Nexus between despotic leadership style and employee's well-being: A case of a Telecommunication Company in Ghana

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Abstract
Purpose: This study examined the influence of despotic leadership style on the various dimensions of employee well-being (psychological, physical, interpersonal, environmental, and total well-being) in an XT Telecommunication Company in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

Methodology/approach: Quantitative research approach was adopted for this study. The study employed the use of census sampling technique. The population for this study was the entire workforce of 150 employees of XT Telecommunication Company in Ghana. Data was collected through standardized structured questionnaire. Data received was analysed through structural equation modelling using Smart PLS 3.0 statistical program.

Results/findings: The findings revealed that despotic leadership style positively influenced employees' psychological and physical well-being. Additionally, findings reveal a positive association between despotic leadership and interpersonal, environmental, and overall well-being.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the context-specific nature of leadership outcomes and challenge the universal assumption that despotic leadership is detrimental to employee welfare.

Limitations: This includes the specificity to Ghanaian society, which may reduce the generalizability of findings across different cultural settings. Future research should explore cross-cultural comparisons and longitudinal impacts to deepen understanding of despotic leadership's diverse effects on employee well-being.

Contribution: The study contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature by highlighting the nuanced role of cultural context in shaping leadership outcomes, thereby broadening theoretical and practical understandings of leadership effectiveness.

Keywords: *Despotic Leadership, Ghana, Telecommunication, Well-Being*

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1. Introduction

Institutions of all sizes are created worldwide to accomplish their stated objectives. Consequently,

management in many businesses uses various leadership philosophies to achieve the desired results. That is, good leadership ensures that employees achieve their desired goals and objectives in a free state of mind or overall well-being. Leadership style is one of the key factors that greatly affects employee well-being while trying to achieve it (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Billings, Ching, Gkofa, Greene, and Bloomfield (2020) highlighted the important role leadership plays in employees' well-being. Leadership style has a strong impact on employee outcomes, especially in countries ruled by men (De Clercq, Azeem, Haq, & Bouckenooghe, 2020). In the view of A. T. A. Khan and Saeed (2024), an organisation's performance depends on its leadership. When the leader fails, the organization suffers because the well-being of their employees or subordinates is also negatively impacted. That is, when employees are mentally healthy because of the influence of their leaders, their goals and targets can be greatly attained. In the age of skill shortage, increased stress levels, and employee ageing, it is imperative for businesses to maintain employee well-being in the workplace (Teetzen, Bürkner, Gregersen, & Vincent-Höper, 2022).

Employee well-being Erskine and Georgiou (2023)as being free of mental disorders or diseases. Sarpong et al. (2025) also defines employee's well-being as an individual's complete quality of life (i.e., physical, psychological, environmental, and social relations) that allows one to be productive and effective at work by making significant contributions to his or her family. That is, employees with a high quality of life are more productive and contribute significantly to the organization. On the other hand, if the employee is disrespected, denied opportunities, and many more by actions and in actions of the leader, then such employees wellbeing can be affected. Hence, leaders' actions can significantly improve or worsen employee well-being. There are several leadership styles, such as transactional, despotic, paternalistic, transformational, authentic, ethical, and servant. Despotic leadership as The focus of this study is described by Ali (2022) describes as the type of behavior exhibited by leaders that is explicitly focused on accomplishing supremacy and authority and is stimulated by a leader's pride, scheming, interests, and intolerance. Despotic leaders are self-centered and do not consider the interests of their staff, which has a detrimental impact on staff well-being (De Clercq et al., 2020).

Raza, Usmani, and Kazmi (2022) found that dictatorial leadership increases employee withdrawal behavior and silence compliance. Additionally, M. M. Khan et al. (2022) study on the connection between dictatorial leadership and employee outcomes discovered a favourable correlation between emotional tiredness, interpersonal misconduct, and indirect violence. Another study on the autocratic leadership model by Islam, Chaudhary, and Ali (2024) found that bullying behavior, mental agility, and well-being all had a detrimental impact on employee well-being. Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of managers' leadership for the welfare of their teams (Lundqvist, Reineholm, Ståhl, & Wallo, 2022). The influence of leaders causes several unfavorable outcomes, including emotional weariness, employee turnover, poor focus, absenteeism, unhappiness, and inappropriate interactions with coworkers (Barasa & Karinki, 2020). Employees are adversely affected by despotic leadership (Ali, 2022). The concept of despotic leadership has been the subject of study, but the focus of these studies has been on the relationship between despotic leadership styles and other variables such as turnover intention, job satisfaction, organizational performance, work withdrawal behavior, and others (Iqbal, Asghar, & Asghar, 2022; Nauman, Zheng, & Basit, 2021).

Despite the research on the subject, there is scant literature examining the relationship between despotic leadership and the various dimensions of employee well-being, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, which takes into account cultural differences. The sparse evidence currently available for this study comes from industrialized nations and does not specifically address how a despotic leadership style affects the physical, interpersonal, environmental, and psychological wellness of employees. Hence, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between despotic leadership style and various dimensions of the well-being of employees of a mobile retail firm in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. By addressing these gaps, this study seeks to provide insights that can inform organizational policies and evidence-based interventions aimed at supporting well-being. Based on the above discussion, this study developed the following objectives:
1) To examine the effect of despotic leadership style on psychological well-being.
2) To examine the effect of despotic leadership style on physical well-being.

3) To evaluate the impact of despotic leadership on interpersonal well-being.
4) To examine the level of influence of despotic leadership style on environmental well-being.
5) To examine the impact of despotic leadership style on the general well-being of employees

2. Literature review

2.1. Despotic Leadership

Despotic leaders tend to be authoritarian, highly engaged in personal interests, and actively seek to take advantage of their followers (Asad et al., 2022). Despotic leadership also refers to behaviors of a leader that incorporate the most negative characteristics of dark leadership (Albashiti, Hamid, & Aboramadan, 2021). A despotic leader is spiteful, aggressive, unforgiving, domineering, manipulative, arrogant, and seeks authority and supremacy (Albashiti et al., 2021). Some recent studies in the domain of despotic leadership have reported its deleterious effects on important employee outcomes such as job performance (Nauman et al., 2021; Raja, Haq, De Clercq, & Azeem, 2020), job satisfaction ((Samad, Memon, & Ali, 2021; Zhou, Rasool, Yang, & Asghar, 2021), turnover intention, ingratiatory behavior (De Clercq et al., 2020), psychological well-being (Raja et al., 2020), citizenship behavior, and creativity. Research points to its negative impact on employee behavior, particularly deviant work behaviors (Albashiti et al., 2021; Murad, Jiatong, Shahzad, & Syed, 2021).

Zhou et al. (2021) claimed that dictatorial leadership, which emphasizes complete control over workers, is a pervasive leadership style in today's collectivist, highly productive society. Furthermore, despotic leaders are similar to autocratic leaders who separate, completely rule, and demand complete obedience from their subordinates (Zhou et al., 2021). Despotic leadership is at the heart of the dark side of leadership. Goals, motivation, and satisfaction among staff members are eventually negatively impacted by despotic leadership, as they are sacrificed for the leaders' abuse of authority and self-interest.

For instance, in a study by A. T. A. Khan and Saeed (2024), on mediating role of workplace ostracism in the relationship between despotic leadership and emotional exhaustion, revealed a significant positive association between despotic leadership and emotional exhaustion, indicating that employees experiencing despotic leadership tend to report higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Again, Samad et al. (2021), on despotic leadership and job satisfaction among nurses: the role of emotional exhaustion also found despotic leadership to positively correlate with emotional weariness. Kalyar (2020) found a significant negative effect of despotic leadership on employees' psychological well-being in project-based organizations in Pakistan. Collectively, these findings underscore the detrimental effects of despotic leadership on employee health and organizational outcomes.

2.2. Employee Well-Being

According to Kirillova, Fu, and Kucukusta (2020), employee well-being refers to how satisfied employees feel with their surroundings and work environment. It can be expressed in both positive and negative terms. Ramadhani, Daud, Marumpe, and Hasanudin (2024), also defines well-being as the total quality of an employee's work experience, which is closely related to their mental health and job happiness. In the view of (S. M. Khan & Abbas, 2022), when employees are happy it can influence their level of creativity since it is a component of wellbeing. However, if an employee perceives a threat in the workplace, their well-being is likely to suffer. Again, when an individual experiences pressure in their area of duty and is unable to control it, they may develop burnout, which can result in varying levels of mental issues such as lack of concertation, stress, and many more (Sarpong et al., 2025). When employees are happy, it generally transcends into their well-being.

Happiness, a state of well-being, is categorized into subjective and psychological well-being. Happiness and well-being are signs of intrinsic motivation that can inspire original thinking and behavior. There are three main aspects of well-being. The first is hedonic, which refers to individual emotions and sentiments, such as happiness or concern. The second component is eudaimonic, which refers to living a "life well lived," networking among family, friends, coworkers, and superiors to compensate for underlying psychological demands, such as an awareness of purpose and meaning in life. The third component is evaluative, which is the ability to objectively evaluate oneself in terms of success or failure

in life activities such as job accomplishment and task completion. Other scholars have separated the concept of well-being into two distinct groups: psychological well-being (individual accepting oneself, development, and life purpose), and physical well-being (Daniel, Kamil, Kpabi, & Adomako, 2022). Employees who experience high levels of well-being tend to be more creative than those who experience low levels of well-being (Widyani, Landra, Sudja, Ximenes, & Sarmawa, 2020).

Several factors have been recognized as important in determining employee well-being, including support from the organization (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024; Kumari, 2023) and even the work environment with healthy leader-subordinate interactions. In contrast, excessive employment demands without appropriate resources can also lead to poor well-being (Simanjorang, Baressa, Rahman, Arif, & Nataldo, 2023). Other studies have identified certain risks leading to poor well-being, such as fatigue, long working hours, disturbed sleep, variable weather, economic pressure, limited time for recreation, lack of job security, and long-term separation from family and home (Brooks & Greenberg, 2022).

2.2.1. Physical Well-Being

According to Bondad and Quisido (2022), physical wellness entails maintaining a healthy physique, practicing good habits, eating well, exercising regularly, and seeking proper medical care. Physical health in the context of this study refers to having mental toughness and higher energy levels when on duty, getting enough sleep and rest, and a willingness to put in 100% effort despite adversities. In terms of physical health, it is expected that the individual will have the energy to go about his or her daily activities well, be free from any fatigue, and have the ability to sleep well and soundly. Studies have shown that insufficient or poor sleep quality is linked to a number of negative well-being and health effects, including experiencing greater daily stressors Lee and Lawson (2021). According to Lee and Lawson (2021), most studies have shown a link between sleep duration and sleep quality and psychological and physical well-being.

Job-related factors such as workload, work schedule, burnout, institutional culture, and bad relationships with colleagues and superiors may lead to poor sleeping habits, which in turn can affect one's physical well-being. According to Lin, Li, Zheng, and Jiang (2022), frequent exercise is a fundamental component and sign of a healthy lifestyle, which can have a major positive impact on a person's physical and emotional well-being. Numerous studies have demonstrated that while physical exercise has a good correlation with psychological capital, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, it has a negative correlation with perceived stress, suicide attempts, anxiety, sadness, and even suicidal behavior (Lin et al., 2022). According to Lin et al. (2022), sleep quality is a key determinant and is strongly linked to both psychological and physical well-being. In particular, getting enough sleep improves health and well-being, but getting too little sleep has a number of negative effects, including health issues (cardiovascular disease and obesity), poor cognitive functioning, academic performance, perceived stress, psychological discomfort, depression, and even suicide (Coiro et al., 2021).

2.2.2. Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a philosophical concept that describes a person's overall contentment with their life or subjective feeling of "happiness" (Cheremiskina & Samoylichenko, 2023). According to Chaudhry, Tandon, Shinde, and Bhattacharya (2024), psychological well-being (PWB) is crucial for achieving intrinsic goals, addressing emotional needs, increasing awareness and consciousness, and enabling independent performance in the workplace. An individual's psychological well-being encompasses favorable mental, emotional, and social situations. This encompasses sentiments of enjoyment, life satisfaction, self-confidence, positive relationships with other individuals, and the ability to deal with obstacles and stress (Putri, Shakiera, Aziz, & Wardah, 2023). Hako and Mbongo (2024), defines psychological well-being as a comprehensive notion that includes aspects such as autonomy, happiness, personal development and relationships.

Similarly, psychological well-being (PWB) encompasses self-acceptance, autonomy, life purpose, positive relationships, environmental mastery, and personal development (Pellerin & Raufaste, 2020). According to Chaudhry et al. (2024), psychological well-being (PWB) has six dimensions: a sense of purpose, personal growth, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, autonomy, and positive

interpersonal relationships. Psychological well-being in the context of this study is related to an individual 's sense of both positive and negative self-esteem and their ability to concentrate or not concentrate at work. Hence, they feel self-confident and autonomous, leading to appropriate decision-making and goal attainment (Yiğit & Çakmak, 2024).

2.2.3. Interpersonal Well-Being
The establishment of a positive work environment is based on healthy interactions. In other words, strong interpersonal relationships and a conflict-free workforce can only be accomplished through great leadership and excellent communication. According to Bondad and Quisido (2022), social wellness involves having ties with friends, family, and community, as well as taking an interest in and caring about the needs of others and humanity. Wellness encompasses a sense of purpose, meaningful work, happiness, positive relationships, a healthy body, and a good environment, rather than just the absence of illness. In the context of this study, interpersonal well-being is related to the social relationships allocated to the individual. That is, one having diverse social networks and better connections and using these resources to reap more benefits from the organization, colleagues, and supervisors. This involves having a good or positive personal relationship with colleagues and supervisors at work and outside of work, such as receiving practical social support from them in relation to work and even off-work issues when needed. According to Zhang, Zhao, Deng, Yuan, and Yang (2024), happiness is an integral part of mental health, and interpersonal relationships play an important role in our social lives.

According to Ogu, Kagwe, and Okpalaenwe (2022), the desire to prevent stress in people's relationships and work, as well as having strong support from those with whom they live and work, has a favorable impact on their interpersonal relationships. In interpersonal well-being, the role of social support is key, as individuals rely on such resources (colleagues, supervisors, and the support of organizations) to increase their interpersonal well-being. Social support is a multifaceted concept that is critical to employees' physical and psychological well-being (Hardan-Khalil & Mayo, 2015). Hence, good interpersonal relationships have a positive impact on well-being (Zhang et al., 2024). Relationships are cultivated through social work, linking two or more individuals. To create a good office environment and foster strong interpersonal relationships, employees must get along well with their colleagues (Ogu et al., 2022).

2.2.4. Environmental Well-Being
Environmental well-being entails feeling and being physically safe in clean environments and having access to clean air, food, and water. The environment includes both the workplace and where we live (microenvironment and macroenvironment (our communities, respectively, and the entire planet) (Bondad & Quisido, 2022). People's health is inextricably linked to the health of the environment (Organization, 2016). Based on the personality-situation interaction theory, the connection between personality and environment influences subjective well-being. According Kapri, Gulati, and Omar (2023), the layout of the workplace can substantially impact employee well-being. That is, the physical environment in which workers work can influence their physical and mental well-being. The nature of the environment, such as arrangement, sound, lighting, color, placement, sound, and materials, excites the senses, leading to different feelings and behaviors.

According Bressane and Castro (2024), supportive and positive work environments have a significant impact on employee well-being and performance. Nevertheless, the competitive and output-driven character of many businesses frequently exacerbates stress levels, leading to negative health effects such as depression, burnout, and anxiety (Gritzka, MacIntyre, Dörfel, Baker-Blanc, & Calogiuri, 2020). Environmental well-being in this study refers to maintaining excellent health by living in pleasant and stimulating circumstances that promote well-being. It encourages engagement with nature while providing an enjoyable personal environment (both within and outside the workplace). According to Hähn, Essah, and Blanusa (2021), exposure to natural light indoors is linked to increased well-being and productivity, highlighting the importance of indoor environmental quality. Hence, when the individual environment is affected, other aspects of their well-being, such as physical health, psychological well-being, and interpersonal well-being, can be negatively affected. With all these factors, the environment's well-being has the ability to influence all the dimensions of one's well-being and a person's overall

general health in either a positive or a negative way.

2.3. *Despotic leadership style and Well-being*

Despotic leadership is also termed "dark-side leadership behaviour" with several meanings and overlapping definitions. It has been used in various ways throughout the literature and emphasizes the importance of perception in describing despotic leadership (Abid, Akbar, & Iqbal, 2024). Conversely, authoritarian leadership, often known as despotic leadership, is typified by harsh and autocratic treatment of staff members, which causes them to feel uneasy and discontented with their positions (Abid et al., 2024). According to Raja et al. (2020), such a leader uses authoritarian and domineering behaviors to further their own goals, as well as self-aggrandize and take advantage of their followers.

Despotic leadership is not only the absence of successful leadership skills; rather, it entails actions that hurt followers, such as corruption, information distortion, manipulation, and illegal or criminal conduct (Raja et al., 2020). This type of leadership has four typical expressions: first, despotic leaders maintain strict control over their subordinates and expect them to follow their orders. Second, despotic leaders do not accept ideas or suggestions from their subordinates. Such leaders take credit for successes while assigning blame for failures to their subordinates. Third, despotic leaders usually appear very confident and are concerned about whether people respect them enough. These leaders distort information and take advantage of others. Fourth, despots are strict, even cruel, with their subordinates. They are rarely satisfied with their subordinates' work (Zhou et al., 2021).

Based on literature, it is revealed that, well-being promotes creativity, attention span, and sensory memory. Workplace well-being not only benefits employees at all levels within and outside an organization, but also creates a highly conducive, vibrant, appealing, and professional working environment. The workforce in organizations is directly and frequently exposed to numerous life-threatening situations, including physical and psychological stress, which demand the exhibition of proper leadership skills to aid employees in coping with adverse conditions (Hamid, 2025). Furthermore, individuals with a greater sense of well-being are more likely to succeed in their (Peng & Huang, 2024). According to Xu, Sarfraz, and Nasrullah (2024), pressure on employee's causes mental and physical breakdown at the workplace. An employee's physical well-being may suffer due to a lack of psychological well-being (Mehmood et al., 2023). According to Adnan Bataineh (2019), a good work-life balance allows one to be happy, succeed at work, and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Previous studies have shown a negative relationship between despotic leadership and employees' physical well-being (Khizar et al., 2023). A similar study by Hamid (2025) indicates that despotic leadership is significantly and negatively related to employees' job crafting and happiness at work. Samad et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between despotic leadership and emotional exhaustion. Islam et al. (2024) studied a model of despotic leadership, bullying behavior, emotional intelligence, and the well-being of nurses and their direct supervisors (dyads) and revealed that despotic leadership has a detrimental impact on employee well-being. Q. Huang, Zhang, Wang, Bodla, and Zhu (2022), in their study, found that employees under authoritarian leadership often experienced lower job satisfaction and reduced organisational commitment, which can manifest in strained co-worker relationships. Based on the preceding debate, despotic leadership is connected with greater mental health difficulties, such as stress, worse satisfaction with work, and higher levels of burnout among employees. Overall, existing evidence suggests that despotic leadership has a detrimental impact on employee well-being, organizational performance, and a variety of other aspects.

2.4. *Hypothesis Building*

In line with the above literature, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Despotic leadership style has a negative and significant effect on psychological well-being

H2: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to physical well-being

H3: Despotic leadership style has significant negative effect on interpersonal well-being

H4: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to individual's environmental well-being

H5: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to employee's general well-being

2.5. Framework of Thought
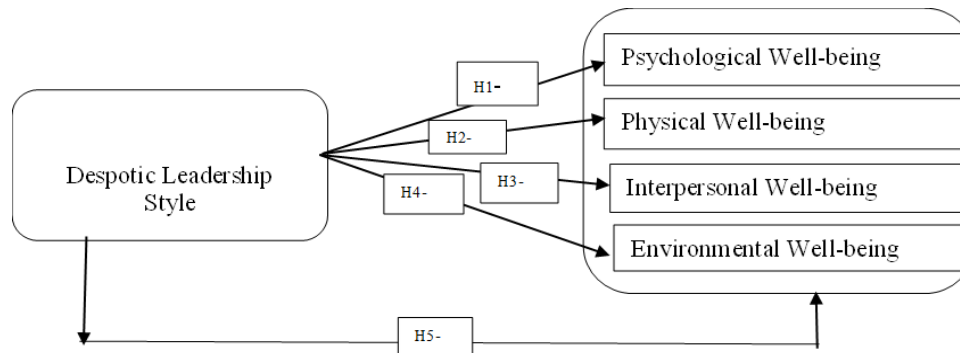The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework
Source: Authors construct (2024)

3. Methodology
3.1. Research Characteristics
This study employed a quantitative research approach with an explanatory and descriptive design. The study population included all employees on the payroll of the XT Telecommunication Company in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The company has a total workforce of 150 employees. Due to the population size, researchers decided to use the census sampling technique. A census involves collecting data from every member of the population, which eliminates sampling errors and biases associated with using a sample. This ensured that the research findings were representative of the entire population (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). Hence, the estimated sample size for this study was the entire 150 employees of the XT telecommunication company. According to Groves et al. (2011), collecting data from the entire population can result in greater accuracy. Data were collected using an adopted standard structured questionnaire. The administration and data collection were conducted from June 2024 to August 2024. A total of 150 self-administered questionnaires were sent to all employees of the XT Telecommunication Company, and all 150 questionnaires were answered and returned for data analysis, giving a 100% response rate.

The study questionnaire was an adapted standard structured instrument that has already been validated in previous studies. The questionnaire was organized into three key sections. Section A comprised questions designed to collect demographic information from respondents. Section B contains questions measuring the despotic leadership style, and Section C includes questions on various dimensions of well-being. The despotic leadership style was measured using a 6-item scale developed by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008). The scale includes statements like, " Leadership is in command, does not allow disagreement or questioning, and issues orders' and "Leadership is punitive; has no pity or compassion." The scale accuracy was 0.876. Respondents were asked to rate their feelings on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = and 5 = Strongly Agree).

Well-being was measured using the WHO (2004) Quality of Life Brief Version (WHOQOL-BREF). The scale was created by Skevington, Lotfy, and O'Connell (2004) and covers four key dimensions: psychological well-being, interpersonal well-being or social relationships, environmental well-being, and physical well-being. Respondents were asked to rate their opinions on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The responses are graded from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = and 5 = Strongly Agree). The scale includes statements such as 'how well you can focus, ' 'how energized you are for day-to-day activity, ' 'how frequently does physical pain prevent you from working, and 'how satisfied are you with your general health.' The scale has Cronbach's alpha values as follows: physical domain of 0.79, psychological domain of 0.82, environmental domain of 0.83, and interpersonal domain of 0.81.

3.2. Data Analysis

The data collected through the surveys were physically inspected to ensure that all questions were answered appropriately. Data were first entered into Excel and exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version_21 for additional cleaning and analysis. SPSS was used for the descriptive analyses of the study variables. To assess the proposed research model and hypothesis in this study, the data were analyzed using structural equation modelling through the Smart-PLS 3.0 statistical program.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Result

4.1.1. Demographics of Respondents

Gender, Age, marital status, number of children, qualifications, years of service, and type of job were among the respondents' demographics. The results of the respondents' demographic profiles are displayed in Table 1. Of the total respondents 150, (80%) were male, whereas (20%) were female. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 20-29 were the majority, followed by (33%) being between 30-39 years. Then, 7% and 5% were between the ages of 40-49 and 50-59years respectively. In terms of academic qualifications, 65% had SSSCE/WASSCE, representing the majority, 20% had diplomas, and 15% had first degrees. In terms of marriage (77%) were single and (23%) being married.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Detail	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	120	80
Female	30	20
Age		
20-29	82	55
30-39	49	33
40-49	11	7
50-59	8	5
Academic Qualification:		
SSSCE/WASSCE	97	65
Diploma	30	20
First Degree	22	15
Years of Employment		
1-5	85	57
6-10	30	20
11-15	20	13
16-20	15	10
Marital Status		
Single	115	77
Married	35	23
Number of Children		
None	115	77
More than one	35	23

Sample size (N) = 150
Source: Field Data (2024)

4.1.2. Validity and Reliability Analyses

Convergent validity was determined using an average result extracted (AVE), and a result of at least 0.5 showed appropriate convergent validity. The average variance extracted (AVE) of all latent constructs exceeded the recommended cut-off threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This showed appropriate convergent validity, implying that the constructs that were meant to be connected were connected. Discriminant validity was further tested by verifying that each latent variable's AVE

exceeded the squared correlations with all other latent variables. This suggests that the constructs had sufficient discriminant validity. This also indicates that constructions that are not supposed to be related are indeed unrelated, as demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Analyses for (Y.-H. Huang et al.) Measurement Model

Variables	Cronbach's	CR	AVE
Despotic leadership	0.840	0.905	0.721
Psychological wellbeing	0.830	0.902	0.651
Physical wellbeing	0.757	0.601	0.533
Environmental wellbeing	0.750	0.802	0.852
Interpersonal wellbeing	0.642	0.821	0.653

Source: Field Data (2024)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell and Larcker test. Fornell and Larcker (1981)stated that the square root of the AVE should be greater than 0.5. A notion with discriminant validity explains a unique experience that is not replicated by another construct in the model (Joseph F Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Thiele, 2017). Discriminant validity evaluates the distinctiveness of one construct from another. Table 3 shows that the control and latent variables in this study were distinct from each other, with each recording a value greater than 0.5.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Procedure for Discriminant Validity

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	*0.791					
Despotic leadership	0. 634	*0.807				
Psychological wellbeing	0.521	-0.080	*0.765			
Physical wellbeing	0.453	0.067	0.062	*0.852		
Interpersonal wellbeing	-0.239	0.037	0.054	0.537	*0.715	
Environmental Wellbeing	0.213	0.059	-0.06	0.015	-0.025	*0.625

Source: Field Data (2024)

4.1.3. Goodness-Of-Fit of Model

Table 4 shows how well the structures fit. The structural model was validated using various fit indices. The cutoff requirements specified by the model were met, indicating that it fitted the data. The model demonstrated an adequate fit in accordance with the thresholds established by Hu and Bentler (1999) and J. F. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2013). The chi-square for degrees of freedom (CMIN/df) of the study model was 1.621. This falls within the threshold range of 1-3 proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999).

The study model's Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.042, which is outstanding by the cutoff criterion (< 0.06) specified by (J. F. Hair et al., 2013). The Pclose (0.082), Standardised Root Mean Square of Residuals (SRMR) (0.056), goodness-of-fit index (Mulyadi et al.) (0.954), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (0.954), Incremental Fit Index (IFI) (0.958), and Adjusted Goodness-of-fit (Mulyadi et al.) (0.944) also met the cutoff values suggested by (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Table 6 shows that all these values support the hypothesized model's fit to the data.

Table 4. Goodness-of-Fit Indices for Structural Model

Measurement	Estimation	Benchmark	Remarks
CMIN/df	1.631	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
C.F.I	0.975	≥ 0 .95	Excellent
G.F.I	0.954	≥ 0.95	Excellent
RMSEA	0.043	< 0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.084	>0.05	Excellent
AGFI	0.933	≥ 0.90	Excellent
SRMR	0.056	<0.08	Excellent

TLI	0.957	>0.95	Acceptable
IFI	0.961	>0.95	Excellent

4.1.4. Correlation Analysis

Table 5, AQW2 is a Pearson correlations matrix analysis on the study variables, that is despotic leadership (DPL), perceived general well-being (PGW), physical well-being (PSW), perceived environmental well-being (PEW), interpersonal wellbeing (PITW), and psychological well-being (PSYW). The study found a strong positive correlation (r =.923) at (p < 0.01) between despotic leadership and interpersonal wellbeing. This suggests that an increase in the DPL is associated with an increase in the PITW. Furthermore, the study found a significant positive correlation (r =.426) at (p < 0.01) between PGW and PSW, indicating that higher PGW levels are associated with higher PSW levels. Furthermore, the results showed a negative correlation between PGW and PEW and PSYW (-.440 and -.381, respectively), indicating that as PGW increases, both PEW and PSYW tend to decrease significantly (p < 0.01).

Again, despotic leadership was found to have a positive and moderate (r = 0.346) impact on the physical well-being of the study respondents. Additionally, a negative correlation was found between despotic leadership and environmental well-being (r = -0.520) and general well-being (r = -0.440). A negative correlation was also found between despotic leadership and the psychological well-being of respondents. In general, despotic leadership had a significant positive impact (r = 0.943) at (p < 0.01) on employees' general well-being. This suggests a strong positive correlation, meaning that as DPL increases, PGW also tends to increase significantly, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

	DPL	PGW	PSW	PEW	PSYW	PITW
DPL	1					
PGW	.943**	1				
PSW	.346*	.426**	1			
PEW	-.520**	-.440**	.113	1		
PSYW	-.406**	-.381**	-.080	.195	1	
PITW	.923**	-.432**	.056	.110	-.032	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Data (2024)

4.1.5. Regression Analysis

Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 provide the results of regression analyses investigating the effect of despotic leadership on the various dimensions of well-being (psychological, environmental, physical, and interpersonal), and Table 11 summarizes the hypotheses.

Table 6. Despotic leadership predicting psychological well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	35.292	3.289		10.731	.000
Despotic leadership	.872	.283	.406	3.080	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being
Source: Field Data (2024)

The results in Table 6 show the test of the relationship between psychological well-being and despotic leadership. The result (β = 0.872, p=0.003 < 0.05) revealed a significant positive relationship between despotic leadership style and employees' psychological well-being. The results suggest that for each unit increase in despotic leadership behavior, employees' psychological well-being scores increase by 0.872 units. Although the standardized coefficient of 0.406 indicates a moderate positive relationship,

suggesting that despotic leadership significantly contributes to understanding variations in psychological well-being, the p-value of 0.003 (less than 0.05) indicates that this effect is significant. This indicates that despotic leadership has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of the study respondents. In other words, despotic leadership has a significant positive effect on employees' psychological well-being. Based on this finding, study hypothesis H1 was not supported.

Table 7. Despotic leadership predicting physical well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	17.156	3.219		5.330	.000
Despotic leadership	.737	.288	.346	2.556	.014
a. Dependent Variable: Physical well-being					

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 7 presents the test results showing the relationship between despotic leadership and physical wellbeing. The results (B = 0.737, p=0.014 < 0.05) suggest that for every one-unit increase in despotic leadership, physical well-being increases by 0.737 units, indicating a positive relationship. The p-value (p=0.014) indicates that the relationship between despotic leadership and physical well-being is statistically significant, although the standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.346) indicates a medium effect size, indicating that despotic leadership has a notable influence on physical well-being. In line with these findings, the study hypothesis H3 was not supported.

Table 8. Despotic leadership predicting Interpersonal well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	25.292	3.269		4.731	.000
Despotic leadership	.772	.253	.506	5.080	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal wellbeing					

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 8 shows the test results for interpersonal well-being and despotic leadership. The result (β = 0.772, p=0.000 < 0.05) indicates a significant positive relationship between despotic leadership and employees' interpersonal well-being. The results suggest that higher scores for despotic leadership behavior are associated with increases in employees' interpersonal well-being scores. The standardized coefficient of 0.506 implies a moderate to strong impact of despotic leadership on interpersonal well-being. In the context of this study, despotic leadership has a significant positive effect on employees' interpersonal well-being; hence, the study's hypothesis H3 is not supported.

Table 9. Despotic leadership predicting environmental well-being

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	42.463	4.101		10.354	.000
Despotic leadership	.323	.243	.520	4.217	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Environmental well-being					

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 9 reveals the test results between employees' environmental well-being and the despotic leadership style. The test results (β = 0.323, p=0.000 < 0.05) show a significant positive relationship between despotic leadership style and respondents environmental well-being. The results imply that an increase in despotic leadership corresponds to an increase in employees' environmental well-being scores by 0.323 units. Based on this finding, study hypothesis H4 is not supported.

Table 10. Despotic leadership predicting overall wellbeing

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.715	1.012		5.649	.000
Despotic Leadership	1.510	.077	.943	19.655	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee General well-being					

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 10 reveals the test results between employees' general well-being and despotic leadership style. The test results (β = 1.510, p=0.000 < 0.05) show a significant positive relationship between despotic leadership and employees general well-being. This shows that for each one-unit increase in despotic leadership, employees' general well-being increases by 1.510 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.943) indicates a large effect size, meaning that despotic leadership has a strong influence on employees' general well-being.

Table 11. Summary of Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Results	Decision
H1: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to psychological well-being	*Sig*	Not Supported
H2: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to physical well-being	*Sig*	Not Supported
H3: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to interpersonal well-being	*Sig*	Not Supported
H4: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to individual's environmental well-being	*Sig*	Not Supported
H5: Despotic leadership style negatively and significantly relates to employee's general well-being	*Sig*	Not Supported

Source: Field Data (2024)

4.2. Discussion

In line with the study's objective one, which was to examine the effect of despotic leadership style on psychological well-being, the results revealed that despotic leadership has a significant influence on employees' psychological well-being. This finding contradicts those from most developed countries, such as the study by Kalyar (2020), whose research showed that despotic leadership has a considerable and detrimental effect on an employee's psychological well-being. Also, from the study of Kiyani, Atasever, and Rizvi (2021), revealed that when leaders engage in exploitative and manipulative tactics like overburdening, pressuring, and under-challenging employees, the latter may experience psychological stress that is detrimental to their well-being.

Mehmood et al. (2023) discovered that the existence of autocratic leaders in businesses negatively impacted employees' psychological well-being. Furthermore, Islam et al. (2024) investigated the model of despotic leadership, bullying behavior, emotional intelligence, and the well-being of nurses and their direct supervisors (dyads) in Pakistan and discovered that despotic leadership negatively impacts employee well-being. Numerous reasons contribute to this shift in findings, with cultural factors potentially moderating this effect. That is, with Ghana being a collectivist society, it may moderate employees' perceptions of despotic leadership, making them more likely to accept hierarchical authority. Employees may feel more confident and less worried about their performance goals, resulting in better psychological well-being. A despotic leader's unambiguous orders may decrease ambiguity and lower employee stress levels.

In line with the study's objective two, which looked at the effect of despotic leadership style, the study found a positive link between despotic leadership style and physical well-being. This finding deviates from those of earlier studies. For example, Hamid (2025) discovered that dictatorial leadership was

negatively associated with employees' job crafting and workplace contentment. Additionally, Xu et al. (2024) discovered that employee burnout is a type of physical impairment produced by dictatorial leadership. The study's findings also support Einarsen et al. (2020), who argued that employees suffer physical health problems due to bullying from a tyrannical leader. According to Mehmood et al. (2023), an individual's physical well-being may be affected by a lack of psychological well-being; however, the positive association between despotic leadership style and employee psychology can eventually improve physical well-being. Another contributing factor to the shift in findings may be the moderating effect of the organizational structural system in Ghana. Under despotic leadership, a structured environment may result in improved performance because of clearly defined expectations, which can reduce workload-related stress. This structure can also encourage healthier work habits, as employees strive to meet their leaders' expectations, which can improve their overall physical health.

Furthermore, with reference to the third and fourth objectives. The study findings showed a positive relationship between despotic leadership style and interpersonal and environmental well-being. According to Bressane and Castro (2024), supportive and positive work environments have a significant impact on employee well-being and performance. Ernst Kossek, Kalliath, and Kalliath (2012), also point out that healthy working environment positively influences the individual's job and non-job-related activities. Any employee within such an environment has a good psychological association with their job, as well as a positive perception of the transmission and crossing of energy, emotion, and skills between work and home. The ambiance and design of workplaces can influence both individual feelings and behavior. This is affirmed by Kapri et al. (2023), who found that the layout of the workplace can have a substantial impact on employee well-being. Although this study is the first to test the relationship between despotic leadership and employee environmental well-being, some studies indicate that despotic leaders create an unconducive working environment for employees, which can eventually impact their overall well-being. Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that despotic leadership may create a positive atmosphere rather than a toxic environment, making this discovery an important contribution to the literature. In a collectivist society, a despotic leader may provide a stable and controlled working environment that promotes consistency and predictability.

Lastly, in line with the fifth objective, which was to investigate the impact of despotic leadership style on the general well-being of the study participants, the study results showed a significant positive link between despotic leadership style and employees' overall well-being. According to Lundqvist et al. (2022), supportive leadership considerably enhances job satisfaction, stress management, and general well-being; hence, when employees perceive despotic leaders to be supportive, it has an impact on their well-being. Based on the study results, the effect of despotic leadership on well-being may be context-specific and cannot be generalized to all contexts due to cultural variations. Given that despotic leadership is often thought to have a negative impact on employees' well-being. The findings differ from the majority of studies on despotic leadership and well-being conducted in industrialized countries, where a negative relationship has been found between the two variables. Based on the study context, culture plays an important role in influencing the impact of despotic leadership on various dimensions of employees' well-being. Employees in collectivist societies value social cohesion and hierarchy, which can lead to varying interpretations and reactions to authoritarian leadership. Consequently, such outcomes are expected.

5. Conclusion
5.1. Conclusion
The study concludes that despotic leadership has a significant influence on various dimensions of employee well-being. In the context of Ghana, a collectivist society, it may play a moderating role in employees' perceptions of despotic leadership, making them more likely to accept hierarchical authority. This finding offers a fascinating contrast to the broader literature, which typically underscores the negative consequences of such leadership styles. In a collectivist society such as Ghana, where community and group harmony are prioritized, it is essential to consider how the unique cultural context influences employees' perceptions and the impact of leadership acceptance. Although despotic leadership is characterized by authoritarian control, centralization of power, and minimal input from subordinates, the positive findings challenge these assumptions, suggesting a need for deeper

investigation within specific cultural contexts. The contradictory findings regarding the impact of despotic leadership on well-being highlight the importance of cultural context in leadership studies. Many studies conducted in individualistic societies emphasize personal autonomy and engagement, where despotic leadership is often viewed as detrimental. In contrast, collectivist cultures may have nuanced interpretations of authority and leadership dynamics. The cultural values of respect, obedience, and communal harmony in Ghana may inadvertently support a framework in which employees rationalize or accept despotic leadership as a normative practice. This acceptance can lead to improved morale among workers who value the predictability and safety that such leaders provide.

5.2. Limitations
This study focused on examining the relationship between despotic leadership style and various dimensions of well-being, such as psychological, physical, interpersonal, and environmental well-being. The study population was limited to the employees of the XT Telecommunication Company in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

5.3. Suggestions
Consequently, organizations in Ghana, especially telecommunications companies, should consider the cultural implications of leadership styles when designing their management frameworks. Training and development programs for leaders should address how to effectively balance authoritative control with respect for the team's collective input, leveraging the unique cultural attributes of Ghanaian society. Again, organizations should be cautious not to romanticize despotic leadership based only on positive outcomes. They should set clear policies that encourage ethical leadership practices while respecting cultural nuances. This balance could help mitigate the potential long-term negative effects of despotic leadership. Further research is needed in the Ghanaian context to explore this phenomenon. Mixed-method studies could provide insights into employee perceptions and lived experiences under despotic leadership, highlighting how cultural contexts shape these attitudes. Future research should examine additional leadership styles, such as ethical, servant, and authentic leadership, in relation to well-being in a larger sample size to acquire a better understanding of which leadership styles are being practiced in sub-Saharan African organizations.

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