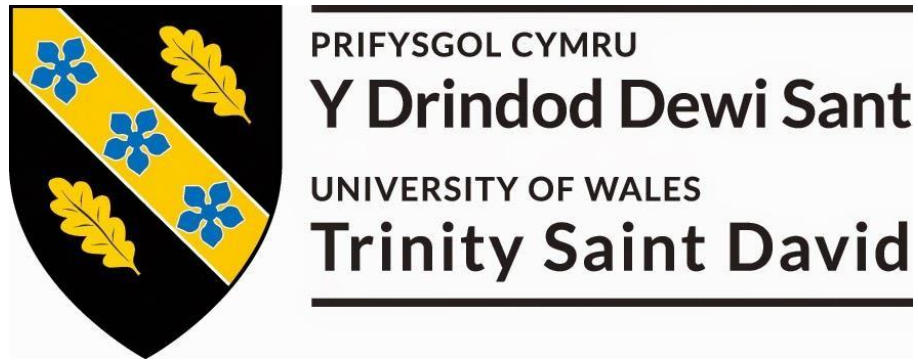




***Approaches to Research and Academic
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Part 1

The impact of leadership on the organizational performance and employee performance

Introduction

The aim of this assessment is to develop a critical review on “the impact of leadership on the organizational performance and employee performance” for which the studies that have been conducted over the period of last ten years will be reviewed. This will be done to examine the ethical, ontological and epistemological issues in research. Moreover, from among the reviewed studies, one of the research studies will be selected for a detailed discussion in which the focus will be on validity, reliability, ethics and research philosophy which has been used in the paper.

Literature Review

The role that leadership has in any organization is important in terms of developing mission, vision and the establishment of methods, policies and strategies for efficiently and effectively achieving the organizational objectives along with coordinating and directing the activities in the organization (Xu & Wang, 2008). Based on the importance of leadership in organizations, literature will be reviewed related to “The impact of leadership on organizational performance and employee performance”. The focus will however be on the ethical, ontological and ethical issues present in each of the research. In order to however understand the impact, it is important to define leadership. According to Tannebaum and colleagues, leadership is defined as the interpersonal influence which is exercised in any situation and tends to be directed through effective communication towards attaining of specific goals (1961). The more recent definition of leadership is focused on explaining the way leader communicated generally and related to the people in a way in which the leader is able to train and motivate the subordinated and the way he/she provides directions to the team for

executing tasks (Gharibvand, 2012). This shows that leadership is a process through which a person tends to influence others in accomplishing the objective as well as directing in ways which tend to make it more coherent and cohesive (Sharma & Jain, 2013). In addition to this, it is important to understand that the topic of effective leadership has been an important topic in research for many years (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978). This is because leadership is required at every level in the organization and was initially considered to be based on building relationship between the follower and leader for producing the results which are desired (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978). On the other hand, in a more recent research, the focus has been leadership skills such as recognizing, encouraging and motivating people which tend to yield results which are productive (Gill et al, 2006). This shows that there are different ways in which leadership is defined and considered in terms of an organization. Moreover, to review different studies, it is however important to understand the three main types of research philosophies and the way they are used.

According to Allen and Varga, there are three main types of research philosophies which are present namely ontology, axiology and epistemology (2007). From among these types, ontology is an important branch of philosophy which is focused on the assumptions which we made to believe that something is real or tends to make sense or the nature of social phenomenon that one is investigating. Hence, it helps in conceptualizing the nature and form of reality and what one believes can be known about the reality. In this regard, Scott and Usher concluded in their study that ontology is an important paradigm as it helps in understanding of the different things which make the world as they are known (2004). In addition to this, ontology helps in examining the underlying beliefs as well as the philosophical assumption as being a researcher related to the nature of reality existence and being (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

On the other hand, epistemology focuses on the way of explaining and understanding what one knows and how one knows (Crotty, 2003). Hence, it is related to offering a philosophical grounding to determine the forms of knowledge which are possible and the way it can be ensured that they are legitimate and adequate. As compared to

ontology which seems abstract, epistemology is more relevant especially in the multidisciplinary context of management and business due to which there are different forms of knowledge which can all be regarded as being legitimate. Hence, different types of epistemologies are used in research ranging from narratives, archival research and autobiographical accounts. Moreover, the large variety of epistemologies provide large variety of methods which can be used in a number of academic disciplines but it is important to have knowledge of the implications related to the assumptions in various epistemologies as compared to the method used (Saunders et al, 2015).

The last important research philosophy is axiology which refers to the role of ethics and values in the research process. Hence, it tends to include questions related to the way researchers deal with their own values and those of the participants of the research (Saunders et al, 2015). In this regard, Heron stated that the values of a researcher tend to demonstrate different axiological skills through the articulation of their values as being the basis to make judgements related to the judgement that they make related to the research and the way they will be conducting it (1996). Hence, it is related to the ethical issues that need to be regarded while planning the research proposal due to which it is related to defining, evaluating as well as understanding the concepts of wrong and right in terms of research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These approaches will be used to identify the research method in each of the studies which will be analysed.

Hence, in terms of leadership and its impact on employee performance, Carter and colleagues conducted a research for investigating the way transformational leadership which is team focused tend to influence the performance of employees at lower levels in the organization where change is an important part (2013). This is because to mitigate the tension along with facilitating effective performance, the managers need to show appropriate behaviour for leadership (Burke, 2002). In this regard, the researchers used epistemology as their philosophy of research as the focus of the research was to understand the reality of knowledge to understand the way leadership affects the performance of employees during change. In this regard, primary data was gathered through two different set of questionnaires in which one was for the employees i.e. team

members and the other one was for the leaders of team i.e. manager survey. The employees were asked to consider the context of change and to assess the leadership and the relation that they had with them during the changes. The data was collected from two different companies using the same approach (Carter et al, 2013). In terms of the findings of the research, it is important to understand that it has been generally posited that the transformational leadership should have an influence on the efforts related to organizational change (Pawar & Eastman, 1997). In this regard, the analysis in the study revealed that relationship between employee performance and transformational leadership is present mainly through the quality of the relationship which is present between the employees and the managers. In addition to this, it was revealed that in contexts in which the presence of frequent changes requires the need to adapt on employees, the transformational leadership personalizes the new vision along with working with the employees to ensure that it is made into a reality (Carter et al, 2013).

In another study, the main aim had been to examine whether authentic leadership tends to be sufficient in promoting organizational behaviour which is positive and whether the presence of authentic leadership is functional in terms of reduction of detrimental behaviour in the workplace (Liu, 2011). In order to achieve this aim, three different studies were conducted based on epistemology. In this regard, from among the four main types of knowledge which are present in this philosophy i.e. intuitive, empirical, logical and authoritative knowledge (Slavin, 1984), the study was based on the use of logical knowledge. This is because the researcher relied on the data gathered from different participants through the use of online surveys to identify the reasons for knowing the truth. Hence, based on this research philosophy, the first study was conducted using online survey for eliminating the items which were performing poorly though the use of exploratory factor analysis in which 693 responses were received from full time employees in different organizations (Liu, 2011). The main reason for using online surveys in the study has been that it provides timeliness, speed, convenience, and ease in entering data and its analysis (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Moreover, the second study was conducted using a different sample i.e. students who

were attending a large university. The main purpose of this study was to initially examine the validity of construct in which the sample size of 158 people was reached. Furthermore, the third study was conducted for testing the hypothesis in which the participants were recruited from health organization in US having more than 500 employees (Liu, 2011). The data was gathered from both supervisors as well as employees through surveys which were personally handed to them and which the participants had to directly give to the researcher. Based on the analysis, it was revealed in the study that authentic leadership is important in terms of predicting the psychological safety of employees, deviance behaviour in workplace, knowledge sharing and positive employee health which will ultimately benefit both organization as well as the employees (Liu, 2011).

Moreover, in another study, the focus has been on determining the impact of leadership on not just the organizational performance but also knowledge management and trust (Koohang et al, 2017). Hence, the main goal of the study was to develop a research model which proposed that in organizations, the presence of effective leadership tends to elevate the level of trust among the employees. This increase in the trust among the employees tends to contribute towards successful implementation of the processes related to knowledge management which will ultimately enhance the organizational performance (Koohang et al, 2017). In order to conduct this research, survey was used based on six main constructs which are leading self, leading people, leading organization, knowledge management, trust and organizational performance. The survey instruments developed were administered electronically through the use of a professional internet site for survey. The respondents of the study were from different levels of management in nine different regions. The final sample size after the elimination of missing data was 217 (Koohang et al, 2017). Moreover, to ensure ethical considerations, the participants' participation was voluntary and they were assured about the anonymity and confidentiality in research. Moreover, in this study, two different philosophies were used i.e. axiology and epistemology. Epistemology was used in the study to determine the impact of leadership on employee trust, knowledge management and organizational performance through the use of logical knowledge as

the study was conducted through the use of a scientific method for data collection and analysis (Slavin, 1984). Furthermore, the study also use axiology as the researcher ensured the participants about anonymity and confidentiality of their responses along with ensuring that their participation in the study is mainly voluntary (Koohang et al, 2017). In addition to this, the use of survey shows that the researcher adopted a neutral stance and ensured that their personal opinion did not in any affected the responses during surveys. In terms of the findings of the research, the research model implied that effective leadership is the foundation of increased level of trust, successful process of knowledge management and an increase in organizational performance. These findings are similar to previous work which has been done in this regard which stated that leadership is one of the most important predictor of organizational success (Peterson et al, 2003; Peterson et al, 2009).

Moreover, in terms of leadership, the different styles can help in solving different challenges which are being faced by organizations. In this regard, Choudhary and colleagues have focused on determining which style of leadership helps managers in obtaining maximum profit for themselves and the organization (2013). In this regard, they have mainly focused on determining whether the servant leadership tends to have more impact as compared to transformation leadership. The study was conducted through the use of quantitative method in which structured questionnaire was used. The population was selected from the service industry in Pakistan which involved sectors such as banking, telecommunication and hotels. The survey was held through the use of administered questionnaire and a sample size of 155 was used for the analysis (Choudhary et al, 2013). This shows that the researchers used epistemological research philosophy in which the focus was on obtaining logical knowledge through the use of a scientific approach for data gathering and analysis (Saunders et al, 2015; Slavin, 1984). Based on this approach, the results of the study revealed that both servant and transformational leadership are linked with organizational performance and learning. Moreover, it was concluded that both of these leaderships tend to have various elements which are common such as their ability to influence the followers, empower them and to encourage them for the good performance along with listening and

communicating with the employees. However, comparatively, it has been seen that transformational leadership tend to have more impact on the organizational learning as compared to servant leadership (Choudhary et al, 2013). Moreover, the statistical results and empirical research revealed that both styles of leadership tem to promote performance in the organization through the presence of mediating impact of the organizational learning (Choudhary et al, 2013). Therefore, based on the importance of leadership in organization, the study provided important learning for the managers to enhance relationships with the employees and for improving their performance which will have a positive impact on the organization.

Apart from the transformational and servant leadership which has been studied in the studies that have been explained, ethical leadership has also turned into a major area of interest as the unethical or ethical behaviour of a leader can influence the culture of organization which leads to the way members in an organization behave and think which tend to ultimately benefit the organization through better and enhanced performance (Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007).Based on this leadership approach, a study has been conducted to explore the impact of ethical leadership in the task performance of employees and the mechanism through which it is done (Yang & Wei, 2017). In this study, hypothesis developed were tested through the use of primary data which was collected from employees as well as their immediate supervisors in an insurance company in China. Hence, 80 different supervisors along with their subordinates were selected randomly after which a briefing session was provided in which the objectives of the study were explained and the way questionnaires will have to be completed. In addition to this, it was also ensured that only the researcher will be using the data gathered (Yang & Wei, 2017). After the processing of the questionnaire of subordinates, their supervisors were invited to attend another session in which the research objectives were again explained and the supervisors were requested to rate the performances of their subordinates. The study used a proper coding scheme to ensure that there was correct matching of data between subordinate and supervisors. Moreover, the data was gathered from 352 subordinates and 73 supervisors. This shows that the study mainly adopted epistemology based research philosophy as logical and authoritative

knowledge was used to gather information through the use of questionnaires from supervisors and their subordinates (Slavin, 1984). Based on this, the results of the study highlighted that the ethical leadership tend to have a positive influence on the task performance of employee due to the mediating impact of organizational identification. Moreover, the study revealed that when the proactive personality of employees is high, ethical leadership tends to have a strong relationship with the task performance of employee in a positive manner. These results are similar to Liu and colleagues which stated that the ethical leadership has a strong and positive effect on the employees' job performance (2013). However, there have been studies which have been conducted related to the presence in instability in the relationship (Kacmar et al, 2013). The results of the study has however provided important findings in terms of the mediating role that highly proactive personality of employees play in the relationship between the task performance of employee and ethical leadership. Furthermore, instead of using social learning theory for explaining the mechanism which is used by ethical leaders to influence the employee behaviour, the paper used social identity theory to explain this mechanism. Based on this research, it is important for organizations to develop employee organizational identification for improving the task performance (Yang & Wei, 2017). This is because when leadership will use moral and ethical approach for improving the employee organizational identification, it will also lead to the promotion and improvement in the task performance of employees. In addition to this, the study highlighted that organizations need to identify the proactive personalities of employees along with creating a friendly environment which will enhance the impact of ethical leadership on the job performance of employees (Yang & Wei, 2017).

The review of literature has revealed that different types of leadership tend to have an influence on both organizational performance as well as employee performance. An important point to however understand is that there are different mediating factors which tend to influence this relationship between the type of leadership and the performance of organization and employees.

Part 2

Discussion of Study Selected from Reviewed Literature

Introduction

This section of the paper is focused on conducting a detailed analysis of one of the studies which have been reviewed in the literature review section in a detailed manner. The article which has been selected is related to the impact that leadership has on trust among the employees, knowledge management and the performance of the organization through the development of a research model. It was published in 2017 in the journal *Industrial Management & Data Systems* by Koohang, Paliszkiewicz and Goluchowski. The main purpose of the research was to develop a research model which can be used for examining the impact of leadership on building trust among the employees, managing knowledge and the performance of the organization. In order to conduct this study, survey was used based on six different constructs and the participants of the study included people at different levels of the management in nine different regions in the US. The data gathered was analysed through the use of partial least squares for testing the hypothesis based on which the findings revealed that there is a significant and positive linear connection between the leadership, knowledge management, trust and the performance of organization. Hence, in literature, this study has been able to demonstrate that effective leadership is the bedrock to increase the level of trust, knowledge management processes which are successful and an increase in the organizational performance (Koohang et al, 2017). After having an understanding of the paper and its findings, the next sections of the paper will focus on analysing the philosophy of research which has been used, ethical considerations, and validity and reliability.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophies are defined by ontology and epistemology in which the former focuses on the way the researcher perceives the reality i.e. the way the researcher considers the construction of world while the latter is related to the way knowledge is

built in terms of the format which is used in the study for increasing the knowledge (Rich & Brown, 2014). This shows that ontology is related to the way reality is constituted due to which it is important for the researchers to take a position related to the perceptions of how things are and how they work (Crotty, 2003). On the other hand, epistemology is related to the forms and nature of knowledge as it is concerned with the way knowledge is created, communicated and acquired (Cohen et al, 2007). An important point to understand is that every paradigm has its own epistemological and ontological assumptions and as all of the assumptions tend to be conjecture, the underpinnings in a philosophy cannot be proven or disproven in an empirical manner. In terms of these research philosophies, it is important to understand that in the study by Koohang and colleagues, the researchers have mainly focused on using epistemological philosophy in research (2017). This is because they initially reviewed the studies which have been conducted in this regard to identify any gaps in the literature. This analysis was then used to develop hypotheses for the study which they have proven using a scientific and step-by-step approach. Moreover, to ensure that they are able to empirically prove their hypotheses, they have used survey for gathering data which is then analysed in a scientific manner to achieve the aim of the study.

In addition to this, it is also important to understand the methodology and method which is used in each study. In this regard, methodology refers to the plan or strategy of action which forms the basis of selecting and using specific methods (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, it is associated with how, what, where, why and when of data which is gathered and analysed. In this regard, it is important to understand that Koohang and his colleagues used a quantitative research method in which the data was gathered through the use of survey using a deductive approach (2017). This is because they have used a scientific paradigm in which the methodology is focused on explaining the relationships. It is due to the attempt of the researchers to identify causes which tend to influence the outcomes. Therefore, the main focus is to develop laws which will serve as the basis for predicting and generalizing (Scotland, 2012). This shows that the scientific paradigm focuses on seeking generalization and predictions due to which the method used needs to generate quantitative data which was done in the case of Koohang's study.

while the data analysed helped in developing a research model which can be generalized to the populations (2017).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a system of principles that can critically alter the prior consideration related to actions and choices. Hence, it is the branch of philosophy that deals with the dynamics related to what is wrong and right. Therefore, the research ethics focuses on protecting the dignity of subjects as well as the publication of information gathered in research (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011). In this regard, there are two main approaches which are present in research ethics which are deontology and teleology. According to the teleology, the ends which are served by research tend to justify the means which highlights that the benefits present in research findings tend to be weighed against the costs associated with acting in an unethical manner (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). On the other hand, the deontological theories highlight that the ends which are served by research cannot justify the unethical use of research. Hence, it asserts that there are considerations that make the action right which is apart from the badness or goodness of consequences (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Based on these approaches, it can be seen in the case of Koohang's study that they used deontological approach to ensure that research was conducted ethically (2017).

In addition to this, there are a number of elements which need to be considered to ensure that ethical research is conducted. The first in this regard is consent which is related to the procedure used through which the individual might choose to participate in study. In this regard, it is important for the researcher to ensure that participants have complete understanding of the methods and purpose which will be used in the study, the risks involved and the demands which are placed (Sage, 2007). In this regard, the subjects of the study had to fill the questionnaire based on their own willingness and an understanding of the purpose of the research (Koohang et al, 2017).

The second major issue is related to privacy in which seeking privacy is related to the act of confidentiality or seclusion along with removing from the public knowledge. From among the different aspects present in privacy, sensitivity of data needs to be regarded in terms of the individuals studied (Sage, 2007). Moreover, the setting in which research will be conducted might also be an important factor in terms of invasion of privacy. The last aspect related to information is the extent to which the information is public. In terms of privacy, the participants of the study were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality related to the data gathered and the way the information will be used in the research (Koohang et al, 2017).

Furthermore, research deception is related to intentional misrepresentation of facts which are related to consequences, nature or purpose of investigation. In this regard, deception refers to the commission or omission on the researcher in terms of the interaction with the participants (Sage, 2007). In this regard, the study ensured that only the right information was represented in the study along with ensuring that there was no intentional misrepresentation of facts which were gathered through research (Koohang et al, 2017).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important elements of research in which validity refers to the extent to which concept is measured accurately in the quantitative study. The second important measure of quality is the reliability which focuses on the accuracy of the instrument (Heale & Twicross, 2015). Hence, it focuses on the extent to which the research instruments yield same results if they are used in a similar situation.

In terms of determining whether a research instrument has validity, there are three main types of validity which can be used. The first is homogeneity which ensures that the instrument is measuring one construct. The second is convergence which takes place when the instrument tends to measure concepts which are similar to the other instruments. The last approach is the theory evidence which is evident when the behaviour tends to be similar to the theoretical propositions present in the construct

which is measured in instrument (Heale & Twicross, 2015). In terms of convergence validity, the study looked at the results presented in each of the LV in which the indicator loading for each of them need to be more than 0.7. In this regard, the conflict indicator from leadership in terms of leading people, leading self and transparency were removed from model as they loadings had a value which was less than 0.70. Moreover, after these indicators were removed, LV values yielded values which were more than 0.70. In addition to this, the LV needs to be more than 0.50. In this regard, the results of all LVs were more than 0.50. All of these results highlighted the convergence validity in the research model (Koohang et al, 2017). Moreover, for establishing the discriminant validity, the results derived from square root of each of the LV had to be more than the correlation with every other LV. In this regard, the study was able to establish sufficient level of discriminant validity for research model used (Koohang et al, 2017).

On the other hand, reliability is a major concern for understanding the functioning of the test which is used for consistently discriminating the people at one time or over a period of time (Drost, 2011). Hence, it is the extent to which the measurements are repeatable i.e. when different participants perform the measurement on different occasions, different conditions and alternative instruments which measure the same thing. Hence, reliability is the consistency in the measurement and is also defined as the stability of measurement over a number of conditions in which the same results can be obtained (Drost, 2011). In terms of reliability, the study measured composite reliability for which the LV needs to be more than 0.80. In this regard, the study revealed that composite reliability value in change was 0.83, for motivation it was 0.89, for values/principles it was 0.89, for competence it was 0.95 and for localization it was 0.92. This shows that the study's research model has composite reliability (Koohang et al, 2017). Hence the analysis of validity and reliability in the quantitative research approach used by Koohang and colleagues revealed that the instrument used have high level of reliability as well as validity.

Conclusion

Koohang and colleagues in their study developed an important model for examining the impact that leadership has on different aspects i.e. knowledge management, trust and the performance of the organization. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant connection between leadership in terms of leading self, people and organization with knowledge management, trust among the employees and organizational performance. Hence, the findings implied that the presence of effective leadership tend to elevate level of trust among the employees which resulted in contributing to successful implementation of the processes related to knowledge management. This as a result enhances the organizational performance.

In terms of the research philosophy used, the analysis revealed that the researchers used epistemological research as the main aim was to gather knowledge from the participants to understand the impact and relationship between leadership and the performance of organization. Moreover, in terms of data collection, quantitative study was used in which data was gathered through the use of online survey which was conducted in nine different regions in the US. Furthermore, in terms of ethical considerations, it was ensured in the study that then privacy of the participants was ensured through anonymity and confidentiality. In addition to this, consent was approved from the participants by making them understand about the research objectives. Lastly, to ensure reliability and validity in the study, calculations were made to determine these important aspects. Based on different calculations, it was revealed that the study had high level of reliability as well as validity. Hence, the research model which was used can further be used by other studies to measure the same aspects.

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