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# An Exploratory Study of Employee Perceptions: Assessing the Efficacy of Devaswom Board Governance in Kerala Temples

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## Abstract

*In this study, Kerala's Devaswom Boards, a system of governance of temples, and their intricacies are examined, and the employee perspective is taken to understand leadership communication, empowerment, and organizational loyalty in temple management. In particular, this study examines how employee empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership communication and organizational loyalty, showing how empowerment is key to a committed workforce. It further investigates the moderating role of workplace hierarchy on the impact of leadership communication on employee empowerment by taking into account the Devaswom Board's layered organizational structure. A total of 300 employees, 100 employees from each of the Cochin, Travancore, and Malabar Devaswom Boards, were recruited to obtain a complete picture of Kerala's temple governance ecosystem. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was then applied to analyse the reams of data to unravel the complex interplay of variables and uncover robust statistical insights. The study findings seek to shed some light for their policymakers and Devaswom Board administrators on the significance of open leadership communication and the effects of this on empowerment and loyalty through the levels of the hierarchy. The study also reveals that improvements in leadership communication significantly boost employee empowerment. Organizational loyalty is positively impacted by shifts in employee empowerment also greatly enhanced by changes in leadership communication. Enhancing employee empowerment is the primary way that effective leadership communication affects organizational loyalty, underscoring the critical role that empowerment plays as a mediator in this interaction. The study also shows that employee empowerment is impacted by workplace hierarchy and how it interacts with leadership communication. This study contributes to the wider debate on the effective governance of religious institutions by focusing on the interplay between leadership practices and organizational dynamics. The strategies on offer are not only actionable and applicable in improving employee satisfaction and retention, but also demonstrate the importance of inclusion in boosting the operational efficiency of temple management in Kerala.*

**Keywords:** Leadership Communication, Employee Empowerment, Organizational Loyalty, Workplace Hierarchy, Devaswom Board Temples, Organizational Behaviour

**JEL Code:** M12, M14, M54, L22, D23

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## Introduction:

Indeed, Kerala's Devaswom Boards, which govern a huge number of temples in the state, find themselves with the unenviable task of preserving culture and simultaneously governing temples competently. Not just as custodians of religious and cultural values but also as important employers, these boards have their own staff composed of priests, administrative staff, and maintenance men. Leadership communication on these boards is of paramount importance because it directly shapes employee gratification, organizational loyalty, and overall effectiveness (Cooper et al., 1997). In hierarchical organizations, such as Devaswom Boards, where empowerment is central to achieving a motivated workforce, communication plays an extremely important role. However, this process is often hindered by hierarchical constraints, which create challenges that require active intervention (Heuss & Datta, 2023). This thesis addresses the relationship between leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty to provide actionable insights for improved governance.

Organizational dynamics in religious institutions research illustrates the unique difficulties resulting from the cultural and hierarchical nature of their structures. In such organizations, employees rarely obtain upward mobility opportunities, which is why the empowerment of employees with effective leadership communication becomes even more vital (Lin et al., 2022). Additionally, workplace hierarchy can also moderate the impact of leadership communication, facilitating or restricting the ability of leadership communication to drive employee

empowerment (Bouma et al., 2023). Prior studies have also found an increase in organizational loyalty among empowered employees, with processional outcomes on the institution increasing (Ahmed et al., 2023). However, little empirical research exists on these dynamics within the framework of temple governance in Kerala. Bridging this gap, this study examines the mediation effect of employee empowerment and the moderating effect of workplace hierarchy in relation to leadership communication and the consequent contribution to improving governance practices pertaining to Devaswom Boards.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to address the problem of inadequate understanding of the manner in which leadership communication affects employee empowerment and organizational loyalty in the case of Devaswom Board temples in Kerala. Previous research has examined leadership communication and employee empowerment in other organizational contexts (Ashkanasy et al., 2021; Jose & Mampilly, 2015)), but this is not the focus of this aspect. Furthermore, although there is a clear understanding of how employee empowerment mediates the connection between leadership communication and organizational loyalty in corporate contexts (Gorde et al., 2022), its application in temple settings has not yet been established. Moreover, the effect of workplace hierarchy has not been adequately explored in these relationships, especially in organizations with a tightly structured hierarchy of workers, such as temples (Cochran & David, 1986). An inquiry into how leadership communication shapes empowerment, organizational loyalty, and its relationship with workplace hierarchy in temple organizations is needed to fill this gap in the literature. Closing these gaps will fill in the missing pieces to improve performance of employee engagement and governance in Devaswom Board temples, where leadership practices are key to achieving operational effectiveness as well as employees' commitments to the temple ((Ennis et al., 2018); (Ahmed et al., 2023).

### **Literature Reviews and Hypotheses Development**

An intimate relational connection has been made between leadership communication and employee empowerment as a key to creating and maintaining a productive organizational environment. Communication is an effective leadership tool; it clarifies, builds trust, and aligns objectives that empower employees to feel they can accomplish more in their roles (Ashkanasy et al., 2021). The role of leadership communication is even more pronounced in Devaswom Board temples, which are not only based on cultural and hierarchical constraints, but the processing of such a set of conditions poses a greater challenge to its communication. According to previous studies, more empowered employees give more to the organization and are more capable of easily contributing to an organization's goals, which can be achieved through transparent and consistent communication by leaders (Kanjakanan et al., 2023). Empowered employees tend to exhibit higher levels of organizational loyalty if empowerment is a trigger for a feeling of belonging to the institution (Jose & Mampilly, 2015). This is essential for both operational efficiency in temple settings and conservation of cultural heritage.

In addition, leadership communication directly impacts organizational loyalty, as employees usually regard open communication as a symbol of trust and respect (Gorde et al., 2022). Moreover, employee empowerment acts as a mediator between leadership communication and organizational loyalty, meaning that communication alone is not effective without the practice of empowerment (Ennis et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the effect of leadership communication on empowerment is not the same at all hierarchical levels. This relationship is moderated by workplace hierarchy, with the effects of different communication practices depending on employees' hierarchical positions (Cochran & David, 1986). This dynamic in Devaswom Board temples necessitates leadership strategies that accommodate hierarchical nuances as well as opening ways to empower in order to effectively improve organizational loyalty.

### **H1: Leadership Communication Positively Influences Employee Empowerment in Devaswom Board Temples.**

It is well known in leadership communication that employee empowerment is fostered on the basis of a foundation of employee empowerment, especially in culturally diversified, but hierarchically structured organizations such as Devaswom Board temples. Leadership communication, for it to be effective, includes clarity, transparency, and constant engagement with each other, which ultimately creates an atmosphere in which empowerment and accountability can thrive (Ashkanasy et al., 2021). Communication from leaders in religious institutions, where formal hierarchies reign supreme, has been shown to be of practical use in closing the distance between organizational objectives and employee autonomy (Kanjakanan et al., 2023). Employees who work with leaders who communicate openly and provide prompt feedback are better able to develop self-efficacy and make decisions on their own (Gorde et al., 2022). With regard to temple management, however, which is characterized by the tradition of not involving employees in decision-making, as happens in the specific temple context studied, leadership communication can breach the existing barriers to communicating inclusion and autonomy (Lin et al., 2022). Communication of vision and clarity of expectations have also been seen to help leaders empower employees by helping them understand their roles and boost their confidence in

taking initiative (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022). In addition, leader communication that is sensitive to culture in contexts such as Devaswom boards also strengthens employees' connections with organizational values while also empowering them (Ennis et al., 2018). Having a positive influence in such situations is extremely important to the organization, especially in traditional organizations where the outcome of their empowerment initiative is dependent largely on the quality and frequency of leadership communication (Cochran & David, 1986).

## **H2: Employee Empowerment Enhances Organizational Loyalty Among Employees In The Temple Setting.**

Employee empowerment is one of the most important determinants of organizational loyalty, especially in culturally important settings, such as temples, where employees struggle with rigid hierarchies and conventional restraints. Initiatives for empowerment, which increase employees' autonomy, competence, and sense of belonging, are shown to immediately affect their commitment to organizational goals (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022). Empowered employees feel like they are part of achieving organizational success and, as a result, are influenced by increasing job satisfaction and emotional attachment (Gorde et al., 2022). Empowerment in religious institutions, such as temples, which fundamentally deal with the cultural values of work, helps employees map their personal and organizational values and, hence, their loyalty (Kanjanakan et al., 2023). Through the practice of empowering workers, such as participative decision making and ensuring that employees have access to the required resources, employers earn the trust of their employees and management by treating them with the respect they deserve, thus increasing loyalty in employees (Ennis et al., 2018). In addition, research indicates that empowered employees are more resilient to challenges at work and demonstrate behaviours that benefit the organization over the long term, building long-term loyalty (Lin et al., 2022). This is especially important in the temple context because job roles are often traditional and less dynamic, which is why empowerment is an essential strategy to raise employee engagement and loyalty (Cochran & David, 1986). On the other hand, employee empowerment leads to the creation of a dedicated and loyal workforce by fostering a sense of ownership and accountability (Ahmed et al., 2023).

## **H3: Leadership Communication Positively Impacts Organizational Loyalty Among Temple Employees.**

Leadership communication is a key organizational driver of loyalty, particularly in temples, which are seen as traditional and culturally saturated environments. The trust, clarity, and alignment between what the organization seeks to achieve and what its employees can realistically be expected to provide is also predicated on effective communication by leaders (Ashkanasy et al., 2021). Leaders need to communicate transparently and consistently, so employees feel they have a sense of belonging and stay committed to the organization (Gorde et al., 2022). Leadership communication, for example, assumes a critical role in temple settings (Kanjanakan et al., 2023), where employees typically work within hierarchically structured environments and have to address employees' concerns and enable alignment of individual efforts towards organizational values. According to research, leadership communication not only helps employees understand their role in a company but also their emotional connection to the firm increases as their loyalty increases (Ennis et al., 2018). Moreover, empathetic communication practices, which are sensitive to the cultural and emotional needs of employees, have been found to enable a good operational environment that promotes sustained loyalty (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022). Effective leadership communication in religious organizations where employees connect to their work is entrenched in tradition, aligned with a shared purpose, improves loyalty, and decreases turnover intentions (Cochran & David, 1986). Moreover, research shows that leaders who spend time in dialogue with attention to constructive feedback foster an atmosphere of mutual learning, which contributes greatly to fostering an atmosphere of shared respect and trust (Ahmed et al., 2023).

## **H4: Employee Empowerment Mediates The Relationship Between Leadership Communication And Organizational Loyalty.**

There is widespread consensus that employee empowerment is a mediator in leadership communication—organizational loyalty connections. Leadership communication practising toward effective leadership communication and result in giving the empowerment of employees by knowing well, supported and enabling the employees to be empowered in their position (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022). Empowered employees are more likely to embed organizational goals into their personal goals, resulting in even stronger loyalty (Gorde et al., 2022). Ashkanasy et al. (2021) found that research indicates that effective leader communication (transparency, feedback and active listening) results in improved employee perceptions of being valued and trusted and directly contribute to their empowerment. Such empowerment is a conduit that translates the positive leadership communication effects into stronger organizational loyalty (Lin et al., 2022); in temple organizations, where the hierarchical structure impedes employee autonomy, leadership communication directing inclusivity, and participatory decision-making helps facilitate employee empowerment (Kanjanakan et al., 2023). Leadership's influence on employees' loyalty towards the organization has been mediated by their engagement and

commitment (Ennis et al., 2018). Studies also indicate that empowering communication practices, such as delegating and recognizing, prevent this chasm from occurring between leadership attempts and employees' emotional ties with the organization (Ahmed et al., 2023). Mediation is highly important in culturally organized institutions, where communication and empowering strategies are effective in changing organizational dynamics and perpetuating employee loyalty (Cochran & David, 1986).

#### **H5: Workplace Hierarchy Moderates the Relationship between Leadership Communication and Employee Empowerment, With the Effect Varying Based On the Level of Hierarchy**

The relationship between leadership communication and employee empowerment is moderated significantly by the workplace hierarchy, depending on the hierarchical level. Communication in the leadership of a hierarchical structure is often a means through which employees feel empowered since it affects information flow, decision-making, and perceived trustworthiness (Ashkanasy et al., 2021). In rigid hierarchies, top-down communication could reduce empowerment, as those lower down may only get access to leadership and the ability to make decisions (Kanjanakan et al., 2023). However, if top leaders engage in inclusive and clear communication, hierarchical challenges can be relieved and even lower-level employees feel empowered (Cochran & David, 1986). On the contrary, a flatter structural organization with least rigid hierarchies is more likely to encourage more direct and participative communication, which leads to a high rate of empowerment across all levels of the organization (Ennis et al., 2018). Research has shown that employees in higher positions in the hierarchy often feel more empowered because they are closer to leadership and have greater access to critical information that makes them appear knowledgeable about ways of creating alternative strategies (Gorde et al., 2022). Hierarchical roles have a moderating effect that is more visible in traditional settings, such as temples, where cultural and structural dynamics work for or against the impact of leadership communication on empowerment (2019). Promoting open-door policies, enabling equitable decision-making, has been found to increase empowerment at all levels of the organization if it directly addresses hierarchical constraints (Ahmed et al., 2023). These findings point to the complex nature of the leadership empowerment relationship and its dependence on issues of workplace hierarchy in organizational settings.

#### **Research Gap And Research Questions**

Despite the abundance of research on individual aspects of leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty, little knowledge exists about the interplay of these concepts in the context of religious and culturally based organizations such as Devaswom Board temples in Kerala. Most research centers on broadly distributed organizational environments (Ashkanasy et al. 2021; (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022)), while lacking attention paid to how leadership communication is related to employee empowerment and organizational loyalty in settings based on temples (Kanjanakan et al., 2023). Although the mediating role of employee empowerment on organizational behaviour is well documented (Gorde et al., 2022), its particular influence within religious institutions has not been studied. Additionally, little attention has been paid to the influence of workplace hierarchy (as a moderating factor in these relationships), especially in culturally hierarchical settings, as found in temples (Cochran & David, 1986). Past research in corporate sectors (Ennis et al., 2018) has stressed the role of leadership communication and empowerment in organizations; however, few studies have been conducted to consider both these variables in the peculiar organizational system of religious institutions. For this reason, this research attempts to fill these gaps by exploring how leadership communication is linked to employee empowerment and organizational loyalty in a temple setting, considering how workplace hierarchy moderates these relationships, and hence suggests ways to enhance governance and employee involvement in Devaswom Board temples.

The research questions attempt to find the interfaces between leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty in the case of Devaswom Board temples. The study starts by examining how leadership communication impacts employee empowerment inasmuch as effective communication is understood to increase employees' perception of autonomy in and participation in decision-making, thereby fostering empowerment (Ashkanasy et al., 2021; (Jose & Mampilly, 2015)). Second, the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational loyalty is explored, and employee empowerment is positively related to organizational loyalty due to a sense of responsibility and being recognized for the job (Gorde et al., 2022). Third, this study seeks to analyse how leadership communication influences organizational loyalty among temple employees, as good leadership communication with employees is powerfully conducive to developing employees' emotional attachment to work organizations (Ennis et al., 2018). The fourth research question investigates whether employee empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership communication and organizational loyalty, which is confirmed by studies that demonstrate that empowerment is a catalyst for converting leadership communication into increased loyalty (Ahmed et al., 2023). Finally, the study discusses the moderating role of workplace hierarchy in the relationship between leadership communication and employee empowerment, in that hierarchy can either limit or amplify the effects

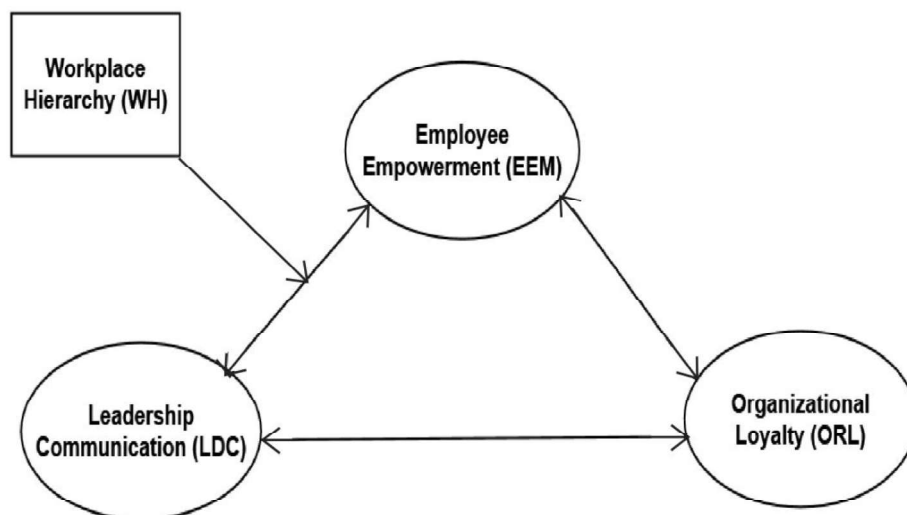
of leadership communication depending on where employees are in that hierarchy (Cochran & David, 1986). Collectively, the questions centered on what leadership practices and organizational structures affected employee outcomes in the temple setting.

### Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual framework to analyse the relationships prevalent between leadership communication, employee empowerment, workplace hierarchy, and organizational loyalty while studying the context of leadership communication in the temples of the Devaswom board under Kerala. It also hypothesizes that leadership communication is the driving force behind employee empowerment, which then influences organizational commitment. This communication creates an empowerment sensation by giving employees a sense of autonomy, responsibility, and acknowledgment of what they can easily do in their roles (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022). The magnitude of the influence between leadership communication and organizational loyalty can be mediated by employee empowerment, which is defined as the degree to which employees feel they have control over their work and decision-making processes (Gorde et al., 2022). Surveys show that empowered employees are more emotionally tied to the organization and less likely to change jobs, which creates loyalty (Ennis et al., 2018).

Moreover, these relationships are moderated by workplace hierarchy, which affects the strength of the relationships among leadership communication, employee empowerment, and their effect on organizational effectiveness. Communication from leadership in settings dominated by hierarchical organizations, such as temples where power and decision making are condensed to upper levels of the hierarchy, is likely to have a greater impact on empowerment at the higher levels of the hierarchy (Kanjakanan et al., 2023). Although employees at lower levels of hierarchy may not have access to leadership and suffer from limited types of empowerments, the positive effects of leadership communication will be reduced (Cochran & David, 1986). The moderating role of workplace hierarchy indicates that organizations with flatter structures or more inclusive leadership communication practices will have higher empowerment across all levels (Ahmed et al., 2023). The conceptual framework then shows how leadership communication influences employee empowerment and organizational loyalty, while the workplace hierarchy moderates these phenomena.

Figure 1: Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples



Source – Author's Own Framework

### Objectives of the Study:

- To examine how employee empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership communication and organizational loyalty in Devaswom Board temples in Kerala.
- To explore how workplace hierarchy moderates the impact of leadership communication on employee empowerment in Devaswom Board temples in Kerala.

### Methodology and Research Design:



This study investigates the linkages between Devaswom Board temples in Kerala leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty. In terms of research design, a descriptive causal approach was adopted, whereby a systematic analysis of the causal relationships among variables was performed using a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

### **Research Design**

To understand how leadership communication affects employee empowerment and organizational loyalty as well as how these relationships are mediated and moderated, this study employs a descriptive-causal study design. The causal nature of the research allows for the examination of how leaders practise in the context of the temple organization may impact employee outcomes (e.g., empowerment and loyalty) as well as understanding how the structure of hierarchy impacts the effectiveness of leader practices. This work allows for the testing of the hypothesized relationships proposed in the study's conceptual framework. The data collection period was from August 2024 through November 2024.

### **Sample and Sampling**

The study focuses on a sample of 300 employees from three major Devaswom Boards in Kerala: These Cochin Devaswom Board, Travancore Devaswom Board, and Malabar Devaswom Board. Each board had three boards and 100 employees. To examine the moderating role of workplace hierarchy, employees were selected from different hierarchical levels in these organizations.

This study uses a stratified random sampling technique, which is best suited to ensure that employees are at different levels within the organization (operational and administrative staff are represented in the sample). Random sampling by stratum splits the population into separate subgroups or strata (i.e., hierarchical levels within each Devaswom Board), and randomly chooses members of the sample from each stratum. The benefit of this method is that it ensures that the sample is representative of the whole population, especially in hierarchical representation, which is one of the most important elements in analysing the moderating role of workplace hierarchy in the leadership communication – employee empowerment relationship.

Furthermore, the stratified sampling technique ensures adequate representation of employees from each board, and the sample is a true reflection of the diversity in the organization. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a final sample size of 300 employees was sufficient, as SEM typically recommends a minimum of approximately 200-300 employees to produce accurate and valid results (Kline, 2015). Through this technique, it was possible to effectively test the hypothesized relationships between leadership communication, employee empowerment, organizational loyalty, and the moderating effect of workplace hierarchy.

### **Tools and Techniques**

The primary data collection tool used in this study was a structured questionnaire. By involving items related to leadership communication, employee empowerment, organizational loyalty, and workplace hierarchy, the questionnaire helps assess the company's efficiency in communication. The scales used to measure leadership communication are based on the leadership communication literature (Ashkanasy et al., 2021), and the scales for employee empowerment are adapted from empowerment studies (Gorde et al., 2022). Loyalty scales are used, which are commonly used in research on organizational behaviour (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022) to measure organizational loyalty. An organization's structure is categorized by its positions in the workplace hierarchy.

Structural equation Modelling (SEM) was used for Data Analysis through the use of AMOS 26 software. SEM also allows us to analyse more complex types of path relationships, such as mediation and moderation effects. The measurement model was validated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The relationships between the latent constructs (leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty) were tested using path analysis.

## Results and Discussions

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Devaswom Employees

Gender	No. of Employees	Percent
Male	181	60.3
Female	119	39.7
Total	300	100.0
Age	No. of Employees	Percent
Below 45	22	7.3
45-50	110	36.7
50-55	97	32.3
Above 55	71	23.7
Total	300	100.0
Marital Status	No. of Employees	Percent
Single	94	31.3
Married	206	68.7
Total	300	100.0
Designation	No. of Employees	Percent
Administrative	180	60.0
Operating	120	40.0
Total	300	100.0
Qualification	No. of Employees	Percent
Below SSLC	24	8.0
SSLC	93	31.0
Higher Secondary	94	31.3
Graduation	59	19.7
Post Graduation	30	10.0
Total	300	100.0

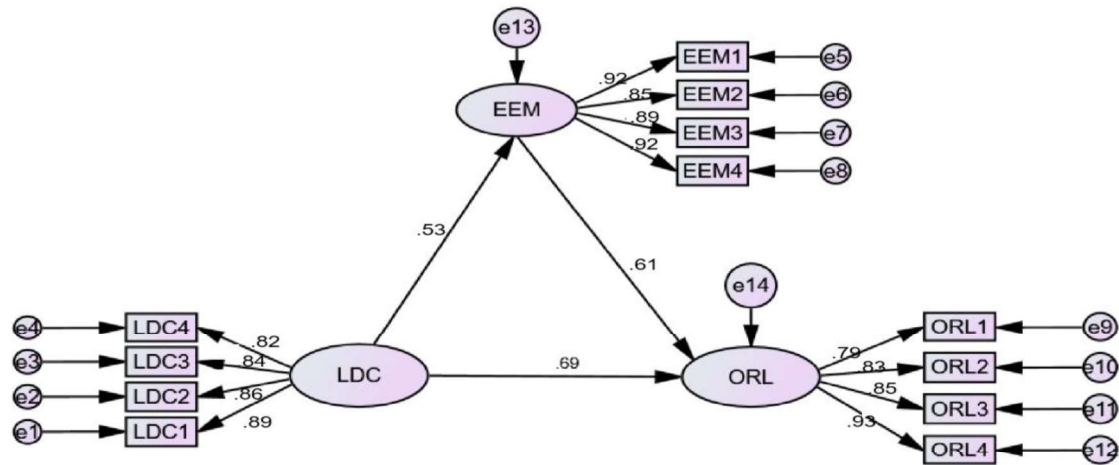
*Source – Author's Own Compilation*

The table 1 provides a demographic overview of the 300 employees surveyed in the study. In terms of gender, 60.3% are male, and 39.7% are female. Regarding age distribution, the majority fall between 45-50 years (36.7%), followed by those aged 50-55 years (32.3%), above 55 years (23.7%), and below 45 years (7.3%). Most employees are married (68.7%), with single employees accounting for 31.3%. In terms of designation, 60% work in administrative roles, while 40% are in operating roles. When examining educational qualifications, 31.3% have completed higher secondary education, followed closely by SSLC holders (31.0%). Graduation and post-graduation levels account for 19.7% and 10%, respectively, while 8% have qualifications below SSLC. This demographic breakdown highlights the workforce's composition in terms of gender, age, marital status, roles, and educational background.

### Model Validity and Reliability

In Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Model validity and reliability are assessed with composite reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. Composite reliability (CR), and values greater than 0.7 are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). This is the Convergent validity, which is checked by AVE and the degree of variance of the ideal items included in the construct; thus, items aggregated to a construct that have correlation of 0.5 or more will be well correlated to share a common variance (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Model reliability and validity can be checked with simultaneous use of both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015) measures and these in conjunction offer a thorough verification of robust results from the robust SEM.

Figure 2: Structured Model of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples



Source – Author's Own Framework

Table 2: Composite Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
LDC	0.915	0.730	0.414	0.921
EEM	0.941	0.800	0.436	0.951
ORL	0.914	0.727	0.533	0.934

Source: Author's own Compilation

An assessment of the composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), mean shared variance (MSV), and MaxR(H) maximum shared variance for the variables of the model's of Leadership Communication (LDC), Employee Empowerment (EEM) and Organizational Loyalty (ORL) are provided in table 2. Internal consistency of the items measuring each construct was sustained (the composite reliability values span the range of 0.914 to 0.941). The values of AVE, which range from 0.727 to 0.800, indicate that indicators can sufficiently explain variances of variables with a little available measurement error. Good convergent validity is such a figure. We observe a large MSV range across these factors, from 0.414 to 0.533, which suggests that a large chunk of the variance of each construct is accounted for by factors that do not load onto any other constructs' common factors. The 0.921 to 0.951 MaxR(H) explain that constructs are discriminant in that the squared correlations are less than the communality between constructs and indicators due to the indicators being significantly related to the constructs rather than vice versa. The findings of the study indicate that the model employed has fulfilled all the necessary conditions for validity and reliability, which provide reasons for assuming that model is formally reflecting constructs.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity of the Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

	LDC	EEM	ORL
LDC	<b>0.854</b>		
EEM	0.589	<b>0.894</b>	
ORL	0.627	0.649	<b>0.852</b>

Source: Author's own Compilation

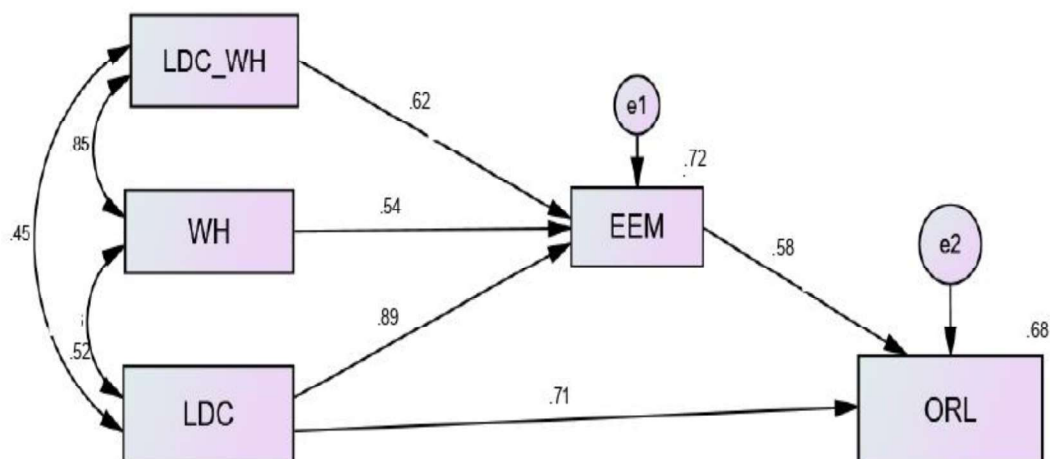
Table 3 reveals the results of the discriminant validity test for LDC, EEM, and ORL, which are the three variables involved in the model. Table's association shows squared correlations between every two variables. At the diagonal lie the scores of the AVE of each construct, and the off-diagonals confirm the squared correlation between constructs. The values of the diagonals are larger in magnitude than those on the cross-diagonals. This shows that each construct shares more statistically with its indicators than do the indicators of the others. It

contributes to the discriminant validity of the model through the division of language constructs into isolated components. Squared correlation numbers are from as low as 0.589 (which translates into 58.9% of shared variance) to 0.649 (which is more than 64.9% of shared variance), confirming that each construct is different internally. In sum, the mentioned results demonstrate that the model's factors have appropriate discriminate validity needed for different measurements.

### Moderated Mediation Model

In this model (Figure 3) it adopts a moderated mediation model to examine the interplay between Leadership Communication (LDC), Employee Empowerment (EEM), organizational loyalty (ORL), and Workplace Hierarchy (WH). Leadership communication is seen as effective communication that empowers employees to increase organizational loyalty. Furthermore, Workplace Hierarchy (WH) serves as the moderating variable following the relationship between leadership communication and employee empowerment, whereby the variable moderating variable (LDC\_WH) is the interaction between the two variables. The model tests the hypothesized relationships with an iteration number 5,000 as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008), using the bootstrapping method. Bootstrapping provides confidence intervals for indirect and moderated effects, with greater robustness to non-normality in the sampling distribution. Integrating moderation, mediation, and bootstrapping, the model presents a nuanced and statistically robust bottom line on how leadership communication and a harmonious job environment impact loyalty and how to use it to increase organizational attachment.

Figure 3: Moderated Mediation of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples



Source – Author's Own Framework

### Model Fit:

For the SEM, model fit examination is highlighted as it would help to determine if a given theoretical framework is capable of explaining the data given. First has to be building up the foundation of how their construct dimensions impact their items. We conduct a "construct validity" on the dimensions of the relationship between Leadership Communication (LDC), Employee Empowerment (EEM), Workplace Hierarchy (WH) and Organizational Loyalty (ORL) as part of Figure 3. The values determine the model's worthiness of the data defined in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Fit Measures related to the Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

Model Fit Indices	Citation	Threshold Limit	Estimated Value	Interpretation
Normed Chi-Square	Kline, R. B. (2015), Schermelleh-Engel, K., Moosbrugger, H., & Müller, H. (2003)	< 3	59.173/28-CMIN/DF = 2.113	Excellent
CFI	Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999), Marsh, H. W., Hau, K. T., & Wen, Z. (2004)	> 0.90	0.928	Acceptable
GFI	Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980), Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019)	>.90	0.911	Good
IFI	Bentler, P. M. (1990), Hooper, D., Coughlan, J., & Mullen, M. R. (2008)	>.90	0.947	Good
NFI	Kline, R. B. (2015).	>.90	0.926	Good
RMSEA	Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993)	< 0.08	0.047	Acceptable
SRMR	Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999)	< 0.06	0.041	Excellent

*Source: Author's own Complitation*

The correct model indices are found in Table 4. In the model fit requirements, all (GFI>0.9, IFI>0.9, NFI>0.9, and CFI>0.9) are all greater than 0.9, the Goodness of Fit to Degrees of Freedom ratio is less than 3, and RMSEA < 0.08. A higher SRMR is shown to reduce the plausibility of the model. An acceptable model is one in which the RMSEA is less than 0.08, and CMIN/DF is less than 3.

Table 5: Direct Effect of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

	Direct Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EEM	<--- LDC	0.942	0.178	5.292	***
ORL	<--- LDC	0.424	0.087	4.874	***
ORL	<--- EEM	0.534	0.064	8.344	***

*Source: Author's own Complitation*

H1: Leadership communication (LDC) positively influences employee empowerment (EEM) in Devaswom Board temples.

The hypothesis suggests that the relationship between the dependent variable EEM and the independent variable LDC is positive and strongly significant, at the 0.05 level of significance. This perfectly corresponds with the findings of the carried-out regression analysis, for which the coefficient was estimated to be 0.942 suggesting a positive relationship such that as LDC rises, EEM is expected to increase. The standard error estimate of 0.178 indicates the sort of fluctuation in the estimated coefficient; although it established the coefficient is statistically significant, there is a confidence interval when it comes to estimation. Looking at the coefficient, a t-statistic of 5.292 is derived by dividing the coefficient by the standard error. Similarly, the computed p-value of 0.000 (\*\*\*) shows that this association is highly significant at most common standards of significance (commonly set at  $p < 0.05$ ), which translates to the evidence strongly rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that changes in LDC have a considerable positive impact on EEM.

H2: Employee empowerment (EEM) enhances organizational loyalty (ORL) among employees in the temple setting.

The hypothesis suggests that the relationship between the dependent variable ORL and the independent variable EEM is positive and strongly significant, at the 0.05 level of significance. This perfectly corresponds with the findings of the carried-out regression analysis, for which the coefficient was estimated to be 0.534 suggesting a positive relationship such that as EEM rises, ORL is expected to increase. The standard error estimate of 0.064 indicates the sort of fluctuation in the estimated coefficient; although it established the coefficient is statistically significant, there is a confidence interval when it comes to estimation. Looking at the coefficient, a t-statistic of 8.344 is derived by dividing the coefficient by the standard error. Similarly, the computed p-value of 0.000 (\*\*\*) shows that this association is highly significant at most common standards of significance (commonly set

at  $p < 0.05$ ), which translates to the evidence strongly rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that changes in EEM have a considerable positive impact on ORL.

H3: Leadership communication (LDC) positively impacts organizational loyalty (ORL) among temple employees.

The hypothesis suggests that the relationship between the dependent variable ORL and the independent variable LDC is positive and strongly significant, at the 0.05 level of significance. This perfectly corresponds with the findings of the carried-out regression analysis, for which the coefficient was estimated to be 0.424 suggesting a positive relationship such that as LDC rises, ORL is expected to increase. The standard error estimate of 0.087 indicates the sort of fluctuation in the estimated coefficient; although it established the coefficient is statistically significant, there is a confidence interval when it comes to estimation. Looking at the coefficient, a t-statistic of 4.874 is derived by dividing the coefficient by the standard error. Similarly, the computed p-value of 0.000 (\*\*\*) shows that this association is highly significant at most common standards of significance (commonly set at  $p < 0.05$ ), which translates to the evidence strongly rejecting the null hypothesis. This finding suggests that changes in LDC have a considerable positive impact on ORL.

### Mediation Effect

To test the mediation effect of Employee Empowerment (EEM) on the relationship between Leadership Communication (LDC) and Organizational Loyalty (ORL), the researchers used the bootstrapping method with an iteration number of 5000 as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008). The given research was done at a 95% confidence level.

H4: Employee empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership communication and organizational loyalty.

Table 6: Mediation Effect of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

Effect	Standardized Estimation	Un Standardized Estimate	Confidence Interval Low/High	P-value
Indirect Effect (LDC $\rightarrow$ EEM $\rightarrow$ ORL)	0.516	0.503	0.035/0.635	0.002

Source: Author's own Complitation

The table 6 provides statistical evidence supporting the hypothesis (H4) that Employee Empowerment (EEM) mediates the relationship between Leadership Communication (LDC) and Organizational Loyalty (ORL). The indirect effect of LDC on ORL through EEM is significant, with a standardized estimation of 0.516 and an unstandardized estimate of 0.503. The confidence interval (0.035 to 0.635) does not include zero, further affirming the mediation effect. Additionally, the p-value of 0.002 indicates that the observed mediation effect is statistically significant. These findings validate the hypothesis by demonstrating that effective leadership communication influences organizational loyalty primarily by enhancing employee empowerment, highlighting the crucial role of empowerment as a mediator in this relationship.

### Probing Role of Workplace Hierarchy (WH) in Moderated Indirect Relationship

This study investigated the role of Workplace Hierarchy (WH) in the moderated (indirect) relationship between Leadership Communication (LDC), Employee Empowerment (EEM), and organizational loyalty (ORL). This analyses how WH affects the strength and direction of the mediating role of EEM in the LDC\_ORL relationship. The study analyses the dynamics involved by examining how leadership communication can impact organizational loyalty through the conditional, that is, when, and contextual, that is, what conditions, the relationship between workplace hierarchy, and employee initiatives to enhance organizational loyalty.

H5: Workplace hierarchy moderates the relationship between leadership communication and employee empowerment, with the effect varying based on the level of hierarchy

Table 7: Direct effect of Moderation Effect of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

Direct Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EME	<---	WH	0.689	0.257	2.681	0.001
EME	<---	LDC_WH	0.523	0.126	4.151	0.004

Source: Author's own Complitation

Table 7 assesses hypothesis (H5) which states that Workplace Hierarchy (WH) moderates' leadership communication (LDC) and employee empowerment (EEM). WH had a significant direct effect on EEM, and the estimate (0.689) was positive, and statistically significant ( $p = 0.001$ ). As with Workplace Hierarchy (WH), the interaction effect of Leadership Communication and Workplace Hierarchy (LDC\_WH) also negatively influences EEM, with an estimate of 0.523 ( $p=0.004$ ), and it also builds up statistical significance. These results indicate that, although WH and its interaction with LDC affect EEM, the effects are sufficiently strong to substantiate the hypothesis.

Table 8: Indirect Effect of Moderation Effect of Employee Empowerment Model for Devaswom Board temples

Effect	Standardized Estimation	Un Standardized Estimate	Confidence Interval Low/High.	P-value
Indirect Effect (LDC_WH $\square$ EEM $\square$ ORL)	0.362	0.279	.017/0.430	0.003

Source: Author's own Complitation

EEM was also used to assess the indirect effect of the interaction between Leadership Communication and Workplace Hierarchy (LDC\_WH) on organizational loyalty (ORL), as shown in Table 8. The standardized estimate of the indirect effect is 0.362, with an unstandardized estimate of 0.279, upper confidence limit (UL) of 0.430, and lower confidence limit (LL) of 0.017. However, with a p-value of 0.003, the effect was statistically significant ( $p = 0.003$ ). The findings indicate that although an indirect effect does exist, this indirect effect is moderated by Workplace Hierarchy (WH), as hypothesized. Thus, we investigated the relationship between Leadership Communication and Employee Empowerment at different levels of hierarchy and found variation in this relationship based on the level of hierarchy, supporting the moderating effect of WH on the indirect relationship.

### Findings and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study provide important insights into leadership communication, staff empowerment, organizational loyalty, and the hierarchy of workplace relationships in Devaswom Board temples in Kerala. First, leadership communication was found to have a positive influence on employee empowerment, in which employee empowerment is driven by clear and transparent communication from leaders to their employees. Empowering employees in this manner reciprocally greatly increases organizational loyalty, since employees who feel empowered are typically more dedicated to the organization's objectives and values. Additionally, the investigation establishes a direct positive leadership communication impact on organizational loyalty, indicating that good communication can improve employee trust and loyalty. Furthermore, employee empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership communication and organizational loyalty, indicating that empowered employees serve as a connecting link that intensifies the connection between leadership and organizational commitment. Additionally, this study shows that the interaction of leadership communication with employee empowerment is moderated by workplace hierarchy such that the effect of leadership communication on empowerment is stronger at lower hierarchical ranks than at higher ranks. This suggests that employees with lower hierarchical positions are more likely to be empowered through leadership communication, while employees with higher hierarchical positions may begin to disengage because of power relationships and organizational norms. The results show that effective leadership communication is key to the empowerment of employees and to fostering job loyalty in the temple settings of Kerala, and furthermore, how workplace hierarchy impacts this relationship.

This research has wider theoretical implications for understanding leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty in hierarchical organizations, such as the Devaswom Board temples in Kerala. This research extends the existing leadership communication theories by illustrating how good communication not only promotes employee empowerment but also boosts organizational loyalty within a religious or culture attachment-based organizational context. This research adds to the Social Exchange Theory by stressing the mediating role of employee empowerment, which shows that empowered employees are more likely to respond with loyalty, thus reinforcing the mutual nature of leader—employee interaction. In addition, the study supports and enriches empowerment theory by showing how leadership communication can be a source of employee empowerment and by addressing the subtle implications of the workplace hierarchy. This demonstrates that leadership communication is significantly influenced by hierarchical levels, in coherence with power distance and organizational structure theories. Empowerment initiatives are likely to be more effective at some levels of the workplace hierarchy than at others; workplace hierarchy moderates the effect of empowerment. The contribution of this research is to provide new theoretical insight into how leadership practices, aligned with the empowerment of employees, can positively influence the performance of an

organization in contexts where organizational practice is culturally distinct and preserved, as is the case in churches where traditional organizational dynamics are more prevalent. In sum, these theoretical contributions provide fruitful directions for future research on leadership communication in similarly hierarchical and culturally rich environments and similar efforts to empower employees.

### **Recommendation to the Policy Makers:**

Given that this research has shown, it is therefore recommended that Policy Makers in Devaswom Boards and similar hierarchical organizations pay attention to putting clear, transparent, and inclusive leadership communication strategies in place that help with empowering employees to contribute ideas and suggestions on decisions made across various levels of the organization. Leadership training programs that develop communication skills and enhance the effectiveness of communication among senior leaders, and promote such skills and effectiveness in articulating organizational goals, values, and expectations to employees, especially those in low hierarchical positions, should be implemented by policymakers. Finally, the fact that empowerment is moderated by workplace hierarchy requires that empowerment initiatives be differentiated across hierarchical levels, with support targeted for lower hierarchical level individuals, who may derive the greatest benefit from leadership communication. Moreover, policymakers should urge the mandating of formal channels through which leaders can provide and receive feedback and speak with members of the workforce so that leaders and employees engage in a reciprocal flow of trust and loyalty. To increase organizational loyalty, empowerment strategies should be combined with organizational policies to ensure that employees feel valued and respected. Furthermore, it is imperative that the organization adopt policies that encourage the creation of equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of the hierarchical position to which they hold stakeholders. Policymakers can make Devaswom Boards' organizational culture stronger, make employees happier, and make everything better for the Devaswom Boards by aligning leadership communication with empowerment initiatives, while taking care to respect the cultural and organizational dynamics of religious institutions.

### **Further Scope of Study**

The scope for further research based on this study is extensive, particularly in exploring the dynamics of leadership communication, employee empowerment, and organizational loyalty in other culturally significant and hierarchical institutions beyond Devaswom Boards. Future studies should investigate the influence of cultural diversity and regional variations on the effectiveness of leadership communication strategies in empowering employees. Additionally, longitudinal studies should be conducted to understand how changes in leadership styles and communication patterns over time impact employee empowerment and organizational loyalty. Further exploration of the interplay between workplace hierarchy and empowerment in different organizational contexts, such as corporate, non-profit, and public sector organisations, could provide comparative insights. The role of technology in enhancing leadership communication and employee engagement, particularly through digital communication tools, presents an avenue for further research. Expanding this study to include variables such as job satisfaction, employee retention, and organizational performance could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of leadership practices. Moreover, examining the mediating and moderating effects of other organizational factors, such as trust, organizational justice, and cultural values, would deepen the theoretical and practical understanding. Finally, cross-country or cross-cultural comparisons of similar institutions could shed light on how sociocultural factors shape the relationships explored in this study, offering globally relevant insights into leadership and organizational behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, this research confirms the importance of leadership communication for the empowerment of employees and organizational loyalty in Kerala's Devaswom Board temples. The results show that leadership communication significantly affects employee empowerment, and once employees are empowered, organizational loyalty escalates, and they are more committed to the organization. The results show that employee empowerment plays a crucial mediating role in linking leadership communication to organizational loyalty, thereby deepening our understanding of how communication practices influence employee attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, we show that leadership communication regarding emotions has a moderating effect on the workplace hierarchy, demonstrating that the degree to which leadership communication leads to employee empowerment varies across different levels of hierarchy, calling for context-sensitive leadership strategies. Based on these findings, these results have significant implications for both organizational theory and real-world (physically) hierarchical and culturally significant organizations (e.g., temples) where clear communication, empowering methods, and understanding of hierarchy dynamics are needed to increase organizational loyalty. This study adds to the growing literature on leadership communication and employee behaviour in non-traditional organizational contexts and provides avenues for further investigation of the variables that drive employee outcomes in these unique settings.



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