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Emergent Leadership Skills for the Workplace

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Contents

Task 2: Part 1 **2**
- **Introduction** **2**
- Leadership and Leadership Traits 2
- Challenges faced by Ursula Burns 5
- Solutions to Gender Discrimination in Leadership 6
- Transformational Leadership and Organisational Performance 8
- **Conclusion** **9**

Task 2: Part 2 **10**
- Self Reflection 10

References **13**

Task 2: Part 1

Introduction

The following essay is concentrated around the theme of leadership and will be based on the analysis of the case study about Ursula Burns. She is one of the few successful female leaders of the world today. The essay will firstly start by analysing what leadership traits she most represented, and why they are important and necessary factors for strong leadership. As a female leader, she would have faced gender stereotypes which will be covered and evaluated in the essay. Also included will be recommendations of long term solutions to gender discrimination. The final section will discuss and evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership and organisational performance.

Leadership and Leadership Traits

With the many definitions of leadership, a common way of understanding leadership is that it is a process of influencing, establishing a vision or direction and leading people to a common goal. This is reflective of Kouzes and Posner (1995) who define leadership as “the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations”. Another similar definition is given by Northouse's (2007) that leadership is a process of influencing others to achieve a common goal. Strong leadership can be associated with certain traits and characteristics or qualities a person has. Research has shown the following traits necessary for strong leadership. These traits include:

- Integrati
- Self confidence
- Empathy
- Intelligence
- Determination
- Initiative
- Sociability
- Trustworthiness
- Influencing ability

- Emotional Intelligence
- Social Intelligence
- Emotional stability (Northouse, 2019).

Case study Analysis

After analysis of the case study, the following traits necessary for strong leadership can be related to Ursula Burns:

- **Empathy:** Ursula Burns is a compassionate leader, she listens attentively and uses empathy to get along with team members from diverse ethnic backgrounds. She understands and shares the feelings of others. Empathy is an important trait for strong leadership. An example given by Badea and Panà (2010) is that empathy optimizes the leader's relations with subordinates and for effective communication.
- **Self Confidence:** she is confident to stand up for her values and her beliefs. She does not second guess herself and has feelings of self assuredness. The case study highlights her confidence, when at a meeting she was not satisfied with the answers from the executive, she stood up in front of everyone and exchanged arguments. She is also confident to take opportunities that come her way. She is not afraid of risk taking.
- **Integrity:** She is honest, trustworthy and encourages ethical behaviour. Her moral values are evident in her professional behaviour and vision. To gain trust of subordinates and to build a committed team, integrity is a vital trait needed by leaders (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012). This is because leaders with integrity can be trusted to follow up on what they plan, which also leads to greater commitment and participation of subordinates which is needed for strong and effective leadership (Storr, 2004).
- **Intelligence:** She worked at Xerox since 1980, has deep industry knowledge and expertise in the digital printing industry. She is highly educated, with BSc and a masters degree. She uses her intelligence to take necessary business risks that sets her apart from other leaders. She used her intelligence to change the operations process at Xerox which made the company successful and profitable. Bloomberg BusinessWeek reported in an article that her industry knowledge and technical prowess is second to none (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2009). According to Lord *et al., (1984)* intelligence is an attribute that is seen as a vital factor that should be possessed by all leaders.

- **Emotional Intelligence:** This is an important trait because emotionally intelligent leaders can better manage emotions within themselves and in others. Ursula Burns learned to manage her emotions early in her career, which enabled her to develop social awareness of her environment. She also has self management competencies. According to Goleman *et al.* (2002) these are components of emotional intelligence. Relationships between leaders and subordinates is an emotional one, and leaders work through these emotions for effective leadership (Hoffman & Frost, 2006). According to Riggio (2010) emotional intelligence is essential for effective leadership, and its importance increases the more senior the leadership role in the organisation. Emotional intelligence affects many aspects of leadership, such as motivation, communication, adaptability and decision making. One of the important aspects to the success of Ursula Burns is that she used emotional due diligence to develop her leadership style and workplace culture.
- **Determination:** Being a black woman Ursula Burns would of faced sexisum, and race discrimination, but still showed great determination and drive to succeed. She worked at Xerox since 1980, and within her career had two children. With hard work, ambition, and determination, she overcame many obstacles and succeeded in becoming CEO. People without determination as a leadership trait would have faltered in her position.

Ursula Burns also showed other leadership traits including: sociability, trustworthiness, initiative, having the ability to inspire others with charisma.

Challenges faced by Ursula Burns

As a black female leader in a male dominated field, Ursula Burns would have faced many challenges. The gender stereotypes Ursula Burns may have had to combat in her role as leader at Xerox include the following:

- **Sexism:** She may have faced prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination because of her gender. Society views women as emotional and sensitive who would struggle in a leadership position. The stereotypical view is that men are more competitive and in control who would be better leaders than women.
- **Ageism:** The majority of discrimination she faced was because of her age. She was seen as too young to be in a leaders role and have the responsibilities she had.

This isn't gender stereotyping, but never-the-less, it was a major barrier she faced early in her career.

- **Male chauvinism:** Ursula Burns may have faced encounters where women are viewed as property, and only good for raising children or cooking.
- **Gender Discrimination (Glass ceiling):** The term glass ceiling is a metaphor used to represent invisible barriers women face when rising up in an organisation beyond certain hierarchies. Ursula Burns may have faced these barriers because of social stereotypes of women ingrained around child bearing responsibilities. The assumptions she may have faced is that she would leave her job after bearing children.
- **Patriarchy:** This is a system in which men hold power and roles of leadership. For example, women are simply not considered for top management roles because existing top management roles which are held by men tend to promote other men who are similar to themselves (Van Vianen & Fischer, 2002). Ursula fought against this when she was not satisfied with an answer given by an executive, and stood up in front of everyone to give her views. This earned her positive notoriety.

Other challenges faced by women at top management level or leadership roles include sexual harassment. Research carried out by the Swedish Institute for Social Research found women in leadership positions experienced between 30 and 100 per cent more sexual harassment than other women in the workplace (Oppenheim, 2020). Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours or any other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature. The consequences of sexual harassment can be mental or physical ranging from anxiety, powerlessness, depression, and, or eating disorders. It can also have negative effects on job related factors such as damaged interpersonal work relationships or low job satisfaction and commitment (Welsh, 1999).

Statistics show that the percentage of female leaders in top management roles is very low (Mejia, 2018). There is a number of reasons to this including:

- **Lack of Mentoring:** Since there tends to be few executive women, many women are unable to find female mentors and build relationships with co-workers with similar interests. Having a mentor who is the same gender would lead to better understanding of challenges commonly faced. According to Laff (2006) because of the limited availability of capable mentors women are inhibited in the workplace.

While Ursula Burns was executive assistant she found a mentor in Anne Mulcahy who was CEO at that time. Both women described their relationship as a true partnership. This mentorship undoubtedly aided the career of Ursula Burns.

- **Globalisation:** Because of globalisation, many top executives and CEOs have needed to move to new towns, cities or even new countries. This is because of time pressures or relocation of businesses. According to Wellington *et al.,* (2003) this is a major barrier for many women who have families, husbands or live-in partners.
- **Loss of Motivation:** Because of the many barriers such as stereotypes, sexism, family needs, faced by women on the path of becoming a manager or executive, many women will lose the drive and motivation to reach the very top (Annis, 2008). Ursula Burns showed internal motivation, persistence and determination to succeed in becoming CEO at Xerox.

Solutions to Gender Discrimination in Leadership

Effective solutions that may address gender discrimination in leadership include:

- **Education, Training and Development.** Educational training would be an effective way of addressing the problem of gender discrimination in leadership roles. This is because it would increase awareness of gender bias issues among employees and would improve workplace relationships between genders. Evidence indicates that gender bias can be alleviated or reduced by education that both increases awareness and provides bias reduction strategic training (Devine *et al.,* 2012). Training and development programmes will lead to increased employee respect of gender issues and adapting of their own beliefs. This may lead to reduced gender discrimination, promoting institutional change, and the promoting of women to higher ranks.

- **Organisational policy.** Implementing policies on gender discrimination in organisations would be another solution to gender discrimination. For example, policy that outlines what is acceptable behaviour towards the opposite gender would reduce sexual harassment. This would decrease barriers for women. Another policy could be that of equal pay of genders in the same job role. This would mean women leaders would not need to focus on negotiating pay, but instead focus on the job itself.

Women on equal pay as their male counterparts would mean that they would not be looked down upon because of less pay.

- **Mandatory Quotas.** Another solution to reduce gender discrimination, is having a policy requirement to have a mandatory number of women in management roles. This would lead to a gender diverse workforce, which would mean that in the selection process for top management considerations there would be more women available for consideration to choose into top management or CEO roles. According to Burke and Nelson (2000), 82% of organisations stated that one of the major contributing factors in their decisions not to promote women into top management roles was the lack of women with general management skills or experience. A mandatory quota system would mean more women would gain skills and experience of management and be available for consideration into top management positions.

- **Flexible Working Hours.** Because of family commitments, lifestyle, work and life balance, many women are unable to commit fully to their careers, or make it up the promotional ladder to become top management or CEOs. Because of time constraints and job demands, many women often need to choose between career or family. According to Lyons and McArthur (2005) women are more reluctant to travel far to work or work long hours if they have responsibilities at home or have children, which hinders their prospects of promotion to top management positions. Having flexible working hours would mean more gender equity and fairness for women. It would compensate women with social disadvantages which prevents women and men operating on a level playing field.

Transformational Leadership and Organisational Performance

Transformational leadership (hereafter TL) is a proactive style of leadership where subordinates are motivated with encouragement and a sense of common vision or goal. Transformational leaders build relations based in trust, vision and support. Transformational leaders are more relationship oriented, meaning they focus more on building a rapport with people, motivating through charisma and emotional intelligence, as opposed to a transactional leader who focuses more on task completion. According to Conger (2002) TL is a style of leadership that goes beyond increasing performance with incentives, rather it develops and encourages subordinates creatively and intellectually. Trofino (2000) defined that TL is a style of leadership that creates a clear vision, which leads to increased motivation and organisational performance. Transformational leaders generate involvement in subordinates by enhancing relationships based on trust. This relationship bond leads to higher satisfaction and increased organisational performance. This is highlighted in the case study of Ursula Burns. She has established a directive and supportive leadership behaviour, which is a more participative and democratic style of leadership. This meant she was able to build a relationship with subordinates based on trust, care and support. This leads to increased employee satisfaction and organisational performance. According to Graen (1976) transformational leaders create high quality relationships by giving support and attention to their followers which encourages followers to work better to achieve organisational goals.

TL can be determined with four behavioural dimensions which are Idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and Individualised consideration (Bass, 1985). These behavioural dimensions have positive impacts on organisational performance.

Idealised influence involves being seen as a role model based on charisma, integrity, trust and setting an example for followers. As a result of this influence there is a positive impact on organisational performance because employees are more willing to accept assignments given, regardless of difficulty or how complex it is (Chu & Lai, 2011). This influence leads to better employee satisfaction and commitment which increases organisational performance.

Inspirational motivation is a dimension of TL that involves motivational techniques to align employees personal goals with organisational goals. This creates a shared vision which leads to the objectives of the organisation to be met. Shared vision leads to trust and satisfaction of the employees which has positive consequences for organisational performance as a whole. This is highlighted in the case study of Ursula Burns. The mission statement at Xerox was inspired by

her vision which she shared through communicating through the organisation to subordinates. Her moral principles of integrity provided credibility to the vision. Through charisma and trust, she created a shared vision between employees and organisation, which led to better job satisfaction and commitment. This improved the organisational performance.

Intellectual stimulation is about empowering and stimulating employees to creatively solve complex problems (Bass, 1985). This is done through communication and encouragement. This stimulation leads to better employee commitment. Organisational performance is enhanced because of the commitment, dedication and hard work of employees that intellectual stimulation can bring (Anjali & Anand, 2015).

Individualised consideration is an essential part of TL which involves leaders to develop and support individuals. Leaders support and nurture the needs of individuals with empathy. This consideration positively influences employee satisfaction, motivation, and engagement, which leads to better organisational performance (Snell *et al*., 2013).

Conclusion

Effective leadership plays a vital role in the success of an organisation. This is because leaders must motivate their employees, create job satisfaction, create a shared vision, inspire followers, stimulate creativity, influence through integrity and trust. All these aspects can be associated with transformational leadership. Extensive research has suggested that transformational leaders are more superior and effective than other types of leadership in today's business world (Bass & Riggio, 2006). While transformational leadership is not altogether connected to a specific gender type, women are more associated with the transformational leadership style because of their interpersonal ability in mentoring and building relationships. Transformational leaders are more relationship oriented, participative, democratic, emphatic, people concerned and sensitive to feelings. According to Bass and Avolio (1994) these characteristics are more associated with women. Thus women as leaders can bring all the benefits to an organisation that transformational leadership brings such as motivation, satisfaction and increased organisational performance. This can be seen in the case study of Ursula Burns, in which she used her leadership style to make Xerox a successful and profitable company.

An article by BBC News (2020) highlighted the benefit of female leaders. It stated that where at least one-third of the CEOs are women, they have a profit margin more than 10 times greater than those without. It highlighted the fact that there was a stark difference in profit margins with companies which had diverse gender leaderships compared to those who do not have women in leadership roles. The article also highlights the fact, which was also mentioned in this essay, that there is a lack of women in top management roles. Organisations must find a solution to this problem of a lack of women in top management roles, and have a more gender diverse workplace if they want the benefits associated with transformational leadership style that women are more associated with.

Task 2: Part 2

Self Reflection

Before the start of the module Emergent Leadership Skills for the Workplace, I had a vague understanding around the concepts and theories on leadership. I was more understanding of what a leader is, but not why some leaders are more effective and respected than others. The types of leaders who I admire are Barack Obama, the former president of the United States of America, and Jacinda Arden who is the current prime minister of New Zealand. I did not fully understand why these leaders had more respect and why they are admired around the world. My own style of leadership is about open communication and feedback. I lead a small team of eight individuals at a Indian takeaway establishment where I encourage feedback, and make decisions based on these feedback. I was not fully aware of my traits or leadership style, or whether I needed to adapt my style of leadership to increase effectiveness.

During the course of completing the module, with the teachings and with my own research, I became more confident and aware of what leadership is. One of the first aspects of leadership which I learned is that it is a process of influencing others to achieve a common goal. This means that it is about establishing a vision, and then alignment of that vision with followers, making it a shared vision. I saw leadership as a journey, in which you need certain traits to convince, commit, and engage followers.

During the module I was more aware of the leadership traits needed for strong and effective leadership. For example, integrity is important to build trust from your followers. Leaders with integrity have characteristics of honesty, trustworthiness and strong principles. This builds a committed team of followers based in trust (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012). Charismatic leaders inspire followers by being a strong role model. Sociability is a trait which leaders build social relationships with followers by being more friendly, outgoing and diplomatic. After understanding more about traits I could relate certain leaders to leadership traits. For example, Barack Obama can be seen as an intelligent and charismatic leader. He influences with his charm and charisma, and inspires through being a strong role model. Jacinda Arden can be viewed as a leader who influences with integrity and empathy. She has strong principles, takes responsibility, is a trustworthy and honest leader. She is an ethical leader who does the right thing.

Although certain leaders can be viewed as natural leaders, some leadership skills can be developed through hard work and practice which will lead to better leadership. Administrative skills can be developed, for example managing resources and having technical competencies. Another skill that can be developed to improve leadership is interpersonal skills, such as emotional intelligence. This means having the ability to manage emotions within yourself and in others. Being empathetic and compassionate can also improve interpersonal skills.

During the module, I also learnt more about leadership styles. The three types of leadership are authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire. I also learnt how to associate McGregos theory X and Y to these styles of leadership. For example, authoritarian leaders determine tasks and procedures and exert influence and control over the group members. This is associated with theory X which assumes that followers need direction. Democratic leadership is about open communication and objective feedback. Democratic leader guide rather than direct followers. Positives of this type of leadership is greater satisfaction for the group involved, and promotes motivation and creativity. This type of leadership can be associated with theory Y, which assumes that people are self motivated.

After completing the leadership styles questionnaire, my score indicated that I have a democratic leadership style. This was not a surprise because at work, where I lead a small team, I make decisions based on communication and feedback from colleagues. I speak on the same level as colleagues and give mutual praise. But sometimes decisions can take time to make, because of the need for feedback. This is one of the disadvantages of a democratic style leadership.

Another aspect of leadership learnt during the model was behaviours of task oriented and relationship oriented leaders. Task oriented leaders focus most of their efforts on completing the job and completing the task. Relationship oriented leaders are about creating a bound between them and their followers and building relationships built on dignity and respect.

After completing the task and relationship questionnaire my scores were very close with only 1 mark between the 2 outcomes. The result showed that I am in between both which is ideal. It indicates that I am focused on accomplishing a task and also building relationships with followers by creating a pleasant working environment.

During the module and with my own research, I developed an understanding of the differences between transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transactional leaders tend to be directive, authoritative and develop relationships between themselves and subordinates based on performance, whereas transformational leaders are more participative and democratic, who build relationships based in trust and a shared vision (Bass, 1985). After a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of these leadership styles, I found that transformational leadership is a more superior leadership style (Bass & Riggio, 2006). I also found that transformational leadership can be more associated with women because of their interpersonal ability in mentoring and building relationships.

After learning more about leadership, in future I would like to improve my interpersonal skills important to good leadership such as emotional intelligence and sociability skills. I need to improve my capacity to build social relationships and use more empathy in certain situations. This is important to become an effective leader as it builds trust and respect among followers. After feedback from colleagues I have associated leadership traits of honesty, integrity and trustworthiness to my overall leadership style. By using more empathy will mean that I can build a team of followers based on loyalty, inspiration and a stronger relationship overall.

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