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MBAD 821 - LEADERSHIP

Individual Assignment

Leadership Traits and General Wealth

Solemn Declaration – Individual Assignment

Solemn declaration by student

Module: ____ Leadership ____

Module Code: ____ MBAD821 ____

Assignment: ____ Individual Assignment 1 ____

Assignment due date: ____ 31/08/2020 ____

I, ____ Reinier Delport ____ declare herewith that the assignment which I herewith submit to the North-West University as partial completion of the requirements set for the MBA degree, is my own work.



Signature of student _____ Student Number ____ 20556845 ____

Signed at _____ Centurion _____ this day ____ 31/08/2020 ____

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Introduction

Leadership in organizations play 'n pivotal role not only in the psychological health and well-being of work environments, but contributes greatly to the progress and success of employees (Agote, et al., 2016). Although various leadership theories exist, more research is required to understand the psychological processes occurring within these theories and their effect on both leader and subordinate within a dynamic changing context. Systematic change and transformation within organizations forces leadership to adapt simultaneously. Borrowing from positive psychology viewpoints it became necessary to further research in the domain of positive leadership and associating aspects that promote psychological health and growth to advance organizational change and success. Positive psychology encourages moving from what is wrong and weakness to what is right and strengths (Luthens & Bruce, 2003). Pertaining to leadership a positive psychology framework correlates with authentic leadership developmental theory and positive leadership frameworks (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and could provide guidance on how to exert this knowledge to cultivate psychologically healthy work environments.

1. Research Problem

It is unanimously known and expected that leadership and management styles contribute greatly towards the professional and psychological health and well-being of employees (Agote, et al., 2016, Alkahtani, 2016). Research indicates a vastly growing interest in positive leadership characteristics and styles and a possible effect on employees' psychological health, performance and organizational growth (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Organizational strength and change prove to be a necessity in business growth and sustainability (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Managerial contributions and leadership attributes need to be fully understood within this context to broaden our knowledge and create opportunities to influence policies and structure pertaining to work environments and success thereof. The aim of this study is to gain insight into both positive leadership and toxic leadership and their recurring influence and effect on the psychological health and well-being of employees and work environments. Drawing on the experience of employees, leadership characteristics such as behaviour, skills, attitude, abilities and their recurrent influence both positively and negatively, will be discussed. Although established leadership styles will be mentioned, it is not the focus of this study.

2. Literature Review

Well established businesses consist of committed, reliable employees who are motivated to achieve set goals outlined by their managers within organizations. Those who realize employees construct the core of any business understand the value of cultivating a committed and cooperative work environment (Parvin & Kabir, 2011). Research indicates healthy work environments contribute to employees' performance and therefore drives business success (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Achieving such an environment would be dependent upon leadership and employee relations. For this reason, it is crucial to investigate and understand what leadership culture would cultivate a committed, cooperative and psychological healthy work environment leading to employee well-being within an organization. Past research demonstrated a direct link between employee well-being and leadership styles (Popli & Rizvi, 2016) (Alkahtani, 2016). It would not merely be adequate to categorize different leadership styles, because the choice of a chosen leadership style would be depended on managerial nature, personalities and emotional intelligence of the leader (Alkahtani, 2016).

2.1 Psychological Characteristics of Healthy Work Environments

Research indicates that employees are ultimately the ones who judge their job quality and value (Lowe, et al., 2003). For this reason, employees' experience contributes greatly to how they perceive and experience their environment. Grawitch, Grottschalk and Munz (2006) described five domains that emerge in a psychologically healthy work environment (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016, pp. 5-6):

Employee Involvement	Autonomy, decision-making, self-management.
Work-life Balance	Flexibility, life-management resources.
Employee Growth and Development	Improve competencies and career development.
Employee Recognition	Appreciation for employee contribution, rewards.
Health and Safety	Prevention, risk assessment and healthy lifestyle.

The abovementioned domains encompass a holistic view of the psychological health of an employee. Leadership indivertibly influences all of these domains because of their cross-relational involvement.

2.2 Leadership

Leadership are defined as a process which mobilizes subordinates to achieve set goals within an organization (Alkahtani, 2016). A good leader will determine the appropriate leadership style to uphold within an organization to achieve set goals.

2.2.1 Different Leadership Theories

Transformational leadership pertains to lead with visionary, goal-setting and executing behaviour to inspire change. Charismatic leadership share similarities with transformational leadership, but are known for leading with persuasiveness and charm. Their driving force are their convictions and they lead for their cause. Leaders' spirituality greatly influences their vision, beliefs and goals. Subordinates are greatly influenced by their leader's goals and vision. Spiritual leadership therefore occupies ground in leadership models and includes leaders' faith, hope and altruistic love towards others. Servant leadership's main goal is to lead by serving others and not to attain a higher position of power. *Same?*

2.2.2 Authentic Leadership, Positive Leadership and Work Environment

Authentic leadership are referred to as a "root construct", meaning "it forms the basis for what then constitutes other forms of positive leadership" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 328). Characterized by a deeper focus of leader and subordinate self-awareness, self-regulation, role modelling, high moral compass, firm beliefs and convictions authentic leadership inspires and motivates subordinates to join in the process of reaching goals through owning their contributive role (Grawitch & Ballard, 2016). Authentic leaders display in-depth knowledge of themselves and others, is sensitively aware of others' emotions and feelings. This puts them in great advantage to mentor their subordinates. Authentic leadership share characteristics with other leadership theories, but is unique in its constitution.

2.2.3 Toxic Leadership, Effect on Employees and Work Environment

Toxic or poor leadership are unfavorable and pose a risk to the success of organizations because it alters systematic health, growth and development of both employer and employee. The effects of toxic leadership do not only influence employees in the working environment, but it usually follows an employee home and

contributes to irregular work-life balance (Career Contessa, 2020). Toxic leadership then does not only become an organizational problem, but a societal problem.

3. Research Approach

A qualitative research design will be followed in this study in order to gain a deeper understanding of leadership attributes influencing employee experiences.

3.1 Sample Characteristics

Based on my access to obtain participants through random sampling consisting of participants across different organizations, this study will consist of a single sampling design (Creswell, 2009). My population group are sampled from diverse sectors and include both male and female participants. Participants had to be currently employed, between the ages of 25 and 70, hold a matric qualification and have two years employee experience.

3.2 Data Collection

Following a qualitative research design, an open-ended questionnaire was compiled in order for participants to share their own experience in their own words with no predetermined set of answers. This method of data collection allows the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive view of the issues being studied (Allen, 2017). Open-ended questions provide more diverse data since participants are given the opportunity to share from their own experience, delivering balanced data, without being influenced in any specific direction (Allen, 2017). The questionnaires compiled on GoogleDocs were distributed via email to the participants. This particular process ensures both participants and data are kept anonymously safe, with only the researcher having access to it. This is particularly important because of the nature of the data being sensitive and personal.

3.3 Data Analysis

Examining diverse data from participants' personal experience a method of thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to look for patterns and themes emerging from the data without being influenced by limitations of responses (SAGE Publications Ltd., 2019). Emerging themes from the data were categorized into four categories pertaining to leadership: behaviour, skills, attitudes and abilities. The researcher sought patterns and recurring themes to subcategorize.

3.4 Results

For the purpose of this study the term positive leadership refers to leadership that positively influences employees and constructively contribute to a psychological healthy work environment.

3.4.1 Positive Leadership Experiences

Positive Leadership			
<i>Leader Behaviour</i>	<i>Leader Skills</i>	<i>Leader Attitudes</i>	<i>Leader Abilities</i>
Cooperative	Organizational skills	Display trust	Motivation
Trustworthy	Constructive feedback	Value input of others	Encouraging
Caring	Constructive delegation skills	Empathic	Equipping others
Supportive	Project Management	Enthusiastic	Sharing knowledge
Approachable	Guidance	Trusting	Teacher
Inclusive of decision-making	Research	Teachable	Problem solve
Willing	Problem solving	Helpful	Inspire
Supreme work ethic	Creativity	Visionary	Target opportunities
Appreciative	Encourages	Motivating	Mobilize potential
Cultivating belonging	Empower	Eager	Self-assess
Inquisitive	Positive intervention	Inclusion	Change course
Calm and controlled	Effective communication	Optimism	
Enabling	Goal setting	Admit mistakes	

Emerging patterns correlated strongly with transformational leadership attributes where participants indicated vision articulation, role modelling, goal acceptance, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation contributed to positive experiences. Charismatic leadership attributes such as enthusiasm and optimism motivated most participants. Authentic leadership attributes such as self-awareness, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, sensitivity, strong moral convictions, praise and expressing gratitude inspired participants to be better and created opportunities for mentoring.

3.4.2 Negative Leadership Experiences

For the purpose of this study the term toxic leadership refers to leadership that negatively influences employees and create a deconstructive work environment in which employees will experience harmful effects to their wellbeing.

Toxic Leadership			
Leader Behaviour	Leader Skills	Leader Attitudes	Leader Abilities
Dishonest	Manipulation	Not following	Stifling
Reckless	Poor listening skills	through	No leadership
Hard/ Inhumane	Impossible	Lack of direction	Unsupportive
Not transparent	expectations	Too realistic	No knowledge of
Unprofessional	Ignorant	Arrogant	situation/employee
Egotistic	Uneducated	Not invested	Inability to see
Set in their ways	Poor communication	Unadaptable	potential
Authoritarian	Excessive Admin	Unapproachable	Isolate
Insecure	Criticize	Too high	Subtle threats to
Suspicious	Comparison	expectations	exert control
Disrespectful		Suspicious	No guidance
		Degrading	Communicate
		Uninventive	unworthiness

Emerging patterns which constitute participants' negative experiences are opposite of what will constitute healthy relationships, professionalism, respect and cooperation. A pattern of selfishness, carelessness and egocentrism was observed.

Interestingly, one of the participants mentioned when they had experienced a time in their career when they felt depressed and unhappy, it was the reaction of their client who enabled them to feel this way, not their manager. Their manager displayed behaviour which led the participant to feel more in control of the situation by supporting, acknowledging, emphasizing and reassuring. This possibly indicates that a leader has the potential to influence a negative experience of an employee to exert a positive outcome.

4. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

Leadership should not necessarily be viewed as attributes within a person, but rather an evolving process in which certain characteristics are present and accumulate to influence others and the environment. This study indicated that self-awareness and self-regulation are important attributes of effective leadership, because leaders need to know who they are, before they become concerned about who their employees are. Courses to equip and expand different personalities part of the organization. Knowledge of employees' temperaments and personalities creates the opportunity to employ them where they will best perform, learn, grow and thrive. Willingness to grow as a leader, to not only become goal-orientated but people-centered and process-orientated. Regular feedback sessions to express appreciation of input. Open communication to invite innovation and to acknowledge contribution.

5. Limitations

This study indicates the value of drawing from the experience of employees, but a more in-depth study, with a bigger population group and a second stage sampling design would permit validation of findings. It would be of value to pertain both data from employees and leaders/managers to cross-evaluate and draw from both sets of data. Each organization and their leaders need to adapt their programs and policies unique to their own organizational needs. Responsibility of psychologically healthy work environments cannot be solely managerial responsibility and employees' part in overall organizational culture cannot be underestimated. Further research is needed to establish the relational connections between both employee and managerial influence and roles to contribute to a psychologically healthy work environment.

6. Conclusion

This study indicated leaders has the potential to greatly influence and determine employees' experiences, career development and work environment. It certainly is a big responsibility, but if implemented wisely, has the potential to excel both employee and organization. It is evident that we are not done researching these topics and there are more layers to leadership that we will continue to explore the more our knowledge evolves.

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Appendix – Questionnaire and Responses

Delpport_Marks

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Section	Maximum	Mark
Introduction	5	4
Literature review	10	8
Research paradigm, approach and design	10	4
Sample characteristics	10	8
Data gathering method	10	8
Data analysis	10	8
Results	10	9
Managerial implications	10	6
Limitations	10	8
Recommendations	10	6
References	5	3
Total	100	72