

Call for Papers

9th Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Leadership Symposium

Theme: 'Leadership, Human Flourishing and Wellbeing'

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Conveners:

Maria Kakarika, Professor of Organizational Behavior and Leadership, Durham University Business School, UK (maria.kakarika@durham.ac.uk)

Kimberly Jaussi, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Leadership, School of Management at Binghamton University, USA (kjaussi@binghamton.edu)

Convener & Symposium Organizer:

Olga Epitropaki, Professor of Management, Durham University Business School, UK (ipl.symposium@gmail.com)

Keynote Speakers:

[Paul Frijters](#), Professor in Wellbeing Economics, London School of Economics

[Morten L. Kringsbach](#), Professor of Neuroscience, University of Oxford and Aarhus University;
Founding Director, Centre for Eudaimonia and Human Flourishing, University of Oxford

[Gretchen Spreitzer](#), Keith E. and Valerie J. Alessi Professor of Business Administration, Stephen
M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

About the Theme: Leadership, Human Flourishing and Wellbeing

“Flourishing is a kind of activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.”

— Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

Human flourishing and wellbeing are essential foundations for productivity, resilience and engagement (Bellet et al., 2024; Lomas et al., 2025; van Praag et al., 2003). The pursuit of understanding happiness has been a long philosophical journey, and recent advances in neuroscience have offered significant insights into the brain mechanisms underlying eudaimonia and the experience of meaning (Kringelbach & Berridge, 2009). The role of leaders in supporting individuals to reach their full potential and cultivating a healthy and thriving workplace is undeniably important. Not surprisingly, there is consistent evidence linking leadership with employee wellbeing (Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Kuopalla et al., 2008; Martin, et al., 2023), spanning hedonic, eudemonic, and physical dimensions (Inceoglou et al, 2018; Sonnentag, Tay & Shoshan, 2022). For example, research shows that abusive leadership leads to employee health problems (Linag et al., 2017). Meta-analyses also show that leadership influences follower mental health and, in turn, job performance (Montano, Reeske, Franke & Huffmeier, 2017).

Whereas leaders are expected to support others’ wellbeing, they often neglect their own. Leaders’ own health and wellbeing have therefore also been in focus (Kaluza et al., 2020; Li et al., 2018; Skakon, et al., 2010; Weiss et al, 2018). For example, CEO mental health has been found to predict organizational outcomes such as firm performance (Kaloharju, Knupfer & Tag, 2023). Scholars have also talked about the well-being cost of formal leadership (Oc & Chintakananda, 2025).

While employee physical activity has been examined in the literature (see Calderwood et al, 2021 for a review), with documented beneficial effects on important outcomes such as reduced burnout (Toker & Biron, 2012) and depletion (Watkins & Umphress, 2020) and higher self-efficacy and work focus (Brummelhuis et al, 2022), research on the effects of physical activity with leader samples is largely missing.

Employee thriving has been defined as “the joint experience of vitality and learning” (Spreitzer et al., 2005; p. 538). Both are important for one's self-development and personal growth. Thriving has been found to relate to various employee outcomes, including health and performance-related ones (Kleine, Rudolph, & Zacher, 2019). Despite these insights, the broader connections between leadership and holistic health, including sleep, exercise, and vitality, remain underexamined.

This call for papers aims to deepen our understanding of the intersections among leadership, human flourishing, and well-being, particularly in light of emerging research and underrepresented perspectives. In addition to broader research on leadership, human flourishing and wellbeing, we are particularly interested in under-researched topics in this domain. For example, we encourage contributions that explore the taboo and embodied lived experiences of women navigating the “3 Ms” (menstruation, maternity, and menopause) and other embodied leadership challenges (Grandey et al., 2018). We are also interested in research in leader and employee mental health, another underexamined area of research due to the stigmatization of mental health challenges (Fernández-Jiménez & Acquadro Maran, 2024; Kelloway, Dimoff & Gilbert, 2023). Research in transformative non-work experiences (such as mass gatherings, music festivals, spiritual retreats, pilgrimages), and how they influence leader and employee wellbeing, as well as other work outcomes (Neuhofer, et al., 2021; Yudkin et al., 2022) is also welcome.

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological papers that address the following list of indicative, but not exhaustive, topic areas:

- How do specific leader characteristics and behaviors create human flourishing contexts for followers and customers?
- What are the key drivers of both leader and employee wellbeing? How do organizational contexts shape human flourishing outcomes?
- How does leader mental and physical health influence employee and organizational outcomes?
- How does physical activity, sports engagement, or body consciousness influence leaders' and followers' work experiences?
- How do embodied experiences such as the 3M and caregiving roles influence women's leadership and employee outcomes?
- How do transformative non-work experiences shape leadership and human flourishing experiences at work?
- How does the increasing AI drive towards increased efficiency and productivity impact human flourishing and wellbeing at work? How can AI contribute to human flourishing?
- What types of research designs and interdisciplinary methods can help us better understand leadership and human flourishing impact?
- How can we integrate mental health, vitality and physiological measures in leadership research and development?

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Submissions

The 9th IPLS will take place **6-9 May 2026**, on the island of **Crete, Greece**. Interested participants must submit an abstract by January 10th, 2026. The abstract should be of no more than 1,000 words (including references). Authors will be notified of acceptance or otherwise by February 10th, 2026. The conference venue is the Minoa Palace Resort in Chania, Crete (<https://www.minoapalace.gr>). Further details on the conference can be found on the IPLS website (www.leadership-symposium.com).