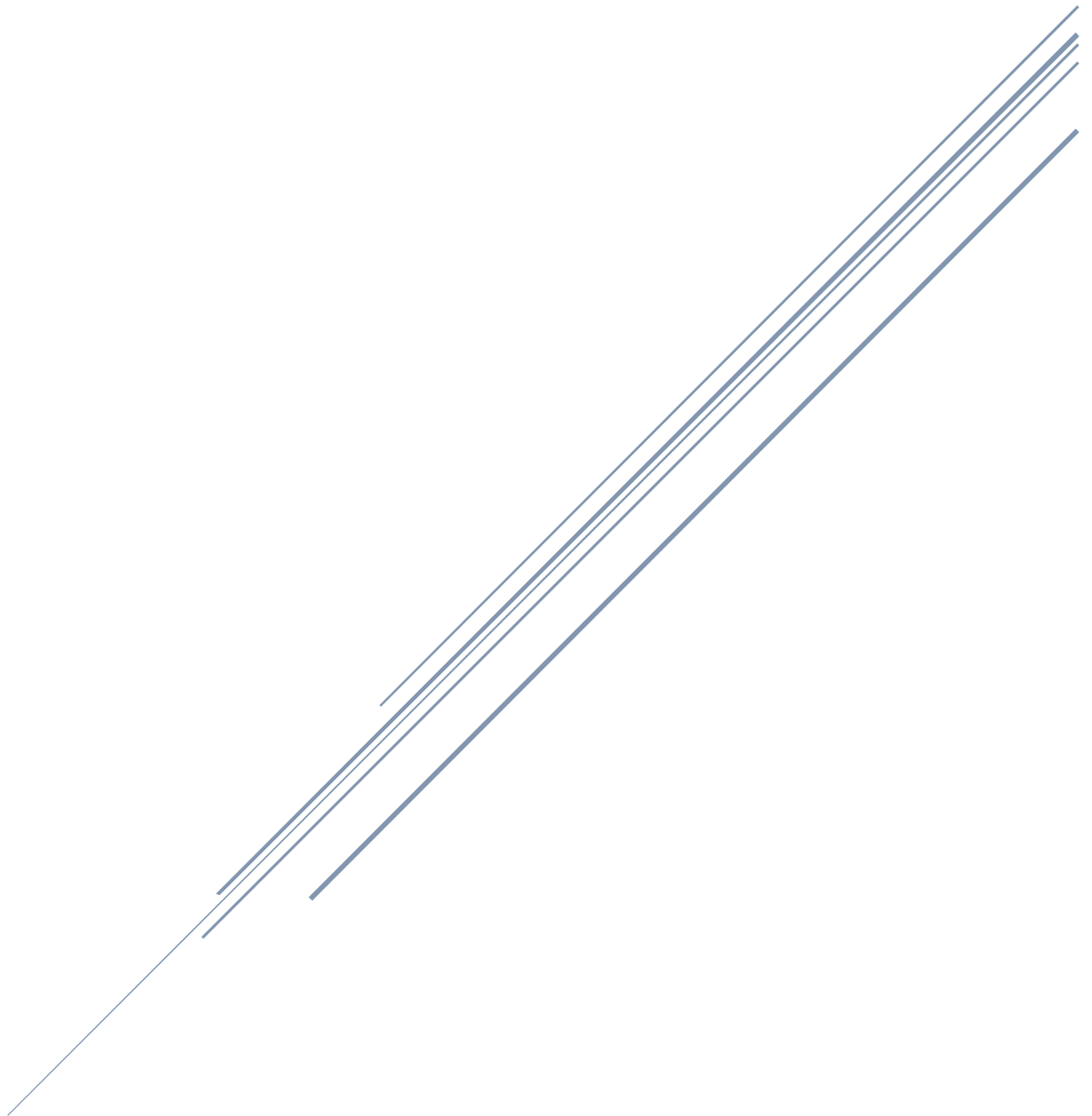


Emerging Leadership Skills

PORTFOLIO – Task 2

BMSW6101



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Introduction

This report will consist of two parts, part 1 focusing on a case study, which will look at the different leadership styles and obstacles that women leaders may face while providing viable solutions on how they can resolve those problematic challenges. The case study will primarily be focusing on Ursula Burns, identifying the qualities of leadership she possesses while considering other factors she may face, such as gender stereotyping and racial discrimination. After identifying these issues, long term solutions will be provided on how to combat these unethical dilemmas. Alongside this case study, additional individual research will be conducted to assist the points that were made in the argument. Part 2 will be focusing on a reflective essay, which will delve into knowledge that was taught in the Emergent Leadership Skills module. In addition to this, personal leadership styles and traits will be explored thoroughly and how these apply in the area of work.

Part 1 – Case Study Analysis

Defining leadership

Leadership can be referred to as many things, such as taking on specific roles or simply just following something one may be interested in. Hughes believes that a leader does not necessarily have to lead but can be open to exploration. Two examples they use is being stranded in a forest with a group of people and the other being a CEO of a company, creating new ideas to stay ahead of its competitors. Both situations have a leader, but they vary in different styles. For example, Hughes states that in the forest scenario, the group will need someone confident to take control and help them stay on the correct path. Experience would not necessarily be needed, whereas the CEO of a company will need to be someone who is highly experienced in this field (Hughes, 1993).

Leadership Traits

Leadership traits are characteristics a leader possesses that distinguish them as a leader. It is often said that leaders have the capability to lead people towards long term goals and help them to reach objectives. When taking into consideration the traits of a leader, the correct attributes can further enhance crucial functions in an organisation. For example, it can assist the workplace to boost their productivity rate by having a more strategic approach (Locke, 1991). Although anyone can take the mantle as leader, some are better suited to the role than others. A good leader will have positive effects on people, such as providing motivation and morale, while also being able to lift the mood of the workplace environment.

There are numerous traits that can cause negative impacts in the workplace. For example, some leaders will always try to ignore conflict. It is a leader's job to try and minimize the amount of conflicts that may arise, but sometimes this is not the case as several leaders may feel the best way to overcome conflict is to pretend it does not exist. This is a cause for concern as small disputes may eventually turn into a dangerous situation, which may have been avoided if they had acted (Carpenter, 2019).

Analysing Ursula Burns Leadership Traits

In the provided case study, Ursula Burns was depicted as being self-aware and authentic to her work colleagues while adapting to the environment around her. Her colleagues say that she is an open-minded individual who is very down to Earth, making her easily approachable by anyone. Ursula Burns likes to take risks within the workplace as it provides her with out of the box business ideas she normally would not think about. As she was influenced by her mother, this shaped her ability in being the strong leader that she is by developing a social awareness of the people around her. Ursula's personal beliefs have also guided her in developing strong work ethics by being encouraging and promoting confidence within the workplace.

Ursula is known to be a down to earth person as she is aware of the feelings of her colleagues, this allows her to communicate and listen attentively to their needs whilst also being understanding. With her abilities in social awareness, Ursula is known to be a team player and is always working closely with her team to collaborate ideas (Sisters of Divine Providence, Marie de La Roche Province, 2019). Her empowering factor provides the opportunity for her colleagues to speak out, as she believes that it is vital for women to voice their opinions as others cannot do the thinking for them. Her viewpoints are made clear to further state that if they do not say anything then they have no thoughts to share.

Although Ursula's stance on being diverse comes off as being quite strong, it evidently proves to be a strong trait that leaders should have. She argues with one of the executives at a meeting about Xerox not having enough diversity and made her feelings clear on the matter, but as she was not afraid of speaking out it was brought to the attention of management which viewed her in a positive light. Her willingness to speak out like this has proven to be effective as it allowed her to receive numerous promotions before her role as CEO and has since set a precedent. When it comes to leadership, it is stated that coaching is a mandatory factor if one is to work on their leadership skills. Mr. Allaire was Ursula's mentor, who has been monitoring her career progress for the most of her business venture. This allowed Ursula to anticipate what her next step would be career wise.

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are described as having the viewpoint that is associated with certain genders. As stated by OHCHR, gender stereotyping limits the ability either a Man or A Woman may have to perform and has been around for a very long time. Children are also exposed to this type of discrimination. For example, today, young girls are expected to play with feminine toys, such as barbie dolls and the boys to play with cars. This goes further, influencing the colours associated with a gender. Like toys, girls are related to the colour pink whereas boys are expected to like darker colours, like blue and black (GENDER EQUALITY LAW, 2018).

As an adult, these discrimination acts have evolved, be it in the workplace or in everyday life. In an article by **Plannedparenthood**, they have described that this can also affect those involved in domestic relationships. The example they use is that either party should not be afraid to speak out if they seek help, but often refrain against the idea as it may look embarrassing, especially from a Male's perspective due to the associated stigma. (Plannedparenthood, 2018).

In leadership roles, gender discrimination is heavily noticeable as there are more Male's in higher levels of management. This is evident in an article by Sarah E. Saint-Michel where she analyses both genders thoroughly using a framework model to see the types of traits they have. Sarah states that due to society's current viewpoints, men are affiliated with being stronger leaders than women due to their representation (Saint-Michel, 2018).

From further evaluation, it was shown that women were represented as being more communal and sensitive, rather than the assertive approach that Men pursue. Due to the affectionate portrayal of women, society began to associate roles such as being a care worker more on the feminine side and looked down on Men who would seek this line of work. This type of discrimination affects all sorts of workplaces and organisations, one example of this is in the NHS. Currently, there are more female nurses than male's, however there are more Male Doctors than women in this field (Ford, 2019). This could play in effect with the stigma relating to nurses being a women's career.

Gender Stereotypes Ursula Faced

The case study states that although more women were emerging with high level qualifications, the number of women that were in higher management roles remained quite low. For example, women were still being overlooked regardless of their accomplishments, which mainly ties in with society's viewpoints at the time regarding stereotypes. In this instance, women were judged if they were to consider taking on a higher position, such as being a CEO. The reasons for this were because women were characterized as being more emotional and sensitive than men, whereas men were the exact opposite. Men were being viewed as having a more controlling nature and a competitive mindset.

Although Ursula Burns faced some of these barriers in her career due to her gender and being from an ethnic group, most of the discrimination she faced came due to her young age, which again ties in with the stereotype of young people not being responsible enough. Ursula Burns was given the opportunity to study at the Polytechnic Institute of NYU, where she received her Science degree and then went on to get a master's degree in mechanical engineering, despite her financial background and situation. The case study identifies that the field of Science and Engineering has a low number of Female leaders due to it being predominantly male dominated, whereas women were being best suited to areas such as Human Resources or the educational sector.

Xerox, in the early 1980's was amongst the first organisation to expand its market to cater to a more diverse workforce. This allowed the organisation to grow bigger while retaining their goals of innovation. Although Xerox is welcoming to people with various skillsets, they particularly favour those who have the most experience. This benefited Ursula Burns as she began her career from the age of 22 and allowed her to divulge in conversations with higher management, providing her the opportunity to disclose personal pursuits and things she doesn't like without having to worry.

Long Term Solutions to Gender Discrimination

1. Equal salary

In order to eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace, multiple steps must be taken to reach this outcome. According to a blog by Jessica Fuhl, she states that a small number of companies within the UK publicly state their statistics regarding gender. Although this number is quite small, it highlights the point she is making that some organisations are willing to cater to both genders, while promoting their stance on equal pay (Fuhl, 2020). This has proven to be effective as people's viewpoints are beginning to change when they enter this environment. For example, Women will feel more comfortable knowing that they are getting fair treatment and earning the same amount of money with their Male colleagues.

2. Promote Diversity through inclusion

Another solution to gender discrimination is the promotion of diversity. Currently, organisations tend to refer to people by name when they are advertising. Although this in its own right is a form of diversity, a better way to increase the number of women and others from ethnic backgrounds is to modify the way the enrolling process works when it comes to applying for jobs in the early stages. A study by Giovana indicates that gender and race can have influence on the selection process long before the interview has commenced. Giovana strongly believes that if someone is applying for a job, they should solely be evaluated on their work ethics and experiences rather than their gender or skin colour. She expands on her experiences, stating that there are numerous times where both Men and Women apply for the same vacancy with nearly identical CV's, but due to the current selection process where it reveals the person's name and gender, the men would more likely be favoured (Sanchez, 2018).

Relationship between Transformational leadership and Organisational performance

Transformational leadership is commonly referred to as an approach that some leaders promote, this helps them to encourage and motivate staff members. This type of style has multiple traits that accompany it, such as the power to motivate, showcasing a better work ethic, and the willingness of teamwork. This is beneficial as it unites everyone to work towards the same goal. Sarah, from CIO has stated that transformation leadership has completely helped shape the IT sector due to its adaptiveness (White, 2018).

Unlike transformational leadership, organisational performance focuses more on how an organisation is doing. This consists of three sections: **Financial** and **Market** performance, and **Shareholder value**. Financial and Market views the monetary side of things, this includes turn out rates and whether the organisation has expanded or lost its market revenue while shareholder value monitors the effects of its current shareholders and how impactful they are (MBN, 2015).

Although both transformational leadership and organisational performance share some similarities, the end goal is the same. For example, the driving force for any organisation is success as without it there will not be a business left to run. The two are opposites when it comes to how they operate because transformational leadership allows the organisation to quickly adapt to different situations while also trying to keep in the best interest of staff members. Organisational performance, however, emphasises on the three particular sections as stated above, most of the time completely disregarding other factors such as work morale (TOUFALI, 2017). It is due to its relaxed nature that most businesses prefer the transformational approach. Companies like Google LLC and Microsoft both operate using this type of leadership and it has proven results, for example Gmail was invented by Paul Buchheit in his spare project time at Google, this is known as the 20% project system. The 20% project system provides employees with the ability to spend time on their own personal developments which is not at all related to their job description (ROBINSON, 2019).

Part 2 – Reflective Essay using Gibbs Reflective Cycle

Describe:

When the module first began, I did not know what traits were, but after our lecturer went into detail it was made clear that traits are the characteristics that leaders possess, however not all traits are good. I enjoyed our classroom activities because it allowed me to think about the sort of leader I would be while comparing myself to the rest of the class. Originally at first, I believed that I did not possess any leadership qualities because I have never been in a position like that. From a glance, I originally thought that there was a “one size fits all” type of leadership, but I realised this is far from right. The three leadership styles we discussed were **Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-faire**. Authoritarian focuses on strict management and everyone is expected to follow rules without questioning it (Susman, 2020), Democratic is more relaxed and everyone can share input (Wilson, 2018), and Laissez-faire is an unrestricted approach that allows people to focus on their task without having management interfere as much (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

Feelings:

Out of the three types of leaders, I believe I am a Democratic because I prefer to guide people rather than give them instructions, it made me realise that no leadership style is perfect. I personally think that being a democratic leader is good because naturally I talk to people and treat them fairly with respect, as they would do to me. If I were to constantly give orders and behave self-entitled, I would feel like I am not being honest to myself and it would make me feel like a hypocrite. Overall, I am happy with what we were taught and would not change anything otherwise it would cause information overload (Interaction Design, 2018).

A few improvements that may have provided better results is if we were given a variety of tests to properly examine if our leadership styles were as we thought. The reason for this is because without sufficient evidence, anyone can assume they are a particular type of leader but it would not hold any weight due to the lack of assessments. For example, I believe I am a Democratic leader because I share similarities traits wise, but I don't know for sure how accurate this is as we never really had a chance to put our leadership skills in to play, small things such as scenarios would have aided me further.

Another point I want to discuss is that a leader can have multiple styles of leadership, this is because there are external factors. The external factors that I am talking about can apply to retail, which is where I work. In my workplace, I have a manager who oversees the everything and normally his type of leadership is democratic. It is because of this I can easily communicate with him if I were to run into issues regarding customers and stock, however, there are times when this changes and he takes a more authoritarian approach. Simply doing what he thinks is right and comes off as bossy. I can understand why this happens though, as everyone acts differently when they are under pressure.

Evaluation and analysis:

In this module, I particularly enjoyed the classroom activities our lecturer provided us with. My favourite activity was the case study regarding **Co-Ed Cleaners**. The case study revolves around Dan Cali and Asher Roland. In this activity, the class was given the task of analysing the case study to find out which of the two managers should remain on with Co-Ed. Everyone in the class shared their input and gave mixed answers, some saying Asher and the others saying Dan.

Asher was described as more laid back and easy going and gets a decent amount of work done. However, Dan was portrayed as being very efficient and more productive than anyone in the company. His work ethos spoke for itself and his colleagues were praising his abilities. As only one of these managers were staying on, I chose Dan as the one who should stay. This is because success is the driving factor for any workplace or organisation, and it was evident from the case study that Dan was producing the desired results.

Overall, I was confident with the Emerging Leadership Skills module. Part one of the assignment was the 5-minute video where I had to analyse my traits. To me, this was quite challenging because communication is not my strongest point. I believe I can have a conversation and take part in interviews comfortably; however, I was not fully confident in getting my points across in a video recording. I personally think if there was no COVID restrictions and the university was open as usual, the video section of the assignment would have been altered, so I guess I can view this as a positive experience as even though I was nervous, this opportunity helped me to overcome this obstacle.

Conclusion:

Given the current situation with COVID, I personally think the university and lecturers did the best they could in teaching students remotely. I will admit that some parts of it were extremely challenging due to not being able to immerse myself with the class. I have had countless issues with the Microsoft Teams software where I couldn't fully participate with the class, this tells me that learning from home will never be quite like learning on campus.

If I could do things differently, I would have reduced the amount of classroom discussions. The reason for this is because sometimes I feel that not everyone could say what they had in mind. Everyone has different strong points; some may feel they are better suited to practicality. The way this could have been done is to include interactive activities, this would mean that everyone would have a chance to take part and apply their knowledge.

With the different types of leadership out there, I have learnt that people cannot just utilise one specific style. As explained above, there will always be a time when someone needs to change their approach to meet deadlines, and this can apply to myself and other students. I have always had the relaxed mindset when it comes to working on my assignments, but when due dates get closer, I begin to panic and a different side of me can be seen. For example, I become less talkative and my mood drastically changes. In the future, I cannot leave everything to the last minute because that is ultimately how a business can fail. I must approach things tactically and use different types of styles depending on situations.

Action Plan:

With the knowledge I have learnt from this module, I believe it will help in the future when it comes to opening businesses of my own or if I take management roles. For example, this module has taught me that different types of scenarios call for different leadership styles and I cannot just stick to one. As I am currently working in retail, I need to brush up on my communication skill because currently I try to avoid management as much as possible due to not knowing how to engage in conversations with them. This has made me realise that if I wish to take on higher positions in the future, I cannot keep up this mindset. As I have stated earlier, we are all human and we all have emotions, so going forward the best way to fit this in is to be more considerate of people's feelings and that I shouldn't act irrationally.

Conclusion

After thorough evaluation of the case study regarding Ursula Burns, analysis identified the various factors she has faced in her career. As Ursula was from a younger age demographic, she encountered doubts regarding her position due to being younger than those who usually take these roles. Other factors included racial and gender discrimination due to her being a woman, especially a woman of colour. This hindered her career negatively because of the associated stigmas created by society, for example women shouldn't be taking managerial positions as they are often regarded as being too emotional.

As gender stereotypes were becoming more prominent, a few solutions were given on how it can be minimised. The chosen solutions that were given are to equalise the pay barrier between both genders as this would promote fair treatment and equality while the other is promoting a diverse workforce through inclusion. Some organisations clearly state people's names during their advertisements as a form of diversity, but research showed that this can backfire due to bias. A better approach to this is to remove names and gender as it removes factors from affecting job applications.

Applying the Gibbs Reflective cycle, it demonstrated personal traits and understanding that was learnt in the Emerging Leadership Module. Originally when the module began, it was evident that further research was needed in understanding what traits are and the types that leaders require to be successful. Classroom activities such as the case study about Co. Ed Cleaners proved to be helpful as it gave examples of the many styles of leadership whilst showing that there is no right and wrong way of leading. Due to the current situation regarding COVID-19, all universities suspended face-to-face teaching which resulted in online learning. The difficulties faced included not being able to access specific programs such as Microsoft Teams due to server issues, further proving that learning remotely will always remain inferior compared to learning on campus.

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