

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

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ASSESSMENT 1

REFLECTION ON LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

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1.0. Introduction

I continue reading books on leadership and now understand that a person can be a leader when the person is ready to learn leadership development apart from being born a leader. The present critical reflection focuses on my leadership experience expounding on my leadership development. Besides, the report expounds on leadership concepts based on theories to analyse and evaluate my experience in Bulgaria where I was employed as an accountant and had the responsibility of running a business, hiring people, and managing financial resources.

2.0. About Stroimarket LTD

Stroimarket LTD is a trading enterprise dealing in furniture and construction materials. The private enterprise performs in the trade and wholesale distribution of furniture and construction materials. The company has stable relations with its suppliers, and commercial locations. The company offers over 40,000 products for manufacturing furniture, construction, and renovation.

3.0. Review of leadership and management theories and models

The concept of leadership currently shifts from personality-based models to situational contexts (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). The current leadership theories fall into leadership as skills, personality attributes, and relationships (Wolinski, 2010). Similarly, Benmira and Agboola (2021) categorise leadership and management theories based on their evolution in different eras including the trait era (the 1840s to 1940s), behavioural era (1940s to 1950s), situational era (1960s), new leadership era (1990s) and other eras (2000s).

3.1. Great man and Trait Theories (Trait Era)

The Great man theory postulates that a leader is born and his capacity is inherent, hence, a leader is born but not made (Wolinski, 2010). The concept of leaders under the great man theory is that leaders are destined to rise at the right moment when they are needed most in society. For example, people like Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, and Julius Caesar were considered great men and leaders.

Based off the trait theory that leaders can either be born or made (Khan *et al.*, 2017,). A leader inherits some leadership qualities which form the behavioural or personality behaviour. A person can also acquire such traits through practice and training.

3.2. Behavioural Theories (Behavioural era)

Behavioural theories emanated from the idea that leaders are made instead of innate. The model considers on the actions of a leader beyond intellectual attributes or internal conditions (Benmira and Agboola, 2021). People learn attributes that make them leaders when they observe and train. For example, workers under autocratic rule work well when the leader is around (Benmira and Agboola, 2021).

3.3. Situational and Contingency Theories (Situational era)

The situational theory postulates that a leader takes the best action based on the circumstance or a situation (Safonov *et al.*, 2018,). A leader can assess a situation and then decides on the best leadership style relevant to the situation. For example, the authoritarian leadership style suits a situation where a leader has the experience and knowledgeable members of a team or a group (Safonov *et al.*, 2018).

Separately, the contingency theory of leadership indicates that context is important in defining a trait of a leader. There is no one best leadership behaviour or trait (McCaffery,

2010). Leaders become successful because of the variables such as leadership style, situation, and the qualities of the subordinate. The theory weighs on effective leadership style depending on the quality of the leader, the style of leadership, and the demand of a given situation (Charry, 2012).

3.4. Transformational and Transactional Theory (New era of Leadership)

Transformational leadership theory postulates that leaders can inspire, encourage, and motivate subordinates. As a result, the theory emphasises on the connection or interaction among followers and leaders. The leaders focus on the performance of their subordinates and are applicable in the contemporary world where transformation takes place due to innovation (Bass *et al.*, 2003,). For example, leaders such as Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos are considered transformative.

Transactional leadership theory values the use of authority or supervisors as the source of motivation for the workers. Leaders provide rewards to their subordinates based on their efforts and offer punishments to those who do not meet goals (Charry, 2012). The leader under the concept values fairness and equity.

4.0. A review of my own experience of leadership and areas for development

4.1. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

I applied Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to expound on the structure of experience as a leader at Stroimarket LTD (Markkanen *et al.* 2020). I examined my experiences and offered a cyclic nature that would offer a way for planning for activities that I did not accomplish.

4.1.1. Description Stage

I worked at Stroimarket LTD in Bulgaria as an accountant and was accorded the responsibility of hiring employees, responsible for the business activities, and dealing with all the finances. The company grew to a large warehouse without a staff turnover. I exercised different management styles that include leading by example, use of rules, and compliance. I used a long-term vision and motivated and encouraged employees for better results. I worked on the principle of what you give is what you get.

4.1.2. Feeling

I did not know that I possessed leadership skills until I got the opportunity to take the leadership responsibilities at Stroimarket LTD. I was happy to take the responsibility of managing business activities, handling financial resources, and hiring workers. I understood that the work would be challenging but knew that such a situation would be best suited for exercising my leadership skills.

4.1.3. Evaluation and Analysis

I worked at Stroimarket LTD in Bulgaria as an accountant and was accorded the responsibility of hiring employees, responsible for the business activities, and dealing with all the finances. The company grew to a large warehouse without a turnover. I exercised different management styles that include leading by example, use of rules, and compliance. Besides, I used a long-term vision and motivated and encouraged employees for better results. I worked on the principle of what you give is what you get.

4.1.3.1. Application of Trait Theory at Stroimarket LTD

I applied leadership theories when working at Stroimarket LTD based on my thinking capacity and experience. I focused on qualities, traits, and situational characteristics that influenced my behaviour. I used the trait and behavioural theories to exercise my leadership skills. I believe that I inherited some leadership qualities that formed my personality behaviours. For example, In Stroimarket LTD, I used my qualities of accountability, intelligence, creativity, and feeling of responsibility to help me succeed as a leader. I used my intelligence, sense of responsibility, and accountability as an employee at the company which made me earn the trust of the owners. I was allocated the responsibility to hire employees, manage the financial resources and oversee all the business activities. Such key leadership traits are innate and made me a good leader in the enterprises during ten years of tenure.

I benefited from the trait leadership theory because I developed a sense of responsibility for the entire organisation by engaging workers. I applied the skill of a sense of responsibility among the workers which led to low employee turnover as the workers carried out their responsibilities accordingly.

Also, trait leadership theory revealed my charisma and was able to articulate my vision and long-term plan. For example, I articulated my long-term vision in the company and engaged the employees who followed my lead. Thus, I believe that I have a charismatic personality that is in-born. I had an attractive personality that workers appreciated leading to a high dependency level because the workers see my vision as a way forward that has lasted for the last ten years.

4.1.3.2. Application of Behavioural Theory at Stroimarket LTD

I applied behavioural theory while working at Stroimarket LTD. I believe that my success at the company depended on my behaviour. I focused on my actions and behaviours

while responding to the situation in the company and began to offer rewards to workers based on their performances while at the same time issuing punishment when employees failed to achieve their objectives. In such cases, I took away some privileges from workers who did not meet their targets. I offered rewards in the form of vouchers and bonuses to motivate and encourage employees for better results while using the principle of what you give is what you take. I applied behavioural theory based on task orientation whereby I focused more on setting goals and achieving the objective of Stroimarket LTD. In such cases, I exercised my authority in working towards achieving the results. I engaged in initiating business activities, organising all the processes, providing clear instructions, and collecting relevant data or information for the improvement of activities. In such situations, I planned a ten-year vision for the company and supervised all the activities in the company.

I used transactional leadership theory to exercise my authority as a supervisor of all business activities at Stroimarket LTD to motivate workers. For example, I provided vouchers, bonuses, and applied values of equity and fairness due to the structure that I laid out to meet the goals (Charry, 2012).

4.1.4. What I have learned (Areas of My Development)

The presented case shows my leadership skills and applications based on both trait and behavioural theories. I learned that to be a good leader you must be example to your employees. Also, when the more you encourage them, the more you get as a leader. Trust leads to the common goal. I engaged my team in handling activities and solving issues (Bass *et al.*, 2003).

4.1.5. Leadership Development Plan (Action Plan)

Milestone	Activities
Defining the qualities of a leader I need	I will make a list of leadership skills and qualities for competencies. Therefore, I will list skills such as ethical behaviour, honesty, communicating vision, and being intuition
Taking self-assessment	I will take a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), (King and Mason,2020) to identify my personality traits such as observant, adventurous, or impulsive. I will use family friends and members to write words that describe me. The strategy will help me break down my personality strengths and traits to give more insight into my style to answer the question of "who am I?"
Identify core values	I will identify my core values to help in decision making, ethics, and integrity
Writing a personal vision statement	The personal vision statement will help me reflect on my core values and traits. Therefore, I will focus on what I want to be, achieving, and the values I can use to make decisions. An example of a vision statement I aspire to have is <i>to use my charisma and intelligence to develop the self-worth of people globally.</i>
Analysing what people think about me	I will answer questions such as what I want my employees and others to say about me, what they say, how others perceive me, whether I care about the perception of others about me, expectations for leadership, and professionalism. The answers to the questions act as checks and balances to all the work I do.

Identifying my existing and lacking leadership skills	I will identify the skills that I already possess such as accountability, communication skills, delegation skills, personal skills, interpersonal skills, group skills, and technical skills
Goal-setting	I will write SMART leadership goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.
Writing action plan	I will make specific steps to achieve my goals using the SMART technique.

5.0 Conclusion

Using the presented case as an anchor point, it can be concluded that leadership theories are integral factor in a company's success, profitability and future progress. Leaders take a central role and are the most important figure when it comes to organisational success. The successful leader has a clear vision of the ultimate result and inspires his people to attain it through his enthusiasm and perseverance.

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