

**Unlocking Optimal Employee Well-Being:
Investigating the Impact of Empowering Leadership on Employee
Flourishing and the Mediating Role of Psychological Safety**

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Master Thesis

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After six years of studying, it feels surreal to be writing these final sentences of my master thesis and, thereby, closing a very special and important chapter of my life. Although working on this thesis has been tough at some points, I am very happy I got to write about such a relevant topic that really matters to me. The insights and knowledge I gained through this project are a valuable enrichment to my personal skillset, which I am looking forward to applying in the corporate world to create more empowering and supportive work environments in the future.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to reveal new insights into the effect of empowering leadership on employee flourishing as a form of “optimal well-being” (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 218) by exploring the mediating role of psychological safety. Taking a broaden-and-build perspective, this research contributes to the positive psychology literature by examining the role of distinct positive emotions on the investigated relationships. Whereas previous studies mainly utilized employee well-being as a means to achieve better performance outcomes or focused on the prevention of negative well-being outcomes, this study is unique by focusing solely on strengthening positive emotions to enable employees to flourish in the long-term.

To test the suggested hypotheses, quantitative data from a cross-sectional study (n=255) was utilized. The results confirmed that empowering leadership positively impacts employee flourishing as well as psychological safety. Furthermore, a direct positive relationship between psychological safety and flourishing was shown. Lastly, the regression analysis confirmed an indirect positive effect of empowering leadership on flourishing through the mediation of psychological safety. Based on broaden-and-build theory, the positive emotions that result from empowering leadership lead to a psychologically safer work environment as employees are more encouraged to participate in decision-making. Positive emotions arising from that, such as interest, love and contentment, help employees to broaden their thought-action repertoires and build personal resources and resilience. These support employees in solving challenges and finding meaning and purpose in one’s tasks and life. Through an upward spiral, positive emotions created by empowering leadership and psychological safety accumulate and increase employees’ abilities to flourish.

Although this research shows some methodological limitations and proposes future researchers to investigate broader samples and explore different analysis approaches, the results are still from significant value for the organizational practice.

Key words: Empowering leadership, flourishing, optimal well-being, psychological safety, positive psychology, broaden-and-build theory.

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1. Introduction

In 2022, one in five employees in the Netherlands suffered from burnout or emotional exhaustion (TNO & Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, & Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023). As this trend is not only a local issue, Ståhl (2023) even speaks of a new European pandemic, causing severe consequences for individuals, organizations, and economies. With today's work environment being characterized by uncertainty, volatility, ambiguity and dynamic developments (Kim et al., 2018b), current literature emphasizes the importance of fostering high levels of employee well-being to facilitate happy, healthy, and productive workers (De Vos et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2018b; Skakon et al., 2010). However, most existing studies use well-being not as an end in itself but as a means to impact performance, and solely focus on preventing negative well-being outcomes (Inceoglu et al., 2018).

In contrast, the positive psychology literature explores how to leverage the experience of positive emotions to foster high levels of well-being (Huppert & So, 2013). More specifically, it aims for identifying, understanding, and nurturing aspects that enable flourishing, which relates to individuals' overall positive life experience (Huppert & So, 2013) and is often defined as the "optimal well-being" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 218). In comparison to job satisfaction, a widely studied hedonic well-being dimension, flourishing is a broader concept that also comprises eudaimonic well-being dimensions. These eudaimonic dimensions relate to an individual's vitality expressing through aspects like personal growth or engagement and, thereby, go beyond the short-term satisfaction of employees (Inceoglu et al., 2018).

An insightful theoretical perspective in the positive psychology is the broaden-and-build theory, which proposes that the accumulated experience of positive emotions broadens individuals' thought-action repertoires and builds personal resources and resilience in the long-term (Fredrickson, 1998). This theory was chosen for the purpose of this study, as it enables examining underlying mechanisms of flourishing by referring it to the effects of distinct positive emotions in the long-term (Fredrickson, 1998). Since flourishing is not a temporary condition but a long-term process (Deci & Ryan, 2008), this theoretical perspective is central to capture its complexity (Fredrickson, 2001). Accordingly, eudaimonic well-being forms, such as flourishing, were shown to help employees find meaning in their job and direction for the future, thereby creating positive emotions and equipping employees with the capabilities needed for facing the challenges in today's volatile working context (Peiró et al., 2021).

Fredrickson (1998) found that these positive emotions can also be triggered by external factors, which is conforming to previous studies proving leaders' significant impact on employee well-

being (Gyu Park et al., 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2018; Maximo et al., 2019). In this context, empowering leadership has gained an increasing interest by researchers, as it is argued to positively impact employee well-being outcomes by increasing their motivation through the experience of meaningfulness, engagement, and belongingness (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2016; Hasan & Kashif, 2020; Kim et al., 2018a). By actively fostering employee participation and giving them a feeling of self-confidence (Kim et al., 2018b), empowering leaders facilitate positive employee emotions, and are therefore of particular relevance for enabling employees to flourish in the long-term (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014).

Several determinants play a role in how empowering leadership creates positive employee emotions and affects their level of flourishing (Lin et al., 2016; Skakon et al., 2010). Hasan and Kashif (2020) emphasize the urgent need to study these underlying mechanisms to provide further insights into the relation between leadership and employee well-being. A factor that has received increasing interest of researchers is psychological safety, meaning the perceived interpersonal risk when making decisions or sharing opinions within a team (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2016; Joo et al., 2023). In a psychologically safe environment, employees feel comfortable to participate in discussions and express themselves without fearing embarrassment or penalties (Edmondson, 1999; Hasan & Kashif, 2020). From a broaden-and-build perspective, positive emotions generated from safe interpersonal connections, such as love or contentment, are expected to broaden employees' thought-action repertoires by creating an urge to cooperate more with colleagues and envision future achievement within the team (Fredrickson, 2001).

With psychological safety being a shared mental state among, for example, leaders and employees (Edmondson, 1999), this study aims for analysing how empowering leadership affects the perceived psychological safety. Joo et al. (2023) already found a direct positive relationship between empowering leadership and psychological safety, as empowering leaders advocate active participation and show confidence and trust in their employees. In addition, it seeks to understand how psychological safety functions as an underlying mechanism in explaining the relationship between empowering leadership and employee flourishing. Referring to the broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions emerging from a psychologically safe work environment are expected to help employees building psychological resilience, an important antecedent of psychological well-being and flourishing (Fredrickson, 1998).

Derived from these theoretical argumentations and research gaps, this study's purpose is to provide a deeper understanding of how empowering leadership impacts employee flourishing through the mediation of psychological safety. Therefore, the following research question was formulated:

To what extent does empowering leadership impact employee flourishing, and how is this relationship mediated by psychological safety?

This study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. First, Inceoglu et al. (2018) stressed that, in most studies, employee well-being is equated with job satisfaction, which does however not fully capture the complexity of this multidimensional construct. Investigating flourishing as a multifaceted well-being outcome which comprises hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions, will therefore provide more comprehensive insights into this complex concept.

Second, although empowering leadership is among the most-studied leadership styles in relation to well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018), further mediators need to be examined to uncover underlying principles of “how, why, and when empowering leadership affects individual and organizational consequences” (Kim et al., 2018b, p. 269). A recent study by Peethambaran and Naim (2023) found a positive relationship between empowering leadership and employee flourishing, mediated through employee work passion. However, the authors propose future researchers to take other possible mediators, such as organizational climate, into consideration. By analysing the effects of empowering leadership on flourishing through the shared emotional state of psychological safety, this study contributes to closing this research gap and discovers a new underlying mechanism which, to the knowledge of the researcher, has never been studied in that combination before.

The third theoretical contribution is the utilization of the broaden-and-build theory which, although it provides insightful perspectives by examining distinct positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), has not yet been widely used to explain the impact of empowering leadership on well-being outcomes. Therefore, utilizing this positive psychology perspective will shed new light on the underlying mechanisms of this relationship by connecting empowering leadership and psychological safety to a psychological well-being dimension, namely flourishing. Thereby, this study aims to close a major research gap, since both, empowering leadership and psychological safety, were mainly related to performance outcomes in previous literature (Gyu Park et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018b; Newman et al., 2017). Specifically psychological safety has not been sufficiently connected to psychological well-being, but more to physical well-being (Hasan & Kashif, 2020).

Lastly, this study will also provide practical contributions. Joo et al. (2023) emphasized that organizations and leaders play an active role in shaping employees’ well-being, which is not only crucial for the workers’ employability, but also for the long-term organizational success. With psychological safety resulting from the co-creation of employees and leaders within the

team (Joo et al., 2023), this study's implications are from high relevance for the organizational practice, as they will help leaders to improve the efficiency of empowering leadership and thus enable employees to flourish, both in the organizational and private sphere.

This thesis will be structured as follows. After this chapter emphasized the relevance of the topic and gave an overview over current research gaps this thesis aims to close, a theoretical framework will be developed in the second chapter. Within this chapter, several hypotheses will be derived from existing literature which support the presumed relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. Chapter three will provide a description of the methodology approach which will be utilized in this research. Subsequently, the collected data and results of distinct analyses will be presented in chapter four. Lastly, these results will be discussed in chapter five to derive an answer to the research question, present theoretical and practical implications as well as limitations and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Broaden-and-Build Theory

In this study, the broaden-and-build theory will be utilized as a framework to explain the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. The theory is positioned in the positive psychology literature, which aims to identify, understand, and reinforce aspects that enable humans to flourish and achieve optimal well-being through an overall positive life experience (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to this theoretical perspective, the experience and accumulation of positive emotions, such as contentment, joy, love, or interest, leads to a broadening of individuals' thought-action repertoires, meaning a larger variety of thoughts and actions an individual is capable of. For example, the experience of joy, broadens individuals' thought-action repertoires by increasing their urge to explore, challenge boundaries, and be more creative. The emotion of interest leads people to appreciate their current circumstances and feeling the need to enhance them even more by incorporating new perspectives and versions of the self and the world. Love, which is felt in safe and close relationships, is a positive emotion that makes people want to explore even further, engage more, and appreciate the experiences with their loved ones (Fredrickson, 2001). In consequence, actions like exploring, incorporating new perspectives, or engaging, enrich an individual's physical, intellectual, social, or psychological resources, such as resilience, coping mechanisms or a strong social network. These resources are from a durable nature and equip

individuals for dealing with challenges or negative emotional states, ultimately enabling individuals to flourish (Fredrickson, 1998).

As further indicated by the broaden-and-build theory, an individual's internal experience of positive emotions does not emerge in a vacuum but can also be triggered by external factors, such as the supportive behaviour of other people and resulting safe relationships, in which individuals feel supported and loved (Fredrickson, 1998). From the exposure to such relationships with others, and the resulting accumulation of different positive emotions, individuals build their personal resources. Thus, it is through this process that they develop an enduring psychological resilience, which helps them to flourish in the long-term (Fredrickson, 1998). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) refer to the concept of an upward spiral when individuals experience even more positive emotions over time through the accumulation of these personal resources and the resulting psychological resilience.

The following chapter will relate this theoretical perspective to the organizational context, starting from defining the concept of flourishing, a form of optimal well-being that results from the accumulation of positive experiences and emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), to establishing the relationship with empowering leadership and the underlying mechanism of psychological safety to explain their interconnectedness.

2.2. Flourishing

The broaden-and-build theory examines distinct positive emotions and underlying mechanisms which enable humans to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Flourishing relates to the experience of life going well, specifically characterized by “a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively” (Huppert & So, 2013, p. 838). It comprises hedonic well-being, meaning the subjective perception of happiness and satisfaction, as well as eudaimonic well-being, referring to aspects like personal growth, subjective vitality, and learning (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Warr, 2013). According to the eudaimonic perspective, real happiness is only achieved when living in harmony with the inner true self. Well-being is therefore not considered an end state, but a process of comprehending one's true self and realizing one's full potential (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Flourishing presents a comprehensive measure for individuals' well-being (Peethambaran & Naim, 2023) as it comprises three different forms of well-being, namely emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Keyes, 2005). Emotional well-being relates to the hedonic parts of flourishing, i.e. avowed quality of life, job satisfaction or positive affect by

feeling happy at work. Psychological well-being also comprises aspects like self-esteem, personal growth, autonomy, meaningfulness, or positive relations. In a work context, this is expressed by purpose, perceived autonomy, or high levels of engagement. Lastly, social well-being refers to social acceptance, actualization, coherence, and integration (Keyes, 2005; Rothmann, 2013). Achieving these different dimensions of well-being, flourishing humans experience high levels of gratitude, contentment, pleasure, and resilience (Rautenbach, 2015), all of which are positive emotions that support individuals in building their resources in the long-term (Fredrickson, 1998).

Further building on the role of external context in the broaden-and-build theory and on the empirical evidence of leaders' impact on employee well-being (Gyu Park et al., 2017; Inceoglu et al., 2018), the following chapter will examine empowering leadership and its effect on flourishing considering distinct underlying positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998).

2.3. Empowering Leadership

2.3.1. Defining Empowering Leadership

From a broaden-and-build perspective, Fredrickson (2001) mentions the importance of external stimuli, such as relationships and other people's behaviour, in provoking positive emotions. Thus, one can expect leadership being from particular relevance for the 'gain spiral' of the emotional experiences of employees. A leadership style that has received significant attention recently is empowering leadership, defined as "the process of influencing subordinates through power sharing, motivation support, and development support with the intent to promote their experience of self-reliance, motivation, and capability to work autonomously within the boundaries of overall organizational goals and strategies" (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014, p. 489). As these practices are closely related to leader-support concepts, empowering leadership is classified as a form of positive, constructional leadership (Cheong et al., 2019). Taking a broaden-and-build perspective, it is expected that such leadership helps employees strengthen their personal resources, resulting in long-term resilience and the experience of positive emotions according to Fredrickson and Joiner (2002).

Empowering leadership builds on the conceptualization of psychological empowerment, a positive state of mind in which employees know how to achieve a certain goal and have the autonomy and confidence to do so (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Sharma and Kirkman (2015) pointed out that researchers mainly differentiate two ways of conceptualizing empowerment in leadership, namely structural and psychological empowerment. Structural empowerment

relates to the organizational conditions and practices which allow the delegation of power down the hierarchy (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). In contrast, psychological empowerment describes the degree to which employees feel they pursuit impact, autonomy, meaningfulness, and competence in their work, thereby focusing more on employees' mental states (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). From a broaden-and-build perspective, psychological empowerment is specifically relevant when examining empowering leadership, as it focuses on the mental states of employees and on the leadership practices that help employees with growing their personal resources (Fredrickson, 1998), such as fostering self-determination, trust, support and self-confidence (Kim et al., 2018b). Within this study, these two approaches will be combined by examining how the managerial practice of empowering leadership impacts the flourishing of employees, which is largely affected by the level of perceived empowerment (Peethambaran & Naim, 2023).

2.3.2. Empowering Leadership and Flourishing

As discussed in the previous chapter, empowering leadership precedes psychological empowerment, referring to employees' positive state of mind concerning their ability to achieve their goals. Relating this to the propositions of the broaden-and-build theory, the positive emotions and experiences at work resulting from empowering leadership and the increased levels of psychological empowerment, are expected to positively impact employee well-being (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Gyu Park et al., 2017). More specifically, they enable employees to broaden their mindsets by acquiring new skills and finding new inspiration through the increased levels of autonomy and the support received by their leaders (Fredrickson, 1998).

The motivational part of empowerment is expected to increase employees' intrinsic motivation and interest, as they, thereby, perceive more meaning in their work (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). This intrinsic motivation has been shown to be more efficient in building intellectual resources than extrinsic rewards and is therefore from significant importance for building employees' long-term capabilities and enabling them to flourish (Fredrickson, 1998). Moreover, intrinsic motivation in combination with autonomy and supervisor support is expected to strengthen employees' will to further grow and learn, to be well equipped for the tasks evolving from these higher levels of autonomy and responsibility. Consequently, empowering leaders are proposed to strengthen employees' intellectual resources, such as problem-solving or decision-making skills (Kim & Beehr, 2023). These intellectual resources, in turn, help employees strengthening their psychological well-being, as they make employees believe in their skills and abilities and,

consequently, increase resilience towards future challenges and enable long-term flourishing (Fredrickson, 2004; Kim & Beehr, 2023).

Based on the supportive, collaborative, and motivational nature of empowering leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014), several authors already established positive relationships with different well-being outcomes (Kim & Beehr, 2023), for example with work engagement (Tuckey et al., 2012) or job satisfaction (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). More recently, Kim & Beehr (2023) investigated the relation between empowering leadership and innovative work behaviour and workplace bullying. They found that this relationship is mediated through employees' thriving at work, a concept very similar to this study's definition of flourishing, and established a positive relationship between empowering leadership and thriving. They argued that specific features of empowering leadership, including information sharing, participative decision-making, and motivational or developmental support, help employees build personal resources. These resources include autonomy, learning opportunities, or opportunities for active participation, which help employees to be more energetic in their work and fosters their positive affect (Kim & Beehr, 2023).

Resulting from this argumentation, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Empowering leadership is positively related to employee flourishing.

2.4. The Mediating Effect of Psychological Safety

Psychological safety refers to how people assess the consequences of taking risks in interpersonal relationships, for example in the workplace (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). In an organizational- or team climate which is psychologically safe, employees feel safe enough to speak up, share their honest opinions, propose new ideas or ask questions without fearing any negative consequences (Edmondson, 2019). Therefore, psychologically safe environments are characterized by high levels of interpersonal trust, feelings of care and concern for other team members, as well as recognition of each other's competences (Schaubroeck et al., 2011).

This study proposes that the shared mental state of psychological safety among leaders and employees functions as a mediator between empowering leadership and flourishing. Taking a broaden-and-build perspective, it is argued that empowering leaders broaden employees' thought-action repertoire by encouraging them to actively interact and shape their work. This is expected to increase employees' interest, as it offers them new opportunities for realizing change. Thereby, their will to explore, generate new knowledge and become more involved

with the person who triggered this interest will increase and broaden employees' thought-action repertoires (Fredrickson, 1998). This might support individuals in building social resources by bonding with colleagues, again resulting in a psychologically safer environment through the gain spiral of positive emotions, as these strong relationships might reinforce the interest to explore and cooperate with colleagues even more (Kim & Beehr, 2023; Fredrickson, 2004). Thus, psychological safety is not an independent contextual factor but a shared psychological resource that develops through the increased thought-action-repertoire enabled by empowering leaders and the emotions they arouse on the part of employees (Edmondson, 1999).

Existing literature has already established a positive relationship between several supportive leadership behaviours and psychological safety (Newman et al., 2017). These include, for example, inclusive leadership (Carmeli et al., 2010), or leader trustworthiness (Madjar & Ortiz-Walters, 2009). More specifically, Edmondson and Lei (2014) found that certain leadership behaviours, such as motivating subordinates to actively participate, posing facilitative questions or staying approachable for employees, help establishing a psychologically safe work environment. By empowering employees, leaders actively invite them to participate in decision-making and create an environment in which employees feel safer to openly communicate (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Empowering leaders express faith in employees' ability to solve complex tasks independently and show trust in their subordinates, while inviting them to take risks and find new ways to solve problems (Newman et al., 2017). These aspects are expected to make employees feel more comfortable in speaking up and taking risks, without fearing negative consequences in form of penalties by the leader (Maximo et al., 2019).

Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 2: Empowering leadership is positively related to psychological safety.

Being able to act and express oneself without fearing negative consequences enables employees to be cognitively vigilant (Maximo et al., 2019) and focus solely on their tasks and on solving job-related problems (Zhou & Chen, 2021). Thus, their thought-action repertoires will be broadened (Schein, 1993; Fredrickson, 2004), as these positive emotions and the perceived freedom arising through psychological safety (Zhou & Chen, 2021) might help them to take new and innovative ways of thinking and acting (Fredrickson, 1998). In this context, one can relate back to the emotions of love and joy, which individuals perceive in contexts of safe relationships (Fredrickson, 1998). When transferring that proposition to the work context, one could expect that psychologically safe relationships with colleagues broaden employees'

thought-action repertoires, as they will be more willing and interested in cooperating and exploring with colleagues they get along with well. In work situations where individuals generally feel safe and content to take risks, they show larger degrees of satisfaction and interest in their work (Fredrickson, 1998), leading to higher degrees of engagement and meaningfulness (Maximo et al., 2019). Moreover, the emotion of contentment, which arises in situations where individuals perceive a high degree of safety, broadens thought-action repertoires “by creating the urge to savor current life circumstances and integrate these circumstances into new views of self and of the world” (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 221).

In the long-term, the positive emotions employees experience through psychological safety, are expected to build personal resources which improve their social well-being through feelings of belongingness, harmony, coherence, and acceptance (Rothmann, 2013). Moreover, a general increase of satisfaction as well as higher levels of meaningfulness of work within a psychologically safe environment, are proposed to foster employees’ emotional and psychological well-being. Therefore, the following relationship between psychological safety and flourishing is expected:

Hypothesis 3: Psychological safety is positively related to flourishing.

Summarizing the insights and findings that emerged from the broaden-and-build perspective, empowering leadership enables individuals to flourish and achieve high levels of well-being in the long-term, also possibly through the indirect effect of psychological safety (Fredrickson, 2004). Accordingly, this study proposes psychological safety as a mediator, as it is a shared emotion and largely impacted by leaders’ and employees’ behaviour (Fredrickson, 2001). Consequently, the positive emotions that are triggered by empowering leadership, such as intrinsic motivation, autonomy and meaningfulness (Kim & Beehr, 2023), are expected to lead to higher degrees of psychological safety. Through this increased psychological safety, which strengthens feelings of belongingness and interest in shaping the environment, employees’ experience of social-, emotional-, and psychological well-being will be fostered (Fredrickson, 1998). Thus, the positive emotions experienced through empowering leadership are expected to be reinforced by psychological safety, leading to high levels of flourishing in the long-term. Based on the upward spiral logic of the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2000), an increased psychological safety that is strengthened by empowering leaders motivating employees to participate in decision-making and autonomous work, is expected to make employees feel even more comfortable to do so. These positive emotions and the psychological

safety reinforce each other, so that employees' experience of flourishing is expected to increase even further in the long-term, as the accumulation of positive emotions arising from empowering leadership and psychological safety enables employees to be “more socially integrated, knowledgeable, effective and resilient” (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1373). Derived from these findings, the following hypothesis concerning the mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: *The effect of empowering leadership on flourishing will be positively mediated by psychological safety.*

In other words, a higher perception of empowering leadership relates to a higher experience of psychological safety which, in consequence, leads to higher levels of flourishing.

2.5. Conceptual Model

Based on these four hypotheses that were derived from current literature findings taking a broaden-and-build perspective, a conceptual model has been developed (Figure 1) which illustrates the variables included in this study and their proposed relationships.

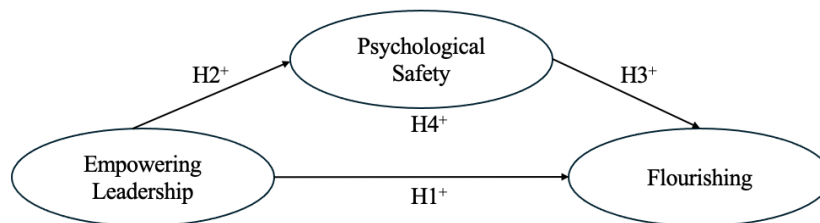


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Procedure

The researchers followed a positivistic approach as they obtained an objective role and did not consider themselves as an active part of the investigated phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, with the hypotheses being derived from already existing findings in literature, the present study is explanatory by nature (Hair et al., 2019) and was structured along a deductive

line of argumentation by relating the results back to existing theory to support the proposed hypotheses. Furthermore, this study utilized quantitative data from a large sample of individuals to verify these a priori hypotheses and derive generalizations for a wider population (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The present study adopted a cross-sectional study design which enabled the researchers to collect a substantial number of responses within the limited timespan of this research project. More specifically, the researchers utilized a survey in which data was collected at a single point in time and neither the researchers nor any other third parties manipulated any of the included variables. This correlational approach aimed to comprehend the “real reality” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109) and capture the natural perceptions of employees and leaders (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Field, 2018) which is appropriate for the purpose of this study, as it allows exploring relationships in a natural context and, thus, increases the results’ practical relevance and generalizability. This presents a contrast to, for example, an experimental approach, in which variables and contexts are often manipulated and sample sizes are smaller. Considering the timely and resource limitations, the correlational approach is therefore more feasible and suitable for this present study (Mitchell, 1985).

The primary data was collected through the collective effort of nine Strategic Human Resources Leadership students over the period of two thesis cycles. It was obtained through an online survey in Qualtrics, which was conducted in a cross-sectional manner and took participants approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey of the current cohort was an adopted version of the survey conducted by the previous thesis circle and mainly consisted of closed questions in form of five- or seven-point Likert scales. Former scales which were not relevant for any of the researchers’ thesis questions were deleted. Before sending out the survey to the personal networks of the researchers and posting the link to the survey on LinkedIn, several pilot tests were performed among persons who were not involved in the survey development and in the research to track the time needed to complete the survey and check for spelling mistakes or lack of clarity. Once these tests were successful, the data collection started on April 22, 2024 and ended on May 7, 2024.

To minimize the risk of self-report bias, which is likely to occur when only using a single source strategy, and to provide more in-depth insights into the complexity of leader-follower relationships (Kenny et al., 2006), the survey was originally designed in a dyadic structure. Thus, two different surveys were created to obtain data from, both, employees and their respective supervisor. The design provides the possibility to control the investigated relationships also from a leadership perspective, thereby providing unique insights and making

the results more reliable by testing whether the perceptions of employees and supervisors are similar. This survey design has not been utilized by many researchers before, although several authors call for more multi-dimensional approaches (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Within this present study, the researcher drew on the supervisor-rated data for empowering leadership obtained by the previous thesis circle to conduct some additional exploratory analyses. However, because of the limited time available for the data collection of the current thesis cohort, only employee responses were collected to facilitate the process of gathering sufficient data.

3.2. Sample

As already stated in the introductory chapter, the importance of employee well-being is not only an issue in the Netherlands, but also elsewhere in Europe (Ståhl, 2023). Therefore, the population of this research comprised all workers aged over 18 from different industries in Europe, but primarily in the Netherlands and Germany. Since both countries are located in Western Europe and share similar cultural backgrounds (Brodbeck et al., 2000), no major differences in the perception of leadership styles were expected. This was also confirmed by the country-comparison tools by cultural scientists Hofstede (Hofstede Insights, 2024) and Trompenaars (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, n.d.), in which Germany and the Netherlands scored similar scores for the different cultural dimensions, thereby indicating a similarity in the perception of leadership. To take part in the survey, participants had to be currently employed and supervised by a leader. The creation of the desired sample was achieved using a non-probability, volunteer sampling technique in which suitable participants were approached by the researchers and asked to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis. Moreover, participants were invited to share the survey with other suitable participants, thereby enabling a snowball sampling method (Mitchell, 1985).

As the questionnaire was already conducted by the previous cohort, 125 dyad-responses were already collected, which were used by this year's cohort to increase the statistical power of this research. In addition, the current cohort was able to collect another 166 employee responses, which makes a total of 291 responses. Whereas the data from the first cohort was already cleaned and complete, the researchers still had to clean the current dataset. Therefore, incomplete responses were deleted, as these respondents did not provide the necessary information about the dependent variables, resulting in a final number of 130 respondents for the current survey, and a total of 255 responses. Thereby, the general requirement of a minimum sample size of 50-100 was met (Field, 2018). The focus on generating only employee responses

enabled the researchers to collect large amounts of data and, thus, make the results even more generalizable.

By merging the data of both datasets, information about the overall sample characteristics were generated (Appendix 1). With 65.1%, the majority of employee participants identified as female, and the average age of respondents was 35,91 years ($SD = 14,63$). Moreover, 66,9% of respondents indicated that their educational status was HBO or higher and the average working hours per week amounted 32,10 hours ($SD = 10,65$). Looking at the industries participants were working in, both surveys used different categories, which is why they had to be considered separately. Overall, most participants were working in the trade-, service-, and healthcare sector. In the first part of the survey, participants were also asked questions about their supervisor and their cooperation. These results showed that the majority of employees' supervisors was male (53,7%) and with 34,9%, most employees have been working together with their supervisor between one and three years and have weekly (39,2 %) or daily (26,3%) contact with their direct supervisor.

3.3. Research Ethics

Researchers are subject to several ethical obligations when conducting studies with human participation. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity comprises the most important standards for researchers to follow, namely “honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence and responsibility” (KNAW et al., 2018, p. 7). Therefore, there are several aspects which were considered throughout the course of this present study.

First, this study aims to achieve high levels of objectivity and transparency by providing detailed descriptions of the research-, sampling-, and analysis processes and access to the relevant primary and secondary data. The secondary data was mainly taken from peer-reviewed journal articles and analysed with caution, to ensure a high degree of reliability of the data, especially in the theoretical framework. Moreover, the aspects of anonymity and voluntary participation are of specific importance when conducting surveys. Participants were therefore asked to give their consent concerning the use of their data within this research. The survey instructions indicated that, at any time, participants could contact the researcher to obtain all relevant information about the research contexts, and the participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study. Furthermore, participants were not obliged to fill out questions they do not feel comfortable with and had the opportunity to not select an answer for any question. Also, the researchers treated their data with utmost care, to ensure that no personal

data can be traced back to the participants. Apart from the necessary data cleaning, the data was not manipulated or changed to ensure high levels of reliability. In addition, the researcher ensured that the obtained data was stored in secure places where only the involved researchers of this study had access. The participants were informed about these data handlings before filling in the survey.

3.4. Measures

The variables included in the conceptual model were measured with validated scales from existing peer-reviewed academic literature, each consisting of several items (Appendix 2). Whereas the measurement scale on empowering leadership was filled out by leaders and followers, the remaining three variables were only assessed from an employee perspective. The original scales were developed in English and translated to Dutch by the previous cohort, using the back-to-back translation method. As this research will focus its sample on the working society in the Netherlands and Germany, they were also translated to German. Therefore, the German researcher of the thesis circle searched for German journal articles which provided validated translations for these scales. If no validated translation was existing, the native-speaking researcher translated the scales into German. Through back-to-back translation, these initial translations were then translated back to English by another independent German native speaker, to see whether the meaning of the original scale was still conveyed (Brislin, 1970).

Empowering leadership. To measure the independent variable of empowering leadership, the Leadership Empowerment Behaviour (LEB) scale by Ahearne et al. (2005) was utilized. This twelve-item scale comprises distinct aspects of empowering leadership, such as fostering participation, showing confidence in employees' performance or strengthening autonomy. The items are measured on a five-points Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). An exemplary item is the following: "My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company" (Ahearne et al., 2005, p. 949). With a Cronbach's α of 0,85, this scale was adequately reliable. As already mentioned, the LEB scale by Ahearne et al. (2005) was also measured from a supervisor perspective (Cronbach's α = 0,80). However, since the current cohort decided not to obtain supervisor data because of feasibility reasons, the sample of supervisor data is rather small with 125 respondents, compared to 255 employee responses. Therefore, this data will only be used in the exploratory analysis part of this research to provide additional information on the regression analysis. To the current knowledge of the researcher, there was no validated German translation for this

scale existing yet. Consequently, this scale was translated to German using the back-to-back translation method.

Psychological safety. To measure psychological safety, the seven-item Team Psychological Safety scale by Edmondson (1999) was utilized. It evaluates an individual's perception of psychological safety on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"), with three of the seven items being reverse scored. As an example, one of the items is "It is safe to take a risk on this team". This scale demonstrated a marginal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,73$). Although Cronbach's α could be increased to 0,77 by deleting one item, the researcher decided to keep the item to fully capture the complex concept of psychological safety. The scale was already translated to German and validated by Fischer and Hüttermann (2020), whose translations have been slightly adapted for this research to ensure high levels of clarity.

Flourishing. To assess the dependent variable of this conceptual model the eight-item Flourishing scale by Diener et al. (2010) (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,85$) was utilized to measure human functioning in different areas of life. These items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree"). An example item is "I am engaged and interested in my daily activities". As part of an interventional study, Esch et al. (2013) provided a validated German translation of this scale.

Control Variables. The survey started with several questions on the participants' demographics. By including these control variables and controlling for possible impacts of these extraneous factors on the study outcomes, the researchers aimed for higher levels of internal validity and generalizability (Field, 2018). The first control variable was age. Older employees with more life and work experience might feel more capable to perform higher levels of autonomy, thereby perceiving empowering leadership more positive than younger employees. In this context, Colbert et al. (2016) found that whereas personal growth is the most important antecedent of flourishing for older workers, younger workers flourish when receiving sufficient emotional support. In contrast, emotional support is negatively related to older workers' flourishing, showing that there are different leadership demands of employees in distinct career stages. Moreover, Kim et al. (2018b) found that women react more positively to empowering leaders and perceive them as more supportive and effective than men. Therefore, this study also controlled for gender among the participants. Another control variable was the educational level of participants. It has been argued that people with a higher education are likely to have higher learning ambitions (Rashkovits & Livne, 2013), which is an indispensable aspect of flourishing (Rothmann, 2013). Lastly, this study controlled for the length of cooperation and the contact

frequency between supervisor and subordinate. A high frequency positively impacts the degree of employees' perceived psychological safety (McPherson et al., 1992). Moreover, a longer cooperation and regular contact enables leaders to perform empowering leadership more often. This could, however, also lead to too high levels of empowerment, which might possibly impact employee well-being negatively (Cheong et al., 2016).

3.5. Data Analysis

To analyse the data and test the hypotheses, the statistical data management and analysis tool SPSS was utilized to carry out a multiple regression -, as well as a mediation analysis. After collecting the data, the researchers prepared and cleaned the data by checking the dataset for missing values, outliers, or other inconsistencies, and creating three reverse-coded items for the psychological safety scale. These items were the following: "If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.", "People on this team sometimes reject others for being different." and "It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.". Moreover, the two data sets of the different cohorts were merged by manually copying the data from the current survey and pasting it into the former dataset. Thus, possible mistakes that could have occurred when merging the surveys automatically through SPSS, were avoided.

The descriptive statistics were used to explore specific characteristics of the sample, such as the distribution of age, gender, or industry. Moreover, based on the descriptive statistics of the variables included in this study, the assumptions of a regression analysis, namely linearity, normality, independence and constant variance of error terms, were tested (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, by conducting an exploratory factor analysis, it was examined whether the utilized scales are consistent in what they measure and to which degree the pre-defined structure of the previously defined scales fits the data (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, to further explore the relationships between all variables included in the conceptual model of this study, a correlation analysis was performed, also considering the possible impact of the control variables.

Subsequently, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses. Since this study aimed for testing the potential mediation effect of psychological safety on the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing, the PROCESS tool within SPSS was applied. Model 4 of this tool allows to investigate this mediation effect by testing the significance of the independent variables' direct effect on the dependent variable (c' , b), the indirect effect through the mediation (ab), and the total effect of the model (c) (Field, 2018). A relationship is considered significant, if the range between the lower level confidence interval (LLCI) and the

upper level confidence interval (ULCI) does not include the value zero (Field, 2018). The statistical model with the corresponding relationships can be seen in Figure 2.

Lastly, in an additional analysis, the regression analysis was run again using the supervisor-rated data which was collected by the first cohort. However, since the sample size of supervisors is rather small in comparison to the total amount of employee responses, the supervisor-rated data was only included in this exploratory part of the research.

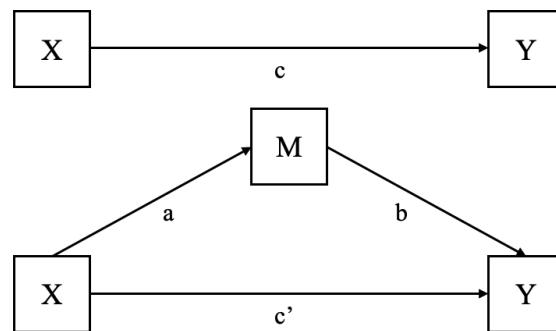


Figure 2: Statistical Model

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Outliers

To provide an overview over the variables utilized in this study, Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the variables' computed mean values and the control variables. In general, all variables were characterized by a relatively high mean and a negative skewness, meaning they were tailing off to the left and most participants indicated values above the mean. The independent variable empowering leadership, which was measured on a five-point Likert scale, had a mean of $M = 3,82$ ($SD = 0,54$). This indicates that, on average, participants rated their supervisor as behaving rather empowering. The dependent variable flourishing was measured on a seven-point Likert scale and had a mean of $M = 5,85$ ($SD = 0,65$), thus revealing that most participating employees ranked their level of flourishing as relatively high. Lastly, the mediating variable psychological safety was measured on a five-point Likert scale and had a mean of $M = 4,08$ ($SD = 0,64$), signifying that, on average, participants perceived high levels of psychological safety within their work environment.

Looking at the descriptive statistics of the control variables provides further insights into their distribution. The mean of gender ($M = 0,36$) and the positive skewness indicate that most participants identified as a woman, which is categorized with the value zero. Although originally participants from three categories, namely woman, man and non-binary, were represented in the survey, the two respondents identifying as non-binary will be deleted in the following calculations for statistical reasons. This will make the interpretation of correlations and PROCESS outputs more explicit.

With a range from 18 to 75 years, the participants were very diverse and scattered in terms of age, which was also indicated by the high standard deviation of 14,63. The positive skewness (0,71) signified that the distribution of age tailed off to the right and that most participants were younger than the mean age. Concerning the education level, the mean of $M = 3,13$ and the positive skewness indicated that the values were more centred towards the left of the mean, which was the same for the length of cooperation ($M = 2,93$) and contact frequency ($M = 3,32$). Another important statistic to investigate are outliers, as a high number of extreme values can significantly impact and distort the analysis (Field, 2018). To identify those outliers, the variables were standardized and z-scores were calculated. Cases with a z-score greater than $|3|$ are considered as outliers and should be examined more carefully to avoid any biases in the analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Empowering leadership and psychological safety each had three cases with a z-score greater than $|3|$ and flourishing four cases (Appendix 3). However, as most of these cases were very close to the threshold value, they were not deleted from the dataset, as they still presented realistic responses from participants who might experience these phenomena more intense than others. Therefore, they were kept in the dataset to ensure a realistic representation of the sample.

Descriptive Statistics

		<i>Independent Variables</i>		<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Control Variables</i>				
		Empowering Leadership	Psychological Safety	Flourishing	Gender	Age	Educational Level	Length of Cooperation	Contact Frequency
N	Valid	255	255	255	255	255	255	255	255
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	3,82	4,08	5,85	0,36	35,91	3,13	2,93	3,32
	Std. Deviation	0,54	0,64	0,65	0,50	14,63	1,22	1,29	1,14
	Skewness	-0,69	-0,86	-1,03	0,80	0,71	0,27	0,16	-0,42
	Std. Error of	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,15
	Kurtosis	1,32	1,35	2,43	-0,90	-0,94	-0,68	-0,91	-0,09
	Std. Error of Kurtosis	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30
	Minimum	1,58	1,29	3,00	0	18	1	1	0
	Maximum	5,00	5,00	7,00	2	75	6	5	5

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

As a next step, an exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess the validity and reliability of the variables. With the aim of identifying latent factors that explain the shared variance of the variables, the principal axis factoring was utilized as an extraction method. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to assess whether the given sample adequately represents the population (Hair et al., 2019). With a KMO value of 0,86, this sample's adequacy was above the threshold value ($> 0,5$). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates whether the null hypothesis stating that the variables are uncorrelated, can be rejected. In the present sample, the null hypothesis was rejected with $p < 0,001$, indicating that there were sufficient correlations existing. Since the researcher already knew how many variables were included in the model, the a priori determination method was used to determine the number of components. These three factors were empowering leadership, psychological safety and flourishing and explained 45,07% of the total variance.

For the rotation of the factors, the direct oblimin method was chosen, as it allows the factors to be correlated, which was expected based on the theoretical argumentations. Looking at the communalities after the factor extraction (Appendix 4), all values exceeded the threshold value of 0,20 (Hair et al., 2019), apart from the item *"No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts."*, which only had a communality of 0,05. This item also only had a small loading on the factor it was supposed to load on (0,22). Despite this discrepancy, this item was not deleted from the analysis to ensure a high similarity to the original scale.

Based on the factor loadings depicted in the pattern matrix in Appendix 4, Factor 1 represents empowering leadership, Factor 2 flourishing and Factor 3 psychological safety. Although most items loaded relatively high on their respective factors, there were some exceptions and cross-loadings existing. Both items *"My manager helps me understand how my work contributes to the overall effectiveness of the company."* and *"My manager makes it more efficient for me to perform my work by keeping the rules simple."* loaded on empowering leadership (Factor 1) and psychological safety (Factor 3), with the difference between those loadings being smaller than 0,20 (Hair et al., 2019). But since they were both loading higher on the factor they belong to, namely empowering leadership, and have been validated by previous literature (Ahearne et al., 2005), they were not deleted.

Two items whose loadings were problematic, were *"My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company."* and *"My manager helps me understand how my work fits into the bigger picture."*. Not only did they show cross-loadings on Factor 1

and 3 with a difference smaller than 0,20, but they also both loaded higher on psychological safety (Factor 3), than on the factor they originally belong to, namely empowering leadership (Factor 1). However, it was decided to accept this discrepancy as these items still showed sufficient loadings on Factor 1 and were already validated by previous authors (Ahearne et al., 2005). In conclusion, it was assumed that the utilized scales sufficiently represented the phenomena they were supposed to measure.

4.3. Correlations Analysis

The correlations displayed in Table 2 provide information about the significance and direction of the correlations between the variables included in this study. In general, the values of the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) range between -1 and 1, with these threshold values indicating a perfect linear correlation between two variables (Field, 2018). It is striking that all variables of this study's model showed significant positive correlation with each other. The highest correlations were identified between psychological safety and empowering leadership ($r = 0,39$, $p < 0,001$) and between flourishing and psychological safety ($r = 0,38$, $p < 0,001$). This means that a higher value of empowering leadership or flourishing leads to a higher psychological safety and vice versa. Positive relationships were also found for the other variables of the model, all with a correlation coefficient of at least $r = 0,29$ and $p < 0,001$.

Looking at the control variables, educational level ($r = 0,12$, $p < 0,05$) and contact frequency ($r = 0,30$, $p < 0,001$) significantly correlated with empowering leadership, meaning that employees perceived higher levels of empowering leadership when they had a higher educational degree and had regular contact with their supervisor. Moreover, age was significantly positively correlating with flourishing ($r = 0,13$, $p < 0,05$) which indicates that with increasing age, participants perceive higher levels of flourishing. Additionally, some correlations between the control variables were identified. First, age was correlated with gender ($r = 0,26$, $p < 0,001$), education level ($r = -0,18$, $p < 0,001$), length of cooperation ($r = 0,16$, $p < 0,05$) and contact frequency ($r = 0,13$, $p < 0,05$). Moreover, gender correlated with the length of cooperation ($r = 0,16$, $p < 0,05$) and contact frequency ($r = 0,13$, $p < 0,05$), meaning that men tend to work longer and more frequently with their supervisors. The correlations data on the supervisor-rated empowering leadership data will be presented and interpreted in chapter 4.3. These overall significant correlations between the variables might have implications for the regression analysis. Therefore, the assumptions of a regression analysis will be carefully tested in the following chapter.

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Empowering Leadership	253	3,82	0,54	(0,85)								
2. Psychological Safety	253	4,08	0,64	0,39**	(0,73)							
3. Flourishing	253	5,85	0,65	0,29**	0,38**	(0,87)						
4. Gender	253	0,36	0,50	-0,05	0,00	-0,08	--					
5. Age	253	35,91	14,63	-0,11	0,06	0,13*	0,26**	--				
6. Educational Level	253	3,13	1,22	0,12*	0,08	0,06	-0,08	-0,18**	--			
7. Length of Cooperation	253	2,93	1,29	0,10	-0,02	-0,01	0,16*	0,44**	-0,08	--		
8. Contact Frequency	253	3,32	1,14	0,30**	0,02	-0,06	0,13*	-0,06	0,01	0,12	--	
9. Supervisor-rated Empowering Leadership	124	4,1	0,39	0,22*	0,15	0,02	-0,02	0,24**	0,23**	0,27**	0,15	(0,80)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Correlations Analysis

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

4.4.1. Assumptions

Before conducting the regression analysis, there are several assumptions which must be tested to evaluate whether the results of the analysis are reliable. The first assumption is normality of the residual distribution, meaning that variables should be normally distributed. This can be assessed by looking at the normal probability plot, as well as at the skewness and kurtosis. To meet this assumption, the normal distribution of error terms should be similar to the diagonal line of normality (Hair et al., 2019). Although minor deviations were observed, the probability plot in Appendix 5.1 was closely following the normal distribution line. Moreover, the skewness values for all variables were below or very close to $|1|$, and therefore lie within the range of a symmetric distribution. The accepted kurtosis range is from -2 to $+2$ (Hair et al., 2019). Apart from flourishing, which had a kurtosis value of $2,45$, this criterion was met by the other two variables. However, since the probability plot showed a relatively normal distribution, the assumption of normality was considered being met.

Next, the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity were tested by examining the scatterplot (Appendix 5.2). The data points in the scatterplot did not show a clear pattern and were randomly scattered, indicating that the variance of residuals was consistent throughout all levels of predictor variables and confirming the assumption of homoscedasticity. Concerning the assumption of linearity, the scatterplot was investigated again to check if the residuals followed a linear pattern. With the data points following a somewhat linear distribution around a central line, this assumption was accepted.

Lastly, the independent variables of the model should not be too highly correlated with each other. Thus, the multi-collinearity was assessed by examining the tolerance levels and VIF-values. When the tolerance level is greater than or equal to $0,25$ and the VIF-value is greater than 1 , there is no multi-collinearity and the assumption is fulfilled (Hair et al., 2019). Looking at the collinearity statistics in Appendix 5.3, this assumption was met (tolerance values = $0,85$; VIF = $1,17$).

4.4.2. Hypotheses Testing

After the assumptions of a multiple regression analysis were confirmed, this section will now test the conceptual model and the respective hypotheses, which were derived from the theoretical framework. To capture the full complexity of the mediation model, Model 4 of the

SPSS extension program PROCESS was utilized to test the significance of all proposed relationships. Based on the conceptualized model, empowering leadership was the independent variable (X), flourishing the dependent variable (Y) and psychological safety the mediating variable (M). In the following, both, the isolated relationships of the variables as well as the indirect mediation effect were assessed. Moreover, the control variables age, gender, educational level, length of cooperation and contact frequency were included as covariates. First, the direct relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing in the absence of the mediator was examined (H1), which corresponds with the total effect (c) of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The results displayed in Table 3 indicated a positive significant effect of empowering leadership on flourishing ($\beta = 0,42$, $p < 0,001$; [LLCI = 0,28; ULCI = 0,57]). The total effect model explained 15,03% of variance in flourishing. Therefore, H1 was supported. Looking at the control variables, only age showed a significant but very low effect on the total effect ($\beta = 0,01$, $p < 0,001$; [LLCI = 0,00; ULCI = 0,02]).

Results Regression Analysis: Total Effect

	Flourishing				
	<i>R-sq</i>	β	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Empowering Leadership	0,15	0,42	0,28	0,57	<0,001
2. Psychological Safety	-	-	-	-	-
3. Gender	-	-0,11	-0,28	0,05	0,19
4. Age	-	0,01	0,00	0,02	<0,001
5. Educational Level	-	0,02	-0,04	0,09	0,48
6. Length of Cooperation	-	-0,06	-0,13	0,00	0,06
7. Contact Frequency	-	-0,07	-0,14	0,00	0,05

Table 3: Total Effect

For testing H2, which relates to the relationship between empowering leadership and psychological safety (a), the results indicated a positive significant relationship ($\beta = 0,51$, $p < 0,001$, [LLCI = 0,37; ULCI = 0,65]), meaning that an increased level of empowering leadership leads to a higher perceived psychological safety on the part of employees (Table 4). This finding supports H2. Looking at the covariates, age had a significant, although very low, effect on psychological safety ($\beta = 0,01$, $p = 0,02$, [LLCI = 0,00; ULCI = 0,01]), indicating that with increasing age, employees' psychological safety increases. In contrast, the other control variables did not show any significant effects.

As a next step, H3 was assessed which proposed the positive effect of psychological safety on flourishing (b). The results in Table 4 indicated a positive significant relationship ($\beta = 0,28$, $p < 0,001$, [LLCI = 0,16; ULCI = 0,41]). Thus, an increased psychological safety leads to higher levels of employee flourishing, which is in line with H3. Looking at the control variables, only age showed a significant, although very low, effect on flourishing ($\beta = 0,01$, $p < 0,001$, [LLCI = 0,00; ULCI = 0,01]), meaning that older employees tend to achieve higher levels of flourishing than younger employees.

Further, the indirect mediation effect of empowering leadership on flourishing through psychological safety (ab) was tested. The inspection of the indirect effect showed that the range of the confidence interval does not include zero [LLCI = 0,07; ULCI = 0,24], and thereby showed that the mediation effect is significant (Table 4). Moreover, the coefficient of the indirect effect ($\beta = 0,14$) indicated a positive relationship, which is in line with the previous calculations and the proposed conceptual framework. Therefore, H4 was supported.

Moreover, further inspections of the results indicated that the direct effect from empowering leadership on flourishing (c') resulted being significant ($\beta = 0,28$, $p < 0,001$, [LLCI = 0,12; ULCI = 0,44]). This further corroborated H1, but also indicated that the direct relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing persists, even accounting for the mediating role of psychological safety. Lastly, looking at the final model, 21,35% of the variance in flourishing was explained through all the variables and relationships involved in this study.

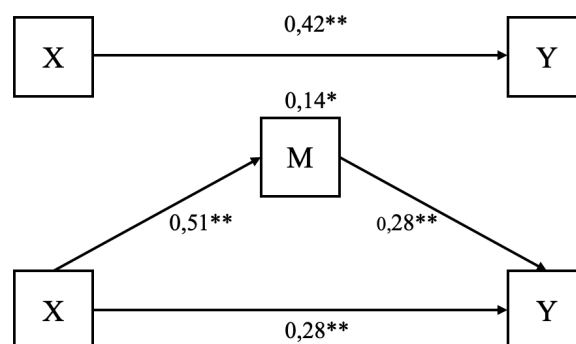


Figure 3: Regression Results in Statistical Model

Results Regression Analysis: Direct and Indirect Effects

	Direct Effects										Indirect Effects		
	Psychological Safety					Flourishing					β	95% bootstrap confidence interval	
	<i>R-sq</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R-sq</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>		<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
1. Empowering Leadership	0,18	0,51	0,37	0,65	<0,001	0,21	0,28	0,12	0,44	<0,001	-	-	-
2. Psychological Safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,28	0,16	0,41	<0,001	0,14	0,07	0,24
3. Gender	-	0,02	-0,13	0,18	0,76	-	-0,12	-0,28	0,04	0,15	-	-	-
4. Age	-	0,01	0,00	0,01	0,02	-	0,01	0,00	0,01	0,00	-	-	-
5. Educational Level	-	0,03	-0,03	0,09	0,38	-	0,01	-0,06	0,08	0,63	-	-	-
6. Length of Cooperation	-	-0,06	-0,12	0,00	0,07	-	-0,05	-0,11	0,02	0,16	-	-	-
7. Contact Frequency	-	-0,05	0,12	0,02	0,14	-	-0,06	-0,12	0,01	0,11	-	-	-

Table 4: Direct and Indirect Effects

4.5. Additional Analyses

The data on empowering leadership was obtained from, both, the employee and the supervisor perspective. However, the supervisory sample was smaller ($N=125$), which is why the current study opted for testing the hypotheses of the conceptual model by using employee-rated data only. Nevertheless, the researcher additionally performed exploratory analyses using the supervisor-rated empowering leadership scale to further explore the investigated relationships. First, the regression analysis was run to re-test the hypothesized model utilizing the supervisor-rated data for empowering leadership. However, the corresponding PROCESS output (Appendix 6) showed that there were no significant relationships identified within this alternative statistical model, apart from the direct effect of psychological safety on flourishing which was already established in the previous analysis (H2). Namely, supervisor-rated empowering leadership did not have an impact, neither directly nor indirectly (via psychological safety), related to employee flourishing.

Moreover, looking at the correlations of the supervisor-rated empowering leadership in Table 2, it showed only to be significantly although weakly correlated with the employee-rated empowering leadership scale ($r = 0,22$, $p < 0,05$), but not with any of the other model variables. This contrasts the significant correlations found between the employee-rated empowering leadership and all other variables and might raise questions about the informative value of this study's supervisor sample or about the general utility in supervisory-rated leadership data due to its potential incongruence with the employee-rated data.

To offer more insight into this discrepancy from the original statistical model, the mean scores of the employee- and the supervisor-rated empowering leadership were contrasted. The difference in mean scores indicates the level of similarity or dissimilarity of employees' and supervisors' perceptions (Kenny et al., 2006), with a higher difference score indicating greater dissimilarity. In this study, the mean scores indicated that with a mean of $M = 4,10$ ($SD = 0,39$), supervisors rated themselves higher in terms of their empowering leadership behaviour than their respective employees rated them ($M = 3,85$, $SD = 0,57$). Moreover, calculating the t-value, the difference between the means of these two independent groups resulted as significant (diff = 0,25, $t = -4,031$ ($df = 246$), $p < 0,001$) (MedCalc Software Ltd., 2024). These divergent perceptions might have possibly impacted the significance of the relationships between the different variables.

Thus, future research should elaborate more on the possible relations with supervisor-rated scales, as this sample is not sufficient for drawing final conclusions.

5. Discussion

5.1. Summary and Interpretation of the Results

The aim of this research was to unveil psychological safety as mediator in the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing by taking a broaden-and-build perspective (Fredrickson, 1998). Accordingly, the central research question was: *To what extent does empowering leadership impact employee flourishing, and how is this relationship mediated by psychological safety?* To develop an evidence-based answer, four hypotheses were proposed, suggesting that empowering leadership positively impacts employee flourishing and is mediated through the shared emotional state of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999).

The results supported the first hypothesis that proposed a positive relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. Such result is aligned with evidence from previous studies, which showed that empowering leadership positively impacts employees' intrinsic motivation through increased empowerment and autonomy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Thereby, employees' capability of thoughts and actions is broadened, enabling them to build personal and intellectual resources. These strengthen employees' long-term resilience and facilitate flourishing, since the arising positive emotions foster the experience of positive emotions also in other life areas based on the logic of the upward spiral (Fredrickson, 1998).

Moreover, the results showed that empowering leadership is positively related to psychological safety in accordance with the second hypothesis. Through their high levels of support, trust and autonomy, empowering leaders increase employees' social resources and make them feel safe to say their opinion or suggest new ideas without fearing negative consequences (Maximo et al., 2019). The isolated positive effect of psychological safety on employee flourishing, which the third hypothesis proposed, was also supported. By experiencing emotions of love and joy, employees are more willing to engage with their environment and cooperate with colleagues in psychologically safe environments, thereby increasing their overall satisfaction and the feeling of belongingness. This fosters their emotional and psychological well-being and enables flourishing in the long-term (Maximo et al., 2019; Rothmann, 2013).

Lastly, the indirect positive effect of empowering leadership on flourishing through psychological safety was supported, aligning with the broaden-and-build theory's logic of the upward spiral of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998). Thus, the effects of the broadened thought-actions repertoires and resources built through empowering leadership are even further increased by the positive emotions caused through psychological safety.

Testing for the possible role of several control variables showed that age and contact frequency had a significant impact on the relationship. This suggests that with more work experience and higher contact frequency, the positive effects of empowering leadership increase the level of flourishing even more, which is in line with findings by McPherson et al. (1992). Other control variables, such as gender or educational level were insignificant, thereby contradicting current literature findings (Kim et al., 2018b; Rashkovits & Livne, 2013). This could, however, also be reasoned in this sample's unrepresentativeness of different gender and education groups.

An additional analysis using the supervisor-rated empowering leadership scale did not support most hypotheses. To explore reasons for this discrepancy, differences in the mean scores of the employee- and supervisor-rated scales were calculated, indicating that leaders rated their leadership style higher than employees did. However, the insufficient supervisor sample does not provide a substantial base for drawing conclusions, raising the need for further research.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

All hypotheses being supported by the main model proves the importance of empowering leadership for flourishing and, therefore, the relevance of this study. By not only focusing on the hedonic part of well-being, such as job satisfaction, but utilizing the holistic measure of flourishing, this study makes an important contribution to enabling optimal well-being in different areas of employees' lives and facilitating happy and productive workers in the long-term. With literature on the effect of empowering leadership on flourishing being scarce, this study enriches the existing knowledge about employee flourishing. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, only a single previous study by Peethambaran and Naim (2023) established a positive relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. However, this study was not empirically grounded but only theoretically. By proving the empirical evidence on the significance of the relationship between those two variables among a large sample of employees, this study provides a solid foundation for further investigations and explanations of this relationship.

Further, the findings contribute to existing literature by identifying psychological safety as an underlying mechanism in the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. Thereby, this study follows the call by several researchers (Hasan & Kashif, 2020; Kim et al., 2018b) to explore further underlying mechanisms which affect the impact of empowering leadership on employee well-being. Taking a broaden-and-build perspective, this study sheds light on distinct underlying positive emotions which are caused by the indirect effect of

psychological safety and impact different areas of employees' lives, such as social relationships, intrinsic motivation or a meaningful job.

Moreover, the results support the validity of the broaden-and-build theory as a perspective to explain underlying mechanisms of the relationship between empowering leadership and well-being outcomes. Although Kim and Beehr (2023) related their argumentations on the positive relationship between empowering leadership and thriving to the broaden-and-build theory, they only used it in a more general way to define thriving. In contrast, the present study builds on broaden-and-build theory in a more detailed and comprehensive way by developing the argumentation about the indirect effect of empowering leadership on flourishing through psychological safety by referring to a variety of underlying positive emotions. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broaden-and-build literature by taking a new, more contextualized, perspective on explaining flourishing and showing that empowering leadership is an appropriate leadership style to be utilized within the positive psychology. Although the results of the current study support the logic of broaden-and-build theory and point towards positive impact of empowering leadership on employee flourishing, other research (e.g., Cheong et al., 2016) emphasized that empowering leadership might also cause negative instead of positive emotions at a certain point, which contradicts the findings of this research and is not assessable from a broaden-and-build perspective. Hence, the results of the current study contribute to resolving this debate and speak in favour of the positive role of empowering leadership.

Apart from the theoretical contributions, there are also several practical recommendations based on the findings of this study. First, supervisors should engage more in empowering leadership behaviour by providing employees with autonomy, including them in decision-making processes, trusting their potential and showing support to increase the individuals' levels of flourishing. Moreover, leaders should create a work environment in which employees feel psychologically safe by fostering open and honest communication, emphasizing the values of trust and respect and cultivating a culture in which making mistakes is not judged but rather an opportunity to learn and develop (Edmondson, 1999). Furthermore, testing for different control variables showed that the contact frequency between supervisors and employees positively relates to the perceived psychological safety. Regular contact enables leaders to generate positive emotions on the part of employees more often, thereby increasing the effects of the upward spiral (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2000). Therefore, leaders should keep regular contact with their employees (McPherson et al., 1992) and give them a constant feeling of being heard, supported and respected. Lastly, whereas most researchers and practitioners focus on preventing negative well-being outcomes, this study showed that focusing on positive employee emotions

is an effective method for increasing well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Therefore, organizations could emphasize how employees can achieve flourishing and focus on positive feedback and successes to foster the experience of positive emotions. Offering guided meditations or gratitude workshops, for example, could support employees in leveraging positive feelings that will help them broadening and building their capabilities and resources.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contributions this study makes to existing literature, there are still some limitations which should be taken up by future researchers. First, although the deductive, survey-based research design allows for a higher degree of comparability with other studies, the researchers assumed that the included variables play a significant role in the participants' experience. These assumptions are, however, highly influenced by the researchers' human resources management background and limit the ability to capture other contextual aspects of experience. Therefore, this mono-methodological research design might limit the ability of this research to fully grasp the multi-dimensionality of the investigated concepts (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Ahearne et al., 2005). Also, the cross-sectional research design might limit the ability to capture the full complexity of the investigated relations over time (Mitchell, 1985). For example, based on the broaden-and-build theory it could be possible that the positive spiral does not end with flourishing, but that increased flourishing relates back to psychological safety, which might then stimulate leaders to show more empowering leadership (Rothmann, 2013). Therefore, future researchers could utilize a longitudinal research design, testing possible reciprocal relationships, and incorporating qualitative data to get more insights into the underlying processes of the established model. Moreover, the generalizability of results might be limited by the non-probability sampling method that was utilized, as the sample does not capture all possible sub-groups of workers in the Netherlands and Germany. Thus, future researchers should cover distinct groups of workers to test if the results differ between them. Furthermore, although the contexts of Germany and the Netherlands are similar and comparable, the generalizability to Southern or Eastern cultures is limited (Brodbeck et al., 2000), raising the need to explore the studied relationships within distinct cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the partly dyadic sample structure could have biased the results by leading to more employees participating who have a positive supervisor relationship. Also, the insignificance of the supervisor-rated regression results raises the need to find possible reasons for these inconsistencies. Since the current cohort did not generate supervisor data, the smaller sample

size could have impacted the data's reliability and validity. The significant difference in the means of employee and supervisor scales is a common problem in the leadership literature (Muterera et al., 2016) and indicates that it might be necessary to utilize a different analysis method for analysing two independent datasets. Assigning different weights to the ratings could make results more informative, since the perceptions of the employees should be more relevant when assessing employee well-being, as it directly impacts their feelings of psychological safety and flourishing (Muterera et al., 2016). Moreover, congruence analysis could be utilized as an alternative analysis method, as it allows investigating the degree to which theoretical propositions are empirically evidenced by utilizing qualitative research methods with a small sample (Blatter & Haverland, 2012).

As part of the data analysis, an exploratory factor analysis was performed to test whether the items of the utilized variables loaded onto a corresponding factor. However, since this research is built on already existing theory and the number of factors included was already specified, a confirmatory factor analysis would have been more appropriate to test the extent to which these a priori assumptions represent the data (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, future researchers could take up on this research by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis which confirms the degree to which this theoretical specification matches reality.

Lastly, the statistical model does not account for high levels of variance explained in flourishing. This indicates that there are other factors impacting flourishing and the relationship between empowering leadership and flourishing. Therefore, future researchers should investigate further underlying mechanisms, which could foster the emergence of positive employee emotions from a broaden-and-build perspective. Thus, additional aspects of empowering leadership strengthening the upward spiral effects could be identified.

5.4. Conclusion

Referring to the initial research question, it is concluded that empowering leadership increases employee flourishing through the positive emotions arising from the higher levels of perceived psychological safety. Taking a broaden-and-build perspective, this relationship is explained through the accumulation of different positive emotions on the part of employees, which are caused by the psychological empowerment and resulting psychological safety. These mutually reinforcing emotions help employees to broaden their momentary thought-action repertoires and build resources, enabling them to sustain resilience and experience high levels of flourishing in the long-term.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Demographic Statistics

Demographic Statistics

	Mean (SD)	
Age (in years)	35,91 (SD = 14,63)	
Working hours (per week)	32,10 (SD = 10,65)	
	N (Total = 255)	%
Gender		
<i>Female</i>	166	65,1%
<i>Male</i>	87	34,1%
<i>Non-binary</i>	2	0,8%
Educational Level		
<i>High School</i>	19	7,5%
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	65	22,5%
<i>Degree at a University of Applied Sciences</i>	86	33,7%
<i>University (Bachelor's Degree)</i>	39	15,3%
<i>University (Master's Degree)</i>	42	16,5%
<i>PhD</i>	4	1,6%
Length of Cooperation		
<i>Less than 6 months</i>	42	16,5%
<i>6 months - 1 year</i>	51	20,0%
<i>1 year - 3 years</i>	89	34,9%
<i>3 years- 5 years</i>	28	11,0%
<i>More than 5 years</i>	45	17,6%
Contact Frequency		
<i>Never</i>	2	0,8%
<i>Monthly</i>	20	7,8%
<i>Once every two weeks</i>	24	9,4%
<i>Weekly</i>	100	39,2%
<i>Daily</i>	67	26,3%
<i>Several times a day</i>	42	16,5%
Supervisor Gender		
<i>Female</i>	112	43,9%
<i>Male</i>	137	53,7%
<i>Other</i>	2	0,8%

Appendix 2: Measurement Scales

Leadership Empowerment Behaviour (LEB) Scale (Ahearne et al., 2005)

1. My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company.

2. My manager helps me understand how my work contributes to the overall effectiveness of the company.
3. My manager helps me understand how my work fits into the bigger picture.
4. My manager makes many decisions together with me.
5. My manager often asks me for advice on strategic decisions.
6. My manager asks for my opinion on decisions that affect me.
7. My manager believes I can handle demanding tasks.
8. My manager believes in my ability to improve even when I make mistakes.
9. My manager expresses confidence in my potential to perform at a high level.
10. My manager allows me to do my job my way.
11. My manager makes it more efficient for me to perform my work by keeping the rules simple.
12. My manager allows me to make important decisions quickly myself if it is in the best interest of the company.

Team Psychological Safety Scale (Edmondson, 1999)

1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.
2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.
4. It is safe to take a risk on this team.
5. It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010)

1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.
6. I am a good person and live a good life.
7. I am optimistic about my future.
8. People respect me.

Appendix 3: Outliers

<i>Zscore (Empowering Leadership)</i>			<i>Zscore (Flourishing)</i>			<i>Zscore (Psychological Safety)</i>		
	N	%		N	%		N	%
-4,13	1	0,4%	-4,40	1	0,4%	-4,40	1	0,4%
-3,36	1	0,4%	-3,82	1	0,4%	-3,06	2	0,8%
-3,05	1	0,4%	-3,05	2	0,8%	-2,83	1	0,4%
-2,59	1	0,4%	-2,85	2	0,8%	-2,61	2	0,8%
-2,44	2	0,8%	-2,66	2	0,8%	-2,38	1	0,4%
-2,13	4	1,6%	-2,28	1	0,4%	-2,16	3	1,2%
-1,98	1	0,4%	-2,08	4	1,6%	-1,93	3	1,2%
-1,83	3	1,2%	-1,70	2	0,8%	-1,71	5	2,0%
-1,67	3	1,2%	-1,50	3	1,2%	-1,48	2	0,8%
-1,52	4	1,6%	-1,31	6	2,4%	-1,26	7	2,8%
-1,36	7	2,8%	-1,12	8	3,2%	-1,04	11	4,3%
-1,21	4	1,6%	-0,93	3	1,2%	-0,81	11	4,3%
-1,06	4	1,6%	-0,73	16	6,3%	-0,59	22	8,7%
-0,90	4	1,6%	-0,54	16	6,3%	-0,36	23	9,1%
-0,75	12	4,7%	-0,35	11	4,3%	-0,14	21	8,3%
-0,60	11	4,3%	-0,15	24	9,5%	0,09	32	12,6%
-0,44	8	3,2%	0,04	23	9,1%	0,31	16	6,3%
-0,29	21	8,3%	0,23	43	17,0%	0,54	17	6,7%
-0,14	17	6,7%	0,42	17	6,7%	0,76	17	6,7%
0,02	21	8,3%	0,62	16	6,3%	0,99	20	7,9%
0,17	22	8,7%	0,81	15	5,9%	1,21	15	5,9%
0,33	14	5,5%	1,00	8	3,2%	1,44	21	8,3%
0,48	18	7,1%	1,20	9	3,6%			
0,63	14	5,5%	1,39	6	2,4%			
0,79	8	3,2%	1,58	3	1,2%			
0,94	11	4,3%	1,77	11	4,3%			
1,09	6	2,4%						
1,25	10	4,0%						
1,40	7	2,8%						
1,55	6	2,4%						
1,71	3	1,2%						
2,17	4	1,6%						

Appendix 4: Factor Loadings

Pattern Matrix^a

	Factor			Communalities
	1	2	3	
My manager believes in my ability to improve even when I make mistakes.	0,70			0,46
My manager makes many decisions together with me.	0,67			0,44
My manager believes I can handle demanding tasks.	0,66	-0,14	-0,13	0,44
My manager asks for my opinion on decisions that affect me.	0,65			0,46
My manager expresses confidence in my potential to perform at a high level.	0,62	-0,13		0,44
My manager often asks me for advice on strategic decisions.	0,54	-0,14	-0,14	0,30
My manager allows me to make important decisions quickly myself if it is in the best interest of the company.	0,44		0,15	0,25
My manager helps me understand how my work contributes to the overall effectiveness of the company.	0,42	0,12	0,39	0,41
My manager allows me to do my job my way.	0,41		0,24	0,31
My manager makes it more efficient for me to perform my work by keeping the rules simple.	0,32		0,29	0,25
I am a good person and live a good life.		-0,78		0,61
I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.		-0,73		0,57
I am optimistic about my future.	0,13	-0,68		0,51
I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.		-0,64	0,14	0,48
My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.		-0,63		0,41
People respect me.		-0,60	0,10	0,43
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	0,10	-0,59		0,42
I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.		-0,57		0,34
People on this team sometimes reject others for being different. (r)	-0,13		0,59	0,35
If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you. (r)			0,58	0,35
It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help. (r)		-0,12	0,56	0,34
It is safe to take a risk on this team.		-0,16	0,53	0,35
Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.			0,53	0,29
Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.	0,10	-0,13	0,47	0,33
My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company.	0,32	0,19	0,46	0,38
My manager helps me understand how my work fits into the bigger picture.	0,40	0,11	0,44	0,44
No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.			0,22	0,05

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

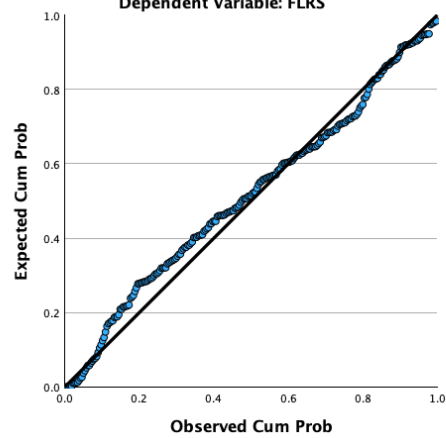
Appendix 5: Testing Assumptions for Regression Analysis

Appendix 5.1: Testing Normality

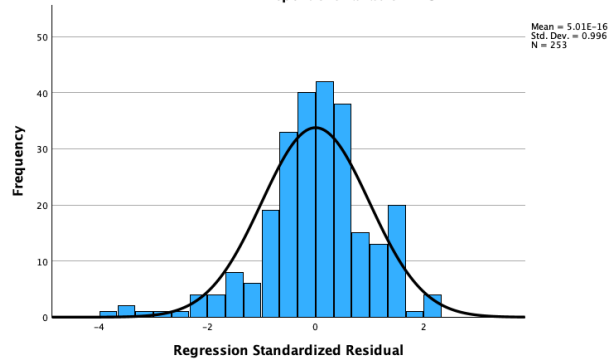
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Empowering Leadership	253	3,82	-0,69	0,15	1,30	0,31
Psychological Safety	253	4,09	-0,87	0,15	1,37	0,31
Flourishing	253	5,85	-1,04	0,15	2,45	0,31
Valid N (listwise)	253					

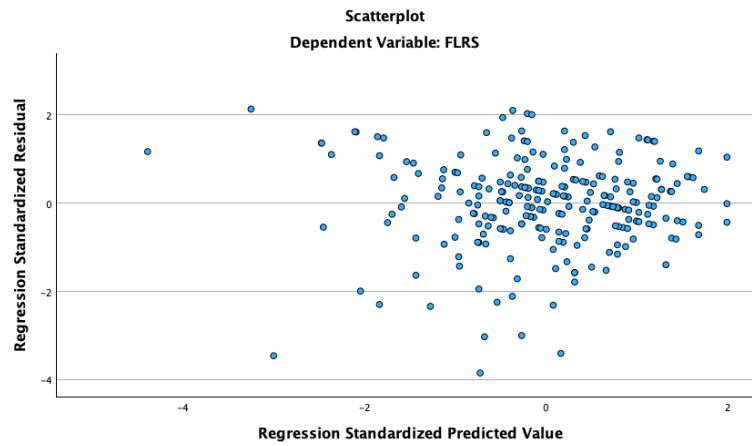
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: FLRS



Histogram
Dependent Variable: FLRS



Appendix 5.2: Testing Linearity and Homoscedasticity



Appendix 5.3: Testing Multi-Collinearity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3,77	0,31		12,33	0,00		
	Empowering Leadership	0,20	0,07	0,17	2,67	0,01	0,85	1,17
	Psychological Safety	0,32	0,06	0,32	5,08	0,00	0,85	1,17

a. Dependent Variable: Flourishing

Appendix 6: Supervisor-Rated Regression Analysis Results

Results Regression Analysis: Total, Direct and Indirect Effects

	Total Effect					Direct Effects										Indirect Effects		
	Flourishing					Psychological Safety					Flourishing					confidence		
	<i>R-sq</i>	β	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R-sq</i>	β	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R-sq</i>	β	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
1. Supervisor-Rated Empowering Leadership	0,05	-0,08	-0,42	0,26	0,65	0,08	0,14	-0,16	0,43	0,35	0,18	-0,14	-0,46	0,18	0,40	-	-	-
2. Psychological Safety	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,42	0,22	0,62	<0,001	0,06	-0,07	0,21
3. Gender	-	-0,11	-0,36	0,15	0,41	-	0,02	-0,20	0,25	0,83	-	-0,12	-0,35	0,12	0,34	-	-	-
4. Age	-	0,01	0,00	0,02	<0,05	-	0,00	-0,01	0,01	0,41	-	0,01	0,00	0,02	0,05	-	-	-
5. Educational Level	-	0,04	-0,06	0,14	0,42	-	0,08	-0,01	0,17	0,07	-	0,01	-0,09	0,10	0,89	-	-	-
6. Length of Cooperation	-	-0,05	-0,15	0,05	0,30	-	-0,04	-0,12	0,05	0,43	-	-0,04	-0,13	0,06	0,43	-	-	-
7. Contact Frequency	-	0,07	-0,05	0,19	0,23	-	0,09	0,01	0,19	0,08	-	0,03	-0,08	0,14	0,56	-	-	-

Appendix 7: Research Integrity Form

Name: Franka Maria Schmidt	Student number: s1122930
RU e-mail address: franka.schmidt@ru.nl	Master specialisation: Strategic Human Resources Leadership

Thesis title: Unlocking Optimal Employee Well-Being: Investigating the Impact of Empowering Leadership on Employee Flourishing and the Mediating Role of Psychological Safety

Brief description of the study: Utilizing quantitative data, this study examines the relationship between empowering leadership and employee flourishing by investigating the mediating role of psychological safety. To collect the data, an anonymous online survey was conducted.

It is my responsibility to follow the university's code of academic integrity and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study. This includes:

- providing original work or proper use of references;
- providing appropriate information to all involved in my study;
- requesting informed consent from participants;
- transparency in the way data is processed and represented;
- ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data;

If there is any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research, I will complete another Research Integrity Form.

Breaches of the code of conduct with respect to academic integrity (as described / referred to in the thesis handbook) should and will be forwarded to the examination board. Acting contrary to the code of conduct can result in declaring the thesis invalid

Student's Signature: Franka Schmidt

Date: 13th June 2024

To be signed by supervisor

I have instructed the student about ethical issues related to their specific study. I hereby declare that I will challenge him / her on ethical aspects through their investigation and to act on any violations that I may encounter.

Supervisor's Signature: 

Date: 13th June 2024