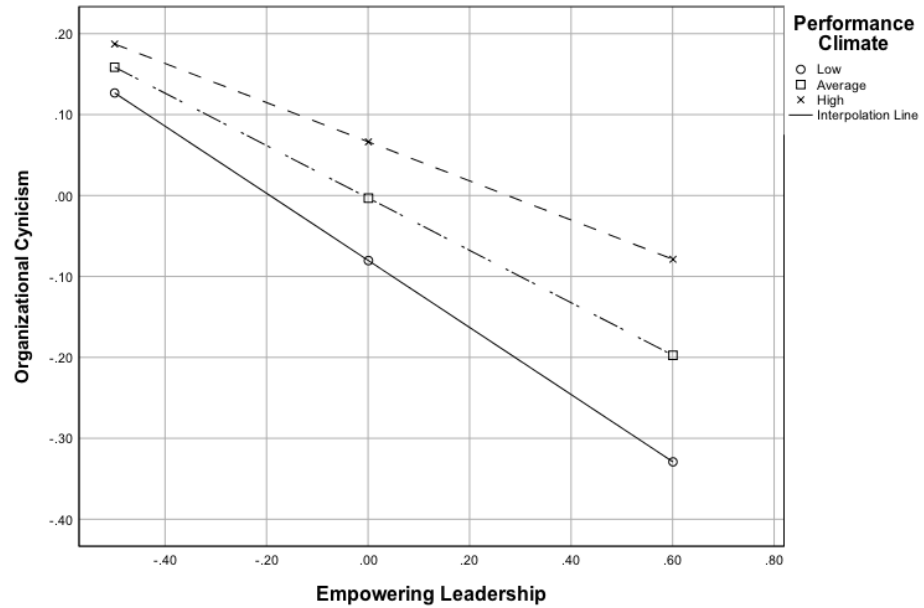
Figure 3. The moderating role of performance climate

3.5 Additional testing

Based on the lack of support for the majority of hypotheses and the extraordinary circumstances during the time of the data collection, additional testing excluding PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1) and work engagement (T1) as control variables, was conducted. When testing for mediating effect with PROCESS model 4, we found significant results for PCM as mediator between EL and work engagement ($b = .10$, 95% CI = 0.04 to 0.18), suggesting support for the proposed relationship. However, the mediating effect of organizational cynicism between EL and work engagement was not significant ($b = .08$, 95% CI = -0.02 to 0.18), and the suggested relationship would not be supported.

Further, investigating the moderated mediation effects with PROCESS model 7 by excluding PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1) and work engagement (T1) as control variables, we found that the hypothesized moderator, mastery climate between EL and PCM indicated marginally significant results ($b = .17$, $t = 1.70$, $p = .09$). Moreover, the index of moderated mediation showed insignificant results ($b = .07$, 95% CI = -0.02 to 0.17). Although, by examining the mastery climate at low ($b = -.50$), average ($b = .00$) and high levels ($b = .67$), the bootstrap confidence interval of mastery climate's effect on work engagement through PCM did not include zero at high level ($b = .12$, 95% CI = 0.03 to 0.22).

However, the effect of the bootstrap confidence interval at the low (b = .04, 95 % CI = -0.07 to 0.13) and average level (b = .07, 95% CI = -0.01 to 0.16) was not significant. In other words, this indicated that the moderation to the indirect link between EL and work engagement generates a significant indirect effect when mastery climate is high. It therefore suggests a marginal significant support for the proposed relationship. Lastly, the hypothesized moderated mediation effect of performance climate at low (b = -.83), average (b = -.08) and high levels (b = .60) were significant at low level (b = .12, 95% CI = 0.01 to 0.24), average level (b = .11, 95% CI = 0.01 to 0.23) and high level (b = .11, 95% CI = 0.01 to 0.25) on work engagement through organizational cynicism. However, the index of moderated mediation was not significant (b = -.01, 95% CI = -0.07 to 0.06). Thus, there was a partial support for the suggested relationship without the mentioned control variables from T1.

4.0 Discussion

In the present study, we developed a model to explain the relationship between EL and work engagement, integrating PCM and organizational cynicism to further examine the equivocal results of previous research. Additionally, the study investigates the possible moderating interaction of EL, mastery climate and performance climate on the mediators PCM and organizational cynicism, respectively. Overall, we identified several patterns of discussion, that are the focus of this section.

4.1 PCM as mediator between EL and work engagement

Hypothesis 1 expected that the association between EL and work engagement would be positively mediated by PCM. However, there was no evidence found that PCM would positively mediate the association between EL and work engagement. Firstly, contrary to what was expected, the relationship between our independent variable (EL) and mediator (PCM) was not significant. This means that no evidence was found between EL behaviors and whether the employees perceive that they have sufficient opportunities to use their competencies at work. Based on previous findings, stating that support from leader and job resources such as autonomy are important predictors of PCM (Lai

& Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005), the findings of our research are surprising.

The absence of a significant positive link between EL and PCM might be explained by research linking EL to self-efficacy (Ahearne et al., 2005; Cheong et al., 2016). It is plausible that resources and support provided by empowering leaders can have given the employees more confidence in their own abilities and thereby led to "too much" self-efficacy which in turn affected PCM negatively. This is in line with the suggested curve-linear relationship between self-efficacy and PCM, where too much or too little self-efficacy can affect PCM negatively (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). Further, when examining the link between PCM and work engagement, no significant association was found. This means that an employee's experience of its competencies being mobilized, is not associated with the employee being more engaged at work. This contradicts previous research finding that PCM is linked to other positive work outcomes (e.g. Morrison et al., 2005; Holman & Wall, 2002; Parker, 2003).

Moreover, other contextual factors might serve as plausible explanations to the current study's surprising results. More specifically, the data collection coincided with the introduction of governmental restrictions regarding COVID-19 and volatility in work life. Many employees have experienced a reduced percentage of employment due to the financial consequences of COVID-19. Based on social comparison theory (Greenberg, 2001), this might have led to some employees feeling under-compensated under the given circumstances compared to their peers, which in turn could have affected their PCM negatively (Lai & Kapstad, 2009). In addition, many employees were at the time of the data collection forced to work from home, which might have introduced new challenges. If the employees did not feel that they managed to adjust to the new way of working or alternatively, if they experienced a strengthened degree of mastery due to the new work situation, it is plausible that they experienced a decreased or increased degree of self-efficacy, respectively. In turn, this could be linked to a decreased degree of PCM (Lai & Kapstad, 2009).

Lastly, peer support might have been reduced due to the isolation measures implemented by the Norwegian government. Consequently, employees might have experienced a lack of support from colleagues, both in terms of exchange of knowledge and emotional and motivational support. This might have

stopped them from utilizing the autonomy from empowering leaders and negatively affected their intrinsic motivation. In turn, lack of intrinsic motivation could have negatively influenced the mobilization of employees' competencies. Similarly, these findings are in line with previous research, suggesting that peer support is an important predictor of PCM (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Lai & Kapstad, 2009), and the absence of it has even been argued to be an inhibitor of PCM (Vandenput, 1973). Accordingly, the contextual factors could explain why hypothesis 1 is not supported.

Also, it should be noted that when conducting additional testing excluding the control variables PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1), and work engagement (T1), the link between EL and PCM was significant. Moreover, it shows support for previous research suggesting that EL behaviors such as delegation of autonomy can lead to PCM and work engagement. An explanation of this relationship can be that employees feeling that their competencies are utilized at work, might have higher intrinsic motivation, are more satisfied at work and experience a higher degree of well-being and organizational commitment (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011). Even though these results should be interpreted with caution, they might support the influence of other contextual factors related to the given situation.

4.2 Organizational cynicism as mediator between EL and work engagement

Our findings support the proposed relationship of the second hypothesis, suggesting that EL and work engagement are positively mediated by organizational cynicism. Our findings show that EL is negatively linked to organizational cynicism, meaning that the negative attitude can be reduced when it is related to EL. The findings extend the research showing that EL is associated with a decrease in employees' cynical attitudes (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017). In other words, employees might perceive increased autonomy and involvement in decision making processes as positive efforts and resources provided by their leader. In turn, these job resources can make the employees better equipped to handle job demands and can be linked to positive attitudes towards their leader and organization (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017). Further, the current study found that organizational cynicism has a negative association with work engagement, which was expected based on existing literature (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Saks, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003). This means that employees with a cynical attitude towards their

organization, are more inclined to feel less engaged towards their work, as they might lack sufficient job resources to feel absorption, vigor, and dedication towards their job.

Consequently, the indirect link between EL and work engagement can show that EL behaviors can provide employees with enough resources to deal with demanding requirements of the job and thus, reduce their organizational cynicism. At the same time, the existing organizational cynicism withheld by employees, can lead to negative associations towards their work and a decrease in internal resources to deal with demanding requirements which reduces work engagement.

4.3 The moderated mediation of mastery climate

The current study did not find statistical support for the moderated mediation link of mastery climate between EL and PCM on work engagement. This means that hypothesis 3, proposing that mastery climate positively moderates the relationship between EL and PCM and thereby increases work engagement, is not supported. That is, the relationship between empowering leadership and the feeling of competencies being mobilized is not contingent on work climate emphasizing learning and growth. This contradicts previous research, showing that mastery climates can influence employees' motivation and urge to find new opportunities for learning (Nerstad et al., 2016). In addition, it can strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation (Nerstad et al., 2013), which in turn are linked to feelings of vigor, absorption and dedication. It is therefore surprising that this process is not associated with an increased degree of mobilized competencies and work engagement.

However, when additional testing was conducted excluding PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1), and work engagement (T1) as control variables, we found that high levels of mastery climate had a significant impact between EL and PCM and thereby increased work engagement. That is, the mediating effect of PCM was contingent on high levels of mastery climate. More precisely, our results from the additional testing suggest that in a strong mastery climate, employees might perceive the autonomy provided by the empowering leaders as an opportunity to learn. This may increase their feeling of their competencies being mobilized and increase their work engagement. Thus, it is suggested that EL is necessary, but not a sufficient condition to link to PCM and consequently work

engagement. Rather, after incorporating an adequate level of mastery climate, EL is associated with an increased feeling of competence mobilization and consequently increase work engagement. Hence, these findings align with previous research suggesting that mastery climate can facilitate for employees' motivation and cognitive-based strategies (Nerstad et al., 2019). In turn, this can help the employees to utilize their given autonomy to mobilize their competencies, which is linked to increased work engagement. Our results might suggest a marginal significant support for hypothesis 3. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as the variance between T1 and T2 was not controlled for.

4.4 The moderated mediation of performance climate

We hypothesized that performance climate positively moderates the relationship between EL and organizational cynicism, which decreases work engagement. Our findings did not support the proposed relationship, as results showed that when the performance climate interacts with EL, it has a negative association with organizational cynicism, which in turn is linked to decreased degree of work engagement. Still, including the moderating variable of performance climate in the current study proved to give valuable insights for several reasons.

First of all, although the moderating influence of motivational climate was not supported in hypothesis 3 and only partially supported in hypothesis 4, it was instrumental to examine the possible moderating influence of motivational climate. This is because the contextual factors can be a stronger antecedent to behavior than individual characteristics and dispositions (Nerstad et al., 2013), which in turn can relate to how negative attitudes can be triggered by such a climate. More specifically, our findings imply that employees working in low or average degrees of performance climates with leaders demonstrating EL behaviors can reduce cynical attitudes towards the employing organization, which again is linked to less work engagement.

Thus, the findings of the present study are surprising as they contradict previous research suggesting that performance climates can enhance employees' experience of cynicism (Nerstad et al., 2019). Even though the findings were unexpected, they support and build on the assumption that EL is negatively related to cynicism (Lorinkova & Perry, 2017), and show how a contextual factor

partially can trigger the relationship. Furthermore, the present study's findings show how work engagement is reduced in the performance climate. Therefore, our study partially supports the assumption that performance climates can undermine necessary job resources (Nerstad et al., 2019), which can lead to psychological strain and drain energy when facing job demands. The lack of energy can decrease employees' feelings of vigor, dedication, and absorption toward their work and therefore, reduce work engagement (Nerstad et al., 2019). In sum, our results show that when EL behaviors are demonstrated in a performance climate, it may be associated with lower organizational cynicism and consequently, lower work engagement.

5.0 Limitations and future research opportunities

This study contributes to the EL research by conducting a more balanced investigation of the concept. The study explores when and how EL can lead to work engagement and possibly disengagement, where PCM, organizational cynicism and motivational climate are proposed as possible factors to explain the relationship. However, there are several limitations that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

First, it is instrumental to emphasize that the current study is conducted without the controlling elements of experimental design and has therefore several limitations. Since the design does not allow for establishment of direction in relationships, it lacks internal validity, and one can only establish patterns of associations between the variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Future studies may want to investigate the proposed relationships through an experimental design to determine causality between the concepts. Moreover, cross-sectional studies have been criticized as they may lead to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Accordingly, two predictors (PCM and organizational cynicism) and the outcome variable (work engagement) were measured at separate points in time through a cross-lagged design to reduce their confounding influence. Another issue with self-reporting methods is social desirability, which could be triggered by items in our research. Although participants were informed about their anonymity and that there were no right or wrong answers (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the average value of several variables were still quite high.

Second, the PCM scale provided some weaker results in this study with

two items with factor loadings below the cut-off of .40 and a Cronbach α slightly below the cut-off of .70. However, considering the importance of the items since the scale only contains five items in total and as the scale has previously been validated, it was retained for further analysis in the study (Lai, 2013; Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011). All of the absolute and relative goodness-of-fit indices of our model did not meet the recommended cut-offs. Nevertheless, due to the complexity of our model and the low sample-size, chi-square per degree of freedom ratio ($\chi 2/df$) was assessed as an alternative measure. Based on this the model was considered to be acceptable in this case. However, as the two above-mentioned issues might have been caused by low sample size and non-randomized sample, we encourage future research to replicate the current study with a bigger and randomized sample to ensure the model fit and the eligibility of the PCM scale in the given context.

Third, the present study's final sample and sample size (N =110) might have restricted the generalizability of the study's findings. The data was collected from several industries, which provides variation in organizations, sectors, functions and people. Subsequently, the heterogeneous sample limits the possibility to generalize the results to the population since one cannot identify the population the sample is representative of (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, the low sample size might have led to low statistical power and consequently, increased the possibility of type 2 error where one believes there is no statistically effect in the population, when in reality there is an effect (Field, 2009). This may have resulted in a conservative test of the hypotheses where we possibly failed to reject false null hypotheses (Field, 2009). As the findings suggested a partially significant moderation of performance climate on the relationship between EL, organizational cynicism and work engagement, we encourage future research to examine the relationship in a larger and more homogenous sample, preferably within one organization to discover a fully significant relationship.

Fourth, based on the way we collected responses in T1, we were not able to control for non-response bias. In other words, we could not control for the fact that employees who did not respond to our survey might differ significantly from the employees who responded (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A higher number of non-respondents might constrain the generalizability of our study as some types of survey respondents might be under-represented in our final dataset (Bryman &

Bell, 2011). However, as we were not able to control for this for T1, it is not possible to assess whether our initial sample was biased or not, which might weaken the value of our results.

Fifth, the current study only measured the proposed relationships through the employee's perception, which can be a limitation. A more nuanced view on EL could have been demonstrated through a dyadic design measuring immediate leader's EL behavior and employee's experiences of EL. This could have added an extra dimension to the current study's purpose of explaining why and when EL can be linked to work engagement or disengagement. For example, Wong & Giessner's (2018) study demonstrated that if EL expectations are not met, it can be perceived as laissez faire leadership through employee-leader dyads. We, therefore, suggest that future research should investigate the link between EL and work engagement, where expectancy matching of EL behavior can further explain the mediating role of PCM and organizational cynicism.

Sixth, the data collection was conducted around the same time as the introduction of the governmental restrictions in regard to COVID-19, where many businesses had to adjust their practices. Therefore, other contextual factors might have affected the results of our study. Some businesses have been forced to decrease pay rates and many employees have had to transition into home office and been forced to learn a new way of work. This might have been challenging for some, and it is plausible that the situation led to increased stress and role uncertainty. Furthermore, the leadership role might have changed for many, as they had to lead their employees through a crisis remotely, which one can assume few have any previous experience with. Altogether, this should be taken into consideration when interpreting results. It is hard to be sure of how COVID-19 might have influenced our results and one should therefore be careful drawing conclusions. However, as the results from the additional testing, where PCM (T1), organizational cynicism (T1), and work engagement (T1) were removed as control variables, slightly deviated from the original results, future studies may want to investigate the proposed conceptual model in more stable times to examine the findings further.

6.0 Implications

6.1 Theoretical implications

Even though we did not find full support for our conceptual model, the present study contributes with several theoretical implications, given that the results can be replicated. Our main contribution is that the current study extends the research on the relationship between EL and work engagement, as there are limited studies offering a nuanced view on EL by including both its possible advantageous and damaging effects. Additionally, the study diverges from the three prominent exceptions from Tuckey and colleagues (2012), Cheong and colleagues (2016) and Cai and colleagues (2018), by examining contextual mechanisms which can trigger and explain the relationship. In other words, the study aims to contribute to filling the identified research gap by investigating when and why empowering leadership can lead to work engagement or in some cases disengagement.

More specifically, the current study extends previous research by examining the mediators PCM and organizational cynicism between EL and work engagement. By developing the understanding of the proposed relationship, the current study has provided valuable insights for the literature on the proposed mediators' possible antecedents and consequences. Firstly, as it finds that EL relates to lower organizational cynicism, our findings indicate that EL behaviors are related to how employees perceive their organization, and leaders might be able to impact this perception. This can be a beneficial avenue of study for future researchers who wish to focus on how EL can influence employees' attitudes towards the organization. By including work engagement in our model, our findings support previous research indicating that organizational cynicism can have negative employee outcomes and extends the research by relating it to reduced work engagement. Further, as our study was not able to find support for the relationship between EL, PCM and work engagement, it might indicate that PCM's relationship with its related constructs is rather complex and dependent on other contextual factors. This may be of interest for future researchers to explore.

Finally, the research on the link between motivational climate and specific behaviors is considered as rather limited in work settings (Nerstad et a., 2013) compared to sport and education (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999; Valentini & Rudisill, 2006), despite its importance. Hence, our results contribute to the

research on motivational climate by showing how a contextual factor can trigger different employee outcomes. More specifically, our research sheds light on the moderating role of performance climates. Employees in low to moderate degrees of performance climates were less inclined to experience organizational cynicism when the leader demonstrated high levels of EL. This can imply that employees in such a climate are more inclined to experience lower degrees of work engagement. Accordingly, the current study supports previous research (Nerstad et al., 2019), showing that employees tend to be engaged at different levels depending on their contextual environment. In other words, the study demonstrates that the way employees perceive their organization is embedded in what behaviors are rewarded in their social context.

6.2 Practical implications

Alongside the theoretical contributions, the results of our study provide some practical implications. The study provides knowledge about what triggers the possible positive and negative effects of EL. Since EL has been popularized and received increasingly more attention in recent years, it is crucial to be able to understand the contextual factors that can trigger different employee outcomes. In turn, one can draw on the proclaimed advantages of EL and strengthen employees' work engagement.

The current study found support for a negative association between EL and organizational cynicism. This finding increases our understanding of the role of the leader and how EL behaviors can influence the employees. More specifically, it can imply that the leader can impact how employees perceive their employing organization. An implication of the finding is therefore that EL may be utilized by leaders as an apparatus to ease employees' organizational cynicism. This is instrumental knowledge for leaders, and they should therefore have a deliberate focus on how they can trigger this relationship.

The present study also investigated how EL is related to different contextual factors and showed how different levels of the performance climate can have different associations with work engagement through organizational cynicism. This means that a moderate degree of focus on competition in a workplace can reduce employees' negative attitudes about the organization and their engagement about their work.

7.0 Conclusion

Research demonstrate that EL is related to several concepts and can have both positive and negative consequences (Tuckey et al., 2012; Cheong et al., 2016; Cai et al., 2018). Several studies have showed how EL is linked to work engagement, although less research has proposed a balanced investigation to explain when and why employees are engaged. Thus, there is still a demand to understand the forces activating different responses to EL without taking a "one size fits all" approach" (Lee et al., 2017, p.19ong). Moreover, research has linked organizational cynicism (Cole et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2017) and PCM (Lai & Kapstad, 2009; Lai, 2011) to different aspects of leadership, but no study has investigated their mediating role in the relationship between EL and work engagement. In addition, studies on motivational climates in an organizational context have been requested since it has instrumental value in achievement settings (Nerstad et al., 2013). The current study intended to fill these gaps by suggesting that the relationship between EL and work engagement is mediated by PCM and organizational cynicism and moderated by mastery and performance climate, respectively.

The results from the current study did not find a moderated mediation link between EL and mastery climate on work engagement through PCM. However, the results show that EL is negatively related to organizational cynicism, and this relationship is negatively associated with work engagement. This indicates that EL can reduce employees' cynicism towards the organization. The existing negative attitude towards the organization can further have a negative impact on how engaged employees feel towards their work. Accordingly, leaders can have an impact on the attitude employees have towards their organization and their engagement towards their work. This finding also applies in low to moderate levels of performance climates. Consequently, climates focusing on competition and results can decrease employees' negative attitudes about the organization when the leader demonstrates EL behaviors. Albeit our contribution to the research on EL stems from the mediating role of organizational cynicism and the moderating role of performance climate. We encourage future researchers to continue the examination of the proposed relationships through a longitudinal design in order to increase the stability of the results.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Norwegian Survey Wave 1

Vennligst les hver påstand nøye og vurder om du noen gang føler det sånn om jobben din. Når du svarer kan du velge alternativer fra "svært uenig" til "svært enig". Hvis du syns det er vanskelig å svare på et spørsmål, velg svaret som er nærmest det du syns er riktig. Hvis du aldri har følt det sånn om jobben, velg "nøytral". Det er ikke noe rett eller galt svar på disse påstandene.

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din opplevelse av din nærmeste overordnede. Dine svar er konfidensielle, så vennligst svar så ærlig som mulig. For hver påstand skal du ta stilling til hvor enig eller uenig du er. I hvilken grad passer disse utsagnene for deg?

Empowering Leadership	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Lederen lar meg få myndighet over saker innenfor mitt område	□	□	□	□	□
2. Lederen oppmuntrer meg til å ta initiativ	□	□	□	□	□
3. Lederen lytter til meg	□	□	□	□	□
4. Lederen er opptatt av at jeg skal nå mine mål	□	□	□	□	□
5. Lederen drøfter felles anliggender med meg	□	□	□	□	□
6. Lederen formidler et lyst syn på fremtiden	□	□	□	□	□
7. Lederen forteller meg om sine egne måter å organisere arbeidet sitt på	□	□	□	□	□
8. Lederen veileder meg i hvordan jeg kan gjøre arbeidet mitt på best mulig måte	□	□	□	□	□

9. Jeg får innblikk i hvordan lederen legger opp sine arbeidsdager	□	□	□	□	□
10. Lederens planlegging av arbeidet sitt er synlig for meg	□	□	□	□	□

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidssituasjon. I hvilken grad passer disse påstandene deg?

Perceived Competence Mobilization	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Det er samsvar mellom de kravene jobben stiller og min kompetanse	□	□	□	□	□
2. Jeg får utnyttet min kompetanse i forhold til de forventningene jeg hadde da jeg tok jobben	□	□	□	□	□
3. Jeg får brukt kompetansen jeg har tilegnet meg relativt kort tid etter endt opplæring	□	□	□	□	□
4. Jeg får brukt mine kunnskaper, evner og ferdigheter i min nåværende jobb	□	□	□	□	□
5. Jeg blir tildelt oppgaver som jeg er spesielt god til	□	□	□	□	□

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidsplass. I hvilken grad passer disse påstandene deg?

Organizational Cynicism	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig

1. Jeg syns at organisasjonen sier noe, men gjør noe annet	□	□	□	□	□
2. Organisasjonens retningslinjer, mål og praksis ser ut til å ha lite til felles	□	□	□	□	□
3. Når organisasjonen sier at de kommer til å gjøre noe, så lurer jeg på om det faktisk kommer til å skje	□	□	□	□	□
4. Organisasjonen forventer en ting av sine ansatte, men belønner for noe annet	□	□	□	□	□
5. Jeg opplever at det er lite samsvar mellom hva organisasjonen sier at den vil gjøre og hva den faktisk gjør	□	□	□	□	□
6. Jeg blir irritert når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
7. Jeg blir anspent når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
8. Jeg engster meg når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
9. Jeg klager over ting som skjer i organisasjonen til venner utenfor virksomheten	□	□	□	□	□
10. Jeg utveksler oppgitte blikk med kollegaene mine	□	□	□	□	□
11. Jeg snakker ofte med andre om hvordan ting blir gjort i organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
12. Jeg kritiserer organisasjonens retningslinjer og aktiviteter sammen med andre	□	□	□	□	□

| 13. Jeg tar meg selv i å gjøre narr av organisasjonens slagord og praksiser | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |

De neste utsagnene skal hjelpe deg med å beskrive hvordan suksess er definert i din arbeidssituasjon. For hver påstand skal du ta stilling til hvor enig eller uenig du er. I hvilken grad passer disse utsagnene for deg?

I min avdeling/arbeidsgruppe...

Motivational climate	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Er det viktig å prestere bedre enn andre	□	□	□	□	□
2. Måles arbeidsprestasjoner på grunnlag av en sammenlikning med kollegers prestasjoner	□	□	□	□	□
3. Blir den enkeltes prestasjoner sammenliknet med andre kollegers prestasjoner	□	□	□	□	□
4. Motiveres det til rivalisering mellom ansatte	□	□	□	□	□
5. Oppfordres det til å prestere optimalt for å få økonomisk belønning	□	□	□	□	□
6. Fremheves kun de arbeidstakerne som oppnår de aller beste resultatene/prestasjonene	□	□	□	□	□
7. Oppfordres det til interne konkurranser for å oppnå best mulig resultat	□	□	□	□	□

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
8. Eksisterer det et rivaliserende konkurranseforhold blant arbeidstakerne	□	□	□	□	□
9. Oppfordres det til samarbeid og gjensidig utveksling av tanker og ideer	□	□	□	□	□
10. Legges det vekt på den enkeltes læring og utvikling	□	□	□	□	□
11. Oppfordres det til samarbeid og gjensidig kunnskapsutveksling	□	□	□	□	□
12. Blir arbeidstakerne oppmuntret til å prøve nye løsningsmetoder i arbeidsprosessen	□	□	□	□	□
13. Er et av målene å få den enkelte til å føle at han/hun har en viktig rolle i arbeidsprosessen	□	□	□	□	□
14. Har alle en viktig og tydelig oppgave i arbeidsprosessen	□	□	□	□	□

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidsplass. For hver påstand skal du ta stilling til hvor enig eller uenig du er. I hvilken grad passer disse utsagnene for deg?

Work Engagement	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Jeg er full av energi på jobb	□	□	□	□	□
2. Jeg føler meg sterk og energisk når jeg er på jobb	□	□	□	□	□

3. Når jeg står opp om morgenen, har jeg lyst til å gå på jobb	□	□	□	□	□
4. Jeg er stolt av det arbeidet jeg gjør	□	□	□	□	□
5. Jeg er entusiastisk i jobben min	□	□	□	□	□
6. Jeg blir inspirert av jobben min	□	□	□	□	□
7. Jeg føler meg glad når jeg er fordypet i arbeidet mitt	□	□	□	□	□
8. Jeg er oppslukt av arbeidet mitt	□	□	□	□	□
9. Jeg blir revet med av arbeidet mitt	□	□	□	□	□

Control variables

	16-25 år	26-35 år	36-45 år	46-55 år	56 år eller eldre
Hvor gammel er du?	□	□	□	□	□

	Kvinne	Mann	Annet
Hvilket kjønn identifiserer du deg med?	□	□	□

	Ungdoms-skole	Vgs	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Annet
Hva er din høyeste fullførte utdanning?	□	□	□	□	□	□

	Ansatt	Fagleder	Mellomleder m/personal- ansvar	Toppleder	Annet
Hva slags stilling har du?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Hva er din e-postadresse?

E-postadressen vil kun brukes til å sende deg spørreundersøkelse nr.2 om to uker og vil erstattes med en anonym ID-kode.

Appendix 2 – Norwegian version of Survey Wave 2

Vennligst les hver påstand nøye og vurder om du noen gang føler det sånn om jobben din. Når du svarer kan du velge alternativer fra "svært uenig" til "svært enig". Hvis du syns det er vanskelig å svare på et spørsmål, velg svaret som er nærmest det du syns er riktig. Hvis du aldri har følt det sånn om jobben, velg "nøytral". Det er ikke noe rett eller galt svar på disse påstandene.

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidsplass. For hver påstand skal du ta stilling til hvor enig eller uenig du er. I hvilken grad passer disse utsagnene for deg?

Work Engagement	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Jeg er full av energi på jobb	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Jeg føler meg sterk og energisk når jeg er på jobb	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Når jeg står opp om morgenen, har jeg lyst til å gå på jobb	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Jeg er stolt av det arbeidet jeg gjør	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Jeg er entusiastisk i jobben min	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Jeg blir inspirert av jobben min	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Jeg føler meg glad når jeg er fordypet i arbeidet mitt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Jeg er oppslukt av arbeidet mitt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Jeg blir revet med av arbeidet mitt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidsplass. I hvilken grad passer disse påstandene deg?

Organizational Cynicism	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Jeg syns at organisasjonen sier noe, men gjør noe annet	□	□	□	□	□
2. Organisasjonens retningslinjer, mål og praksis ser ut til å ha lite til felles	□	□	□	□	□
3. Når organisasjonen sier at de kommer til å gjøre noe, så lurer jeg på om det faktisk kommer til å skje	□	□	□	□	□
4. Organisasjonen forventer en ting av sine ansatte, men belønner for noe annet	□	□	□	□	□
5. Jeg opplever at det er lite samsvar mellom hva organisasjonen sier at den vil gjøre og hva den faktisk gjør	□	□	□	□	□
6. Jeg blir irritert når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
7. Jeg blir anspent når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
8. Jeg engster meg når jeg tenker på organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□
9. Jeg klager over ting som skjer i organisasjonen	□	□	□	□	□

til venner utenfor virksomheten					
10. Jeg utveksler oppgitte blikk med kollegaene mine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Jeg snakker ofte med andre om hvordan ting blir gjort i organisasjonen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Jeg kritiserer organisasjonens retningslinjer og aktiviteter sammen med andre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Jeg tar meg selv i å gjøre narr av organisasjonens slagord og praksiser	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Påstandene nedenfor er relatert til din nåværende arbeidssituasjon. I hvilken grad passer disse påstandene deg?

Perceived Competence Mobilization	Svært uenig	Uenig	Nøytral	Enig	Svært enig
1. Det er samsvar mellom de kravene jobben stiller og min kompetanse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Jeg får utnyttet min kompetanse i forhold til de forventningene jeg hadde da jeg tok jobben	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Jeg får brukt kompetansen jeg har tilegnet meg relativt kort tid etter endt opplæring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Jeg får brukt mine kunnskaper, evner og ferdigheter i min nåværende jobb	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Jeg blir tildelt oppgaver som jeg er spesielt god til	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Hva er din e-postadresse?

E-postadressen vil kun brukes til å koble svarene dine til forrige spørreundersøkelse. Når datasettet skal analyseres vil e-posten slettes og erstattes med et aynonymt ID-nummer.

Appendix 3 – Informasjonsbrev

Vil du delta i et forskningsprosjekt om sammenhengen mellom ledelse og ansattes atferd på jobb?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan ledelsesstil kan påvirke hvordan ansatte har det på jobb. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Hensikten med denne oppgaven er å undersøke hvordan leder påvirker ansatte og hvorfor en spesifikk lederstil kan føre til ulike utfall hos forskjellige ansatte. Formålet er videre å identifisere mulige triggere for negative og positive konsekvenser av en ledelsesstil. Dette kan hjelpe organisasjoner med å forstå hvordan de kan fremme positive utfall hos de ansatte, som kan være positivt både for organisasjonens prestasjoner og den enkeltes trivsel på jobb.

Studien blir gjennomført som en del av en masteroppgave ved studieprogrammet ledelse og organisasjonspsykologi på Handelshøyskolen BI, der Institutt for ledelse og organisasjon er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du fyller ut to elektroniske spørreskjemaer. Hvert spørreskjema vil ta ca. 5 minutter å fylle ut. Spørreskjemaen3 består av påstander der du skal velge det alternativet som passer deg best på en skala fra 1-5, der 1 er veldig uenig og 5 er veldig enig. Det andre spørreskjemaet vil du motta på epost 2 uker etter besvart første spørreskjema. Påstander kan lyde som følgende:

- "Lederen min veileder meg slik at jeg kan utføre arbeidsoppgavene mine best mulig".
- "Jeg blir tildelt arbeidsoppgaver som jeg mestrer godt".
- "Jeg er villig til å velge en utfordrende arbeidsoppgave som jeg kan lære mye av".

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil

da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket og GDPR. Kun undertegnede og vår veileder ved BI vil ha tilgang til opplysningene.

- Ingen identifiserbar informasjon forutenom IP-adresse og epostadresse vil lagres i forbindelse med datainnsamling. IP-adresse vil erstattes med en kode som lagres på egen liste adskilt fra øvrige data. Epostadresse vil kun benyttes for å kontakte respondenter om spørreskjema 2. Dette vil bli tilsendt 2 uker etter svar på første spørreundersøkelse. Respondenter vil ikke kunne bli gjenkjent i publikasjonen, da all data vil analyseres på gruppenivå.
- Leverandør på spørreskjema er Qualtrics, en samarbeidspartner av Handelshøgskolen BI.
- Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes innen 1.juli. Etter dette vil alle personopplysninger bli slettet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *Handelshøgskolen BI* har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Handelshøgskolen BI ved Sut I. Wong, Professor - Institutt for kommunikasjon og kultur: +47 464 10 723, sut.i.wong@bi.no.
- Vårt personvernombud: vibeke.nesbakken@bi.no
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Appendix 4 – Informed consent/Samtykkeerklæring

English version: Informed consent

I have understood the information about the study of how leadership style affects employee well-being and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in the survey by filling out the questionnaire and that my information (responses to the survey, IP address and email address) is processed until the master's thesis is delivered.

☐ I consent to participate in the survey and that my information is processed until the master thesis is handed in September 1st 2020.

Norwegian version: Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om undersøkelsen av hvordan ledelsesstil påvirker ansattes trivsel, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til å delta i spørreundersøkelsen ved å fylle ut et elektronisk spørreskjema og at mine opplysninger (svar på spørreundersøkelsen, IP-adresse og epostadresse) behandles frem til masteroppgaven er levert.

☐ Ja, jeg samtykker til å delta i spørreundersøkelsen og at mine opplysninger behandles frem til masteroppgaven er levert 1. september 2020.

Appendix 5 – English version of Survey Wave 1

Please read each statement carefully and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below. All items should be rated on a 5-point scale, such that 1 = strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. If you find it difficult to answer a question, select the answer closest to what you think is correct. If you've never felt this way about your job, choose "neutral." There is no right or wrong answer to these statements.

The statements below are related to your perception of your immediate manager. Please answer each statement as honestly as possible. Your answers are confidential. For each statement, consider how much you agree or disagree.

Empowering Leadership	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My leader gives me authority over issues within my department	□	□	□	□	□
2. My leader encourages me to take initiative	□	□	□	□	□
3. My leader listens to me	□	□	□	□	□
4. My leader is concerned that I reach my goals	□	□	□	□	□
5. My leader discusses shared affairs with me	□	□	□	□	□
6. My leader conveys a bright view of the future	□	□	□	□	□

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
7. My leader tells me about his/her own way of organizing his/her work	□	□	□	□	□
8. My leader guides me in how I can do my work in the best way	□	□	□	□	□
9. I gain insights into how my leader arranges his/her work	□	□	□	□	□
10. My leader's planning of his/her work is visible to me	□	□	□	□	□

Please reflect on your current work situation and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Perceived Competence Mobilization	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The requirements in my job correspond to my competencies	□	□	□	□	□
2. I am able to utilize my competencies as much as I expected when accepting my current job	□	□	□	□	□
3. I am able to use the competencies I acquire	□	□	□	□	□

relatively soon following completed training					
4. I am able to use my knowledge, abilities, and skills in my current job	□	□	□	□	□
5. I am assigned to tasks that I master especially well	□	□	□	□	□

Please keep your employing organization in mind and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Organizational Cynicism	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I believe that my company says one thing and does another.	□	□	□	□	□
2. My organization's policies, goals, and practices seem to have little in common	□	□	□	□	□
3. When my organization says it is going to do something, I wonder if it will really happen	□	□	□	□	□
4. My organization expects one thing of	□	□	□	□	□

its employees, but it rewards another					
5. I see little similarity between what my organization says it will do and what it actually does	□	□	□	□	□
6. I often experience irritation when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
7. I often experience tension when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
8. I often experience anxiety when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
9. I complain about things that happen at my organization to friends outside the organization	□	□	□	□	□
10. I exchange "knowing" glances with co-workers.	□	□	□	□	□
11. I often talk to others about the way things are run at my organization	□	□	□	□	□
12. I criticize my organization's	□	□	□	□	□

practices and policies with others					
13. I find myself mocking my organization's slogan and initiatives	□	□	□	□	□

Please reflect on how success is defined in your department/work group and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

In my department/work group...

Motivational climate	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. It is important to achieve better than others	□	□	□	□	□
2. Work accomplishments are measured based on comparisons with the accomplishments of coworkers	□	□	□	□	□
3. An individual's accomplishments are compared with those of other colleagues	□	□	□	□	□
4. Rivalry between employees is encouraged	□	□	□	□	□

5. One is encouraged to perform optimally to achieve monetary rewards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Only those employees who achieve the best results/accomplishments are set up as examples	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Internal competition is encouraged to attain the best possible results	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. There exists a competitive rivalry among the employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. One is encouraged to cooperate and exchange thoughts and ideas mutually	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Each individual's learning and development is emphasized	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Cooperation and mutual exchange of	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

knowledge are encouraged					
12. Employees are encouraged to try new solution methods throughout the work process	□	□	□	□	□
13. One of the goals is to make each individual feel that he/she has an important role in the work process	□	□	□	□	□
14. Everybody has an important and clear task throughout the work process	□	□	□	□	□

Please reflect on your current work situation, and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Work Engagement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	□	□	□	□	□
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	□	□	□	□	□
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	□	□	□	□	□
4. I am proud of the work that I do	□	□	□	□	□

5. I am enthusiastic about my job	□	□	□	□	□
6. My job inspires me	□	□	□	□	□
7. I feel happy when I am working intensely	□	□	□	□	□
8. I am immersed in my work	□	□	□	□	□
9. I get carried away when I'm working	□	□	□	□	□

Control variables

	16-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 years or older
What is your age?	□	□	□	□	□

	Female	Male	Other
Which gender do you identify with?	□	□	□

	Middle school	High school	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	PhD	Other
What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?	□	□	□	□	□	□

	Employee	Manager without employees reporting directly to me	Middle manager with employees reporting directly to me	Senior executive	Other
What is your current role in your organization?	□	□	□	□	□

What is your email?

The email address will only be used to send you survey No. 2 in two weeks and will be replaced with an anonymous ID code when data is collected.

Appendix 6 – English version of Survey Wave 2

Please read each statement carefully and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below. All items should be rated on a 5-point scale, such that 1 = strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. If you find it difficult to answer a question, select the answer closest to what you think is correct. If you've never felt this way about your job, choose "neutral." There is no right or wrong answer to these statements.

Please reflect on your current work situation, and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Work Engagement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	□	□	□	□	□
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	□	□	□	□	□
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	□	□	□	□	□
4. I am proud of the work that I do	□	□	□	□	□
5. I am enthusiastic about my job	□	□	□	□	□
6. My job inspires me	□	□	□	□	□
7. I feel happy when I am working intensely	□	□	□	□	□
8. I am immersed in my work	□	□	□	□	□

9. I get carried away when I'm working	□	□	□	□	□

Please keep your employing organization in mind and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Organizational Cynicism	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I believe that my company says one thing and does another.	□	□	□	□	□
2. My organization's policies, goals, and practices seem to have little in common	□	□	□	□	□
3. When my organization says it is going to do something, I wonder if it will really happen	□	□	□	□	□
4. My organization expects one thing of its employees, but it rewards another	□	□	□	□	□

5. I see little similarity between what my organization says it will do and what it actually does	□	□	□	□	□
6. I often experience irritation when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
7. I often experience tension when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
8. I often experience anxiety when I think about my organization	□	□	□	□	□
9. I complain about things that happen at my organization to friends outside the organization	□	□	□	□	□
10. I exchange "knowing" glances with co-workers.	□	□	□	□	□
11. I often talk to others about	□	□	□	□	□

the way things are run at my organization					
12. I criticize my organization's practices and policies with others	□	□	□	□	□
13. I find myself mocking my organization's slogan and initiatives	□	□	□	□	□

Please reflect on your current work situation and indicate the extent to which you agree with the statements below.

Perceived Competence Mobilization	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The requirements in my job correspond to my competencies	□	□	□	□	□
2. I am able to utilize my competencies as much as I expected when accepting my current job	□	□	□	□	□
3. I am able to use the competencies I acquire relatively	□	□	□	□	□

soon following completed training		82			
4. I am able to use my knowledge, abilities, and skills in my current job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I am assigned to tasks that I master especially well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What is your email address?

Your email address will only be used to connect your responses from the previous survey to the current survey, and will be replaced with an anonymized ID code during data analysis.

Appendix 7 – Confirmatory factor analysis loadings

Scales items and Confirmatory Factor analysis loadings with Satorra-Bentler scaling correction

Items	EL	PCM	OC	MC	PC	WE
EL1: My leader gives me authority over issues within my department	.61					
EL2: My leader encourages me to take initiative	.68					
EL3: My leader listens to me	.82					
EL4: My leader is concerned that I reach my goals	.56					
EL5: My leader discusses shared affairs with me	.80					
EL6: My leader conveys a bright view of the future	.37					
EL7: My leader tells me about his/her own way of organizing his/her work	.54					
EL8: My leader guides me in how I can do my work in the best way	.62					
EL9: I gain insights into how my leader arranges his/her work	.58					
EL10: My leader's planning of his/her work is visible to me	.61					
PCM1: The requirements in my job correspond to my competencies		.27				
PCM2: I am able to utilize my competencies as much as I expected when accepting my current job		.51				
PCM3: I am able to use the competencies I acquire relatively soon following completed training		.31				

PCM4: I am able to use my knowledge, abilities, and skills in my current job	.82	
PCM5: I am assigned to tasks that I master especially well	.69	
OC1: I believe that my company says one thing and does another.		.82
OC2: My organization's policies, goals, and practices seem to have little in common		.78
OC3: When my organization says it is going to do something, I wonder if it will really happen		.78
OC4: My organization expects one thing of its employees, but it rewards another		.69
OC5: I see little similarity between what my organization says it will do and what it actually does		.84
OC6: I often experience irritation when I think about my organization		.79
OC7: I often experience tension when I think about my organization		.61
OC8: I often experience anxiety when I think about my organization		.54
OC9: I complain about things that happen at my organization to friends outside the organization		.74
OC10: I exchange "knowing" glances with co-workers.		.71
OC11: I often talk to others about the way things are run at my organization		.44

(*Continued*)

Continued

Items	EL	PCM	OC	MC	PC	WE
OC12: I criticize my organization's practices and policies with others			.74			
OC13: I find myself mocking my organization's slogan and initiatives			.71			
PC1: It is important to achieve better than others				.55		
PC2: Work accomplishments are measured based on comparisons with the accomplishments of coworkers				.67		
PC3: An individual's accomplishments are compared with those of other colleagues				.69		
PC4: Rivalry between employees is encouraged				.66		
PC5: One is encouraged to perform optimally to achieve monetary rewards				.48		
PC6: Only those employees who achieve the best results/accomplishments are set up as examples				.63		
PC7: Internal competition is encouraged to attain the best possible results				.45		
PC8: There exists a competitive rivalry among the employees				.67		
MC1: One is encouraged to cooperate and exchange thoughts and ideas mutually					.68	
MC2: Each individual's learning and development is emphasized					.64	
MC3. Cooperation and mutual exchange of knowledge are encouraged					.89	

MC4: Employees are encouraged to try new solution methods throughout the work process	.71
MC5: One of the goals is to make each individual feel that he/she has an important role in the work process	.57
MC6: Everybody has an important and clear task throughout the work process	.46
WE1: At my work, I feel bursting with energy	.68
WE2: At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	.73
WE3: When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	.75
WE4: I am proud of the work that I do	.68
WE5: I am enthusiastic about my job	.77
WE6: My job inspires me	.75
WE7: I feel happy when I am working intensely	.51
WE8: I am immersed in my work	.60
WE9: I get carried away when I'm working	.54

Notes. EL = Empowering Leadership*; PCM* = Perceived Competence Mobilization*; OC* = Organizational Cynicism*; PC* = Performance Climate; MC* = Mastery Climate*; WE* = Work Engagement.