# The Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Wellbeing and Resilience during COVID-19: A Partial Least Square Approach

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| ARTICLE DETAILS | ABSTRACT |
|---|---|
| <br><br> | **Purpose:**<br>The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of leadership styles on employee well-being and resilience in private universities in Peshawar during COVID-19. The role of leadership in reducing stress and improving mental and physical health was not investigated in COVID-19, and this area is particularly understudied in the Pakistani context.<br>**Methodology:**<br>Data has been collected from 203 faculty members of 10 private-sector universities in Peshawar using an adapted questionnaire. The respondents include lecturers, assistant professors, and full professors working in private-sector universities.<br>**Findings:**<br>Using the partial least square regression, it is found that charismatic leadership, intellectual stimulation, personal recognition, contingent reward, and management by exception have positive and significant relationships with employee well-being and resilience in private sector universities in Peshawar.<br>**Conclusion:**<br>The conclusion is that leaders should use both transformational and transactional leadership styles in their organizations. They should also pay attention to the well-being and resilience of their employees in the workplace. |

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# 1. Introduction
## 1.1. Background of the Study

The COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic highlights globalization's implications. One of the most critical problems of the twenty-first century, this epidemic affects almost every nation, and it is recognized that any major event may directly or indirectly impact the global landscape. A proactive leadership style prepared to innovate and change standard leadership patterns is required to address current or future crises. Politicians' actions and choices have global implications, even when they are taken locally. Globally, boosting citizen well-being remains a top priority for public officials (Najam & Mustamil, 2022). When dealing with a crisis like COVID-19, leaders' styles of leadership and strategy may have a significant impact. As a result, the way a crisis is handled can be influenced by the leadership style employed. Various leadership styles have been studied and analyzed in the academic literature. The COVID-19 crisis illustrates the importance of utilizing the capabilities of several leadership styles while dealing with convergent problems (social, economic, and political). As a result, the purpose of this study is to see whether the leadership works effectively to address a crisis like COVID-19 or not. To thrive in a competitive and dynamic environment, organizations must adapt to changing situations (Lampel et al., 2014; Royer et al., 2008). A recent study shows how important it is for an organization to have strong employees who can handle difficult situations (Lacinák, 2021). Most empirical studies have focused on resilience as a human trait or coping mechanism (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). According to Kim et al. (2021), employee resilience has been conceptualized as an individual resource rather than an indicator and assurance of future disaster preparedness (Linnenluecke et al., 2015). Adopting workplace behaviors that help people learn and build relationships may help close this gap (Näswall et al., 2015). The ability of an organization to manage resilience-promoting practices and policies is critical. Individual differences may explain why people show more adaptable and learning-oriented behaviors (Bardoel et al., 2014; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). This research examines how individual attributes and perceived leadership styles impact employee resilience. In the COVID-19 situation, employees' performance and mental health are adversely affected. Most of the employees have stress and depression, which affect their overall performance and ultimately negatively affect their organizational performance as well.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, employees have a fear of being infected, which can spread easily in their families. This increased stress and depression, which is an alarming point for organizations. It is the role of leadership to think about employee well-being and resilience in the organization. Leadership styles have different approaches, which treat their employees with different perspectives. The role of leadership in reducing stress and improving mental and physical health was not investigated in COVID-19, and this area is particularly understudied in the Pakistani context.

The main objective is to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and employee well-being and resilience in Pakistani culture in the Covid-19 situation. The second objective is to assess the model using partial least square analysis and validate the results of the previous studies.

# 2. Literature Review

To promote normatively suitable behavior among followers, ethical leaders must demonstrate normatively proper behavior via personal acts, interpersonal interactions, reinforcement, and decision-making (Brown & Caylor, 2014; Muhammad et al., 2020). Identifying two facets of ethical leadership, foremost, the leader's morality. That is, the

leader must be an ethical, fair, and principled decision-maker who displays true concern and care for others (Brown & Trevio, 2006). The ethical leader embodies and articulates the organization's ideals (Gomez-Mejia & Werner, 2008). Having morals is important because the leader sets an example of ethical behavior and communicates ethical rules. He or she also holds his or her followers to account.

Every leader has a unique style of leadership, and one style doesn't need to be superior or inferior to another. Someone's leadership style reveals a leader's confidence in their subordinates' abilities, whether or not it is explicitly stated. It signifies that a leader's style of leadership is a mix of his or her philosophy, talents, and character that he or she uses to influence his or her followers. To influence the conduct of others or the performance of subordinates to achieve organizational goals, a leader's leadership style is defined by Baig et al. (2021) as a normative pattern of behavior that they utilize. A leadership style is a combination of traits utilized by the head to influence subordinates to achieve organizational goals. It may be said that a leadership style is a behavioral pattern and technique loved and most frequently employed by the leader.

Leadership is a way through which an individual may influence others' attitudes, behaviors, and ideas. The leader provides clear guidance to the team, allowing everyone to understand what lies ahead. Additionally, they inspire individuals and assist them in seeing what is possible. Without leadership, human beings become embroiled in heightened conflict as a result of divergent perspectives and solutions. Leadership enables individuals to work cooperatively and in unison. Leadership enables people to utilize their strengths to effect major changes that they would not have otherwise. Surji (2015) explains that it galvanizes individuals behind a shared cause. Other researchers, i.e., Bass et al. (1987), identified two types of leadership: transformational and transactional.

Transactional leadership was first used in 1978 by James Burns, who originated the concept (Whittington et al., 2009). Transactional leaders are motivated by their followers, who are the most effective motivators for them. Actions that are positive for a follower will be recognized, while those that are detrimental will be sanctioned (punished). They place a high priority on short-term objectives, standards, control, and constraints (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). The two most important components of transactional leadership are dependent incentive and expectation management, both of which are discussed here (Vaccaro et al., 2012).

It has been found that the three leadership styles (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and thought leadership) all have varying degrees of influence on employee job performance in the Malaysian private sector (Flores et al., 2012). Thought leadership, on the other hand, has gained a lot of attention in recent years because of how different leadership styles affect employee performance. As a result, this study aims to give a unique viewpoint on the subject of leadership styles, which has been the subject of previous research. There was a conceptual framework used to look at the effect that three different leadership styles had on employee job performance (Suleman et al., 2021).

While the term "wellbeing" is subjective, one occupational definition applicable to the whole teachers says 'Well-being is a good emotional state that results from a balance of specific contextual conditions on the one hand and the individual needs and expectations of instructors on the other (Aelterman et al., 2007). The dependent variable is well-being. Welcoming work relationships, a clear role, and influence over organizational changes are all characteristics of well-being according to Guest and Conway (2004). In certain

cases, stress is utilized to assess health responses to stress in the body or mind (Avey et al., 2010). Many factors affect job satisfaction in the workplace, stressors are conditions that force employees to adapt (Rondonuwu et al., 2021; Khattak & Qureshi, 2020; Spector & Jex, 1998). An employee's reaction to a stressor is neutral or even good (Cooper & Brentani, 1991). Strain reduces employee efficiency, effectiveness, contentment, and performance. Workplace stress causes anxiety, depression, headaches, coronary heart disease, and turnover (Ilyas et al., 2020; Spector & Jex, 1998). Individual and social well-being are inextricably linked. The first is concerned with a fulfilling existence and positive functioning accompanied by pleasant sensations, whereas the second is concerned with fostering relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging (Day & Gu, 2014). Subjective well-being, which promotes a perceived meaningful life, and psychological well-being both lengthen longevity by four to ten years (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

To assist leaders and institutions in better understanding how to handle crises, several scholars have sought to develop conceptual models and sense making frameworks. One of the most thorough crises leadership models was developed by Boin et al. (2013). According to the authors, crises bring out the winners and losers in the leadership stakes. They outlined 10 critical executive duties that go along with crisis management success. Making important judgments and making sense of the issue are the first steps in a crisis management plan. Other responsibilities include coordinating inside and between enterprises, as well as coupling and decoupling systems as needed. Other key activities include effective communication, assisting others in making sense of the crisis for others, and ultimately, reflecting on and learning from the crisis and taking responsibility for what worked and what didn't.

According to Boin et al. (2013), crisis leadership is characterized by the ability to create meaning in uncertain conditions. During a crisis, knowledge and recognized remedies may be in short supply. The COVID-19 pandemic created several unique challenges for school administrators, including the rapid pace of the outbreak and the ambiguity that made it difficult to respond effectively. Leaders' expertise was rendered ineffective due to a lack of "knowable components" (Baig et al., 2021). According to Boin and Renaud (2013), "decision-makers are unable to make informed judgments or communicate effectively with partners, lawmakers, and the general public unless they have a common and accurate image of the issue" (p. 41). As a result, many educational leaders were unable to respond effectively to the pandemic because policymakers – and frequently those in positions of authority above them in the organizational ladder – lacked trustworthy information about the outbreak. During the first few months of the epidemic, front-line educators and administrators asked for help and information from their school administrators and representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies.

A company's resilience is its capacity to withstand misfortune, recover from it, and develop from it (Kim et al., 2021). "Survival" might mean a variety of things in the context of a post-crisis company. Returning to pre-crisis conditions is called recovery (adaptation). This means that pre-crisis performance has been exceeded. It is possible to conduct a case-based study of company resilience (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016). The focus of theoretical investigation is on the adaptability of organizations. An organization's perceptual posture, contextual integrity, strategy capacity, and strategic action all have a role in the organization's ability to withstand adversity. When it comes to an organization's "perceptual attitude," "reality, wisdom, and favorable views" are all part of the equation. Confidentiality in this context demonstrates the project team's involvement and empowerment. There are two types of strategic capacity: strategic action and

strategic capacity for people resources. These criteria reveal the characteristics and resources of resilient organizations.

Organizational characteristics, such as leadership behaviors aimed at clarifying goals and expectations, fostering employee growth, and providing support for work and non-work demands, have been advanced as enablers of resilience development, but empirical evidence is lacking to support these assertions (Bardoel et al., 2014). Over the past decade, research on empowered leadership behaviors has gained popularity because of its link to change results (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Silan, 2021). Empowered leaders help subordinates develop self-management skills through delegating authority, ensuring meaningful work, demonstrating confidence in subordinates' ability to accomplish goals, and providing personal support Employee engagement, skill development, autonomy, and the promotion of stretch goals are all connected with the underlying characteristics of employee resilience when leaders exhibit empowered behaviors (i.e., learning, adaptability, and networking) (Nguyen et al. 2016; Silalahi & Salazar, 2015). Thus, empowered leadership is predicted to have a positive impact on the resilience of employees.

## 2.1.    Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the literature review the following hypotheses concluded;

**$H_1$: Charisma has a positive impact on employee well-being.**

**$H_2$: Intellectual simulation has a positive impact on employee well-being.**

**$H_3$: Personal recognition has a positive impact on employee well-being.**

**$H_4$: Contingent rewards have positive impact on employee wellbeing.**

**$H_5$: Management-by-exception has a positive impact on employee well-being.**

**$H_6$: Charisma has a positive impact on resilience.**

**$H_7$: Intellectual simulation has a positive impact on resilience.**

**$H_8$: Personal recognition has a positive impact on resilience.**

**$H_9$: Contingent rewards have positive impact on resilience.**

**$H_{10}$: Management-by-exception has a positive impact on resilience.**
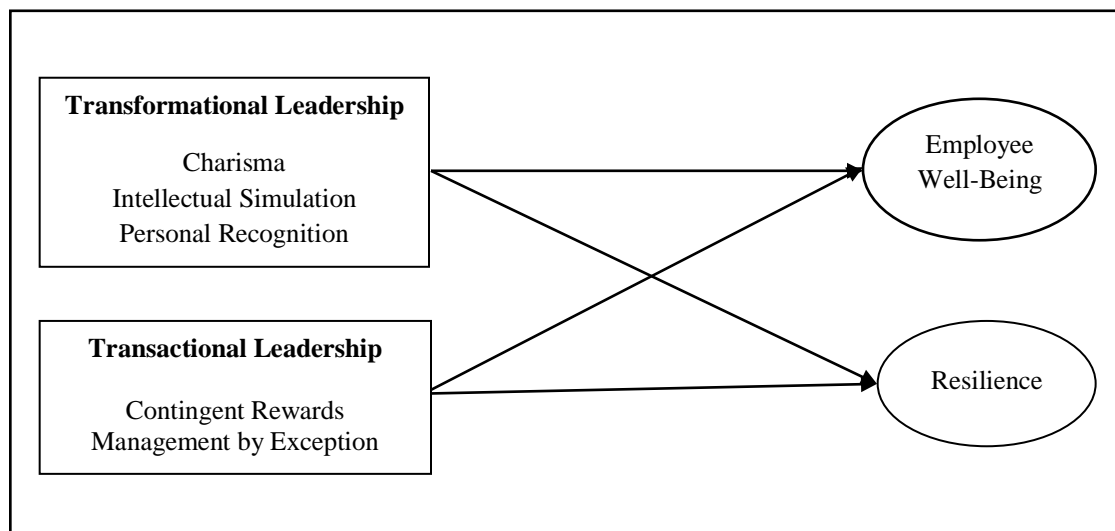
## 2.2.    Conceptual Framework



**Figure.1. Conceptual Model of the Study**
**Source: Author's own elaboration**

# 3. Research Methodology

## 3.1. Population

The population of the study is made up of 10 registered private universities in Peshawar. That is, CECOS University of Information Technology and Emerging Sciences, Brains Institute Peshawar, Qurtaba University of Science and Information Technology, Fast University Peshawar Campus, City University of Science and Information Technology, Gandhara University, Abasyn University, IQRA National University, Pak International Medical College, and Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar. 710 faculty members are working in different departments at these universities. 203 sample size is calculated by using an online sample size calculator with a known population factor and a 5% level of significance.

## 3.2. Sample size and data collection

Data has been collected with the adapted questionnaires using a systematic sampling technique. The Questionnaire for Leadership was adapted from Dussault et al. (2018), wellbeing from Mohamed, 2016 and a ten-item scale of resilience (Corner & Davidson, 2013). A personal survey was conducted, and a questionnaire was distributed to Peshawar's two private-sector universities. There were 300 questionnaires distributed, and 216 were returned and completed. The 5-Point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire for collecting responses from the respondents. Data were entered by SPSS V24 and then exported to Warp PLS 7.0 for Partial least-square regression analysis.

# 4. Results and Analysis

## 4.1. Demographics

The demographics show that 81% of the respondents are male and 19% are female. The respondents of the study are: 44% lecturers, 25% are assistant professors, 16% associate professors, and 15% are professors.

## 4.2. Reliability Analysis

Reliability is the existence of an instrument that provides a consistent result. (Ibrahim et al., 2018). Ibrahim et al. (2018) and Canatay et al. (2022) provided different reliability measures like composite, Cronbach alpha, Dijkstra, True composite, and factor reliability analysis. The threshold for each measure must be equal to or greater than 70%. The result in Table 1 shows that the scores are greater than 0.70.

### Table.1. Reliability Analysis

|  | Charisma | IntS | PerR | CR | MBE | WellB | ReS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Composite Reliability | 0.947 | 0.915 | 0.881 | 0.713 | 0.842 | 0.944 | 0.803 |
| Cronbach's Alpha | 0.935 | 0.888 | 0.831 | 0.745 | 0.760 | 0.935 | 0.724 |
| Dijkstra's PLSc Reliability | 0.954 | 0.896 | 0.892 | 0.807 | 0.824 | 0.940 | 0.734 |
| True Composite Reliability | 0.947 | 0.915 | 0.881 | 0.713 | 0.842 | 0.944 | 0.803 |
| Factor Reliability | 0.947 | 0.915 | 0.881 | 0.713 | 0.842 | 0.944 | 0.803 |

**Note:Charisma= Charismatic Leadership, IntS= Intellectual Simulation, PerR= Personal Recognition, CR= Contingent Rewards, MBE= Management by exception, WellB= Wellbeing, ReS= Resilience**

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

## 4.3. Discriminant Validity

Hair et al. (2014) developed the most advanced and reliable criterion for the assessment of the discriminant validity of the constructs. If the value of the HTMT is greater than the critical value, then this would show that there is a problem of multicollinearity between the constructs. There are two different criteria for threshold as suggested by different

researchers. The threshold for the HTMT is that the value will be less than 0.90. The values in Table 2 show that they are less than 0.90.

**Table.2. HTMT Ratios (good if < 0.90, best if < 0.85)**

|         | Charisma | IntS  | PerR  | CR    | MBE   | WellB | ReS |
|---------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Charisma |          |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| IntS    | 0.441    |       |       |       |       |       |     |
| PerR    | 0.437    | 0.210 |       |       |       |       |     |
| CR      | 0.293    | 0.601 | 0.503 |       |       |       |     |
| MBE     | 0.152    | 0.214 | 0.135 | 0.589 |       |       |     |
| WellB   | 0.263    | 0.199 | 0.129 | 0.567 | 0.866 |       |     |
| ReS     | 0.156    | 0.370 | 0.287 | 0.795 | 0.592 | 0.577 |     |

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

## 4.4.   Correlation and Convergent Validity

It is the extent to which a measure correlates positively with items of the same construct. Convergent validity can be assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and indicator reliability of the latent variables (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Convergent validity is the measure of the degree of confidence that a latent variable is accurately measured by its items or indicators. The average variance extracted (AVE) is the measure through which convergent validity is measured. The threshold value for the AVE is required to be greater than 0.50. The values in Table 3 indicate that the values are greater than 0.50.

**Table.3. Correlation of Latent Variables and Average Variance Extracted (AVE's)**

|         | Charism | IntS   | PerR   | CR     | MBE    | WellB  | Res    |
|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Charism | **0.830** |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| IntS    | 0.404   | **0.801** |        |        |        |        |        |
| PerR    | 0.386   | 0.169  | **0.774** |        |        |        |        |
| CR      | -0.011  | 0.424  | 0.257  | **0.836** |        |        |        |
| MBE     | -0.075  | 0.163  | 0.042  | 0.336  | **0.725** |        |        |
| WellB   | -0.246  | 0.174  | 0.027  | 0.384  | 0.748  | **0.752** |        |
| ReS     | -0.036  | 0.291  | 0.123  | 0.483  | 0.448  | 0.469  | **0.862** |

**Note: Charisma= Charismatic Leadership, IntS= Intellectual Simulation, PerR= Personal Recognition, CR= Contingent Rewards, MBE= Management by exception, WellB= Wellbeing, ReS= Resilience**

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

## 4.5.   Model Fit Indices

In WarpPLS there are many models fit indices that can be tested on the overall model. In this current, the following model fit indices are checked which are given in Table 4.

**Table 4. Model Fit Indices with p-value and Threshold**

| Indices | Value | P-Value | Threshold |
|---------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Average path coefficient (APC) | 0.208 | <0.001 | |
| Standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) | 0.084 | | acceptable if <= 0.1 |
| Average R-squared (ARS) | 0.577 | <0.001 | |
| Average adjusted R-squared (AARS) | 0.566 | <0.001 | |
| Average block VIF (AVIF) | 1.274 | | acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3 |
| Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF) | 1.853 | | acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3 |
| Tenenhaus GoF (GoF) | 0.546 | | small >= 0.1, medium >= 0.25, large >= 0.36 |
| Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR) | 1.000 | | acceptable if >= 0.7, ideally = 1 |
| R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR) | 1.000 | | acceptable if >= 0.7, ideally = 1 |

| Statistical suppression ratio (SSR) | 1.000 | acceptable if >= 0.7 |
|---|---|---|

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

Some of the fit indices have the criteria of p-values less than 0.05 and for some, there are specific thresholds provided by different researchers. The average path Coefficients show that all the independent variables have average path coefficients of 0.208 which has a significance value of less than 0.001. Similarly, ARS and AARS have that a good value means about 57.7 and 56.6% changes come from the independent variables in the dependent variables. AVIF and AFVIF values are less than 3.3 which shows the data has no multicollinearity issues. The value of GoF is 0.546 which shows the large explanatory power of the model.

## 4.6.    Hypotheses Testing

It is the extent to which a measure correlates positively with items of the same construct. Convergent validity can be assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and indicator reliability of the latent variables (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Convergent validity is the measure of the degree of confidence that a latent variable is accurately measured by its items or indicators. The average variance extracted (AVE) is the measure through which convergent validity is measured. The threshold value for the AVE is required to be greater than 0.50. The values in Table 3 indicate that the values are greater than 0.50.

**Table.5. Path Coefficients When Employee Well-being is Dependent**

| Independent | Dependent | Coefficients | P Value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charism | | 0.15 | 0.014 | Supported |
| IntS | | 0.12 | 0.032 | Supported |
| PerR | WellB | 0.07 | 0.01 | Supported |
| CR | | 0.12 | 0.04 | Supported |
| MBE | | 0.66 | <0.001 | Supported |

Note: Charisma= Charismatic Leadership, IntS= Intellectual Simulation, PerR= Personal Recognition, CR= Contingent Rewards, MBE= Management by exception, WellB= Wellbeing, ReS= Resilience

**Source: Author's own elaboration**

In Table 6, the hypotheses 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in which charismatic leadership, intellectual simulation, personal recognition, contingent reward, and management by exception have a positive impact on resilience are accepted, with a p-value less than 0.05. The beta values are 0.131, 0.278, 0.207, 0.188, and 0.252, which show that there are positive significant relationships between the independent variables and resilience.

**Table.6. Path Coefficients When Resilience is Dependent**

| Independent | Dependent | Coefficients | P Value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charism | | 0.131 | 0.026 | Supported |
| IntS | | 0.278 | <0.001 | Supported |
| PerR | ReS | 0.207 | <0.001 | Supported |
| CR | | 0.188 | 0.002 | Supported |
| MBE | | 0.252 | <0.001 | Supported |

Note: Charisma= Charismatic Leadership, IntS= Intellectual Simulation, PerR= Personal Recognition, CR= Contingent Rewards, MBE= Management by exception, WellB= Wellbeing, ReS= Resilience
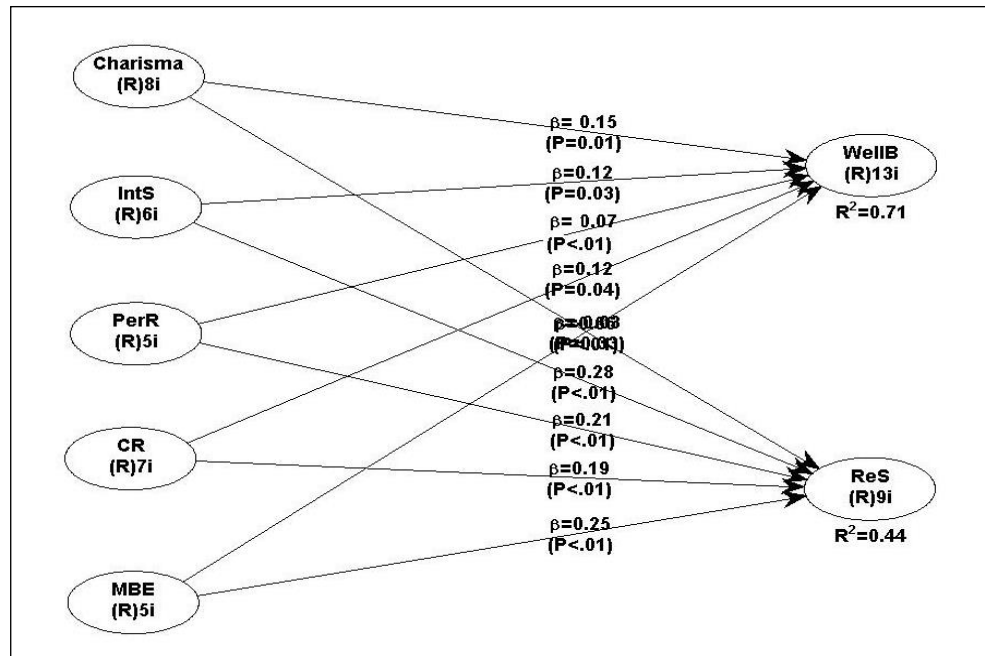
**Source: Author's own elaboration**

**Figure.1. Model of the Study**
**Source: Author's own elaboration**

# 5.  Conclusion

Charismatic leaders have the quality of being visionaries and motivating their employees in the organization (Silan, 2021). Employee wellbeing is a very important factor in organizations' what they are doing for the betterment of the mental and physical health of their employees. When leaders are visionaries, they treat their employees as a factor in getting competitive advantages and they involve them in decision-making, which further provides a better feeling and satisfaction in the organization, which improves the mental health of the employees. Intellectual simulation is an important aspect of transformational leadership in which innovation and creativity are encouraged in the organization. The leader encourages their employees to take an active part in the innovation process and contributes to promoting an innovation-driven environment in the organization. This will contribute to improving the overall environment and reducing stress. This creative and innovative thinking will also improve the critical thinking abilities and problem-solving skills in the organization. Personal recognition is the third characteristic of transformational leadership in which leaders recognize the efforts of employees and encourage them to improve their efforts for the organization. The results of this study are similar to those of the previous studies, i.e., Holl & Avolio, 1993; Moin et al., 2021), in which positive relationships were identified between transactional leadership styles and their factors, e.g., charismatic leadership, intellectual simulation, and personal recognition, with employee wellbeing and resilience in the organization. Transactional leadership is another type of leadership that focuses on the goals and objectives provided to their employees (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). This type of leader sets a target for every employee and has been rewarded and punished based on the employee's performance. Hypotheses from 1 to 10 accepted that the positive significant relationships in COVID situations are confirmed. The findings are consistent with previous research (e.g., Abdullah and Anwar, 2021; Avey et al., 2010; Plessis and Keyter, 2020).

This study was conducted on only private-sector universities. Other researchers studied public-sector universities and other industries as well. Special attention should be given to hospitals and police departments because they were on the front line during the

COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers can also compare the results of private and public-sector universities as well.

**Author Contributions:** Dr. Lal Muhammad conceived and designed the empirical analysis and data analysis. Muhammad Amin and Alam Zeb Khattak performed literature review and wrote the paper. Aurang Zeb Khan and Rashid Mustafa have done data collection and recording.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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