

Leadership and management theory and practice

Nikola Ivov Dimitrov

2010613

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the most important skills and aspects that is needed to attain greater success in career. This reflective report will comprehensively evaluate a range of different learnings experiences and knowledge explored. Marks and Spencer is chosen as the organization for the reflective report. For effectively explaining the experiences Gibbs reflective cycle will be used as the model which has 6 stages in cycles. At last a precise and concise action plan will be stated which will help in attaining success in the future. Overall, the reflective report will be detailed and highly informative about the experiences and learnings.

Background of organisation

Marks and spencer is a British multinational retailer that is specialised in selling clothing, home products, beauty and food products. I have worked with this retailer for 2 years and I must say that this retailer provides opportunities to their employees to innovate and improve their performance (Hilal, 2021). I was also given an opportunity to lead a new team and this opportunity has helped me out in my career growth and development. This retailer has around 959 stores across the UK and it has diverse workforce that also helped me out in knowing about different cultures.

Own experience of leadership

Before discussing and sharing my own experience of leadership, I want to discuss about leadership. In this context, I can say that it is an ability of a group and individual to guide followers and people of a team. An ability to influence others and get the desired work done in an efficient and happier manner is known as leadership. I believe that leadership is not only to guide and get the work done but it is all about to make sure team members are happy with their work, they have clarity about the work, they have right guidance and can complete the task with effectiveness. I want to share my experience of leadership in Marks and Spencer where I gave training to newer team members about the work and customers services.

Description: Here, I want to share my experience of leader. While working in Marks and spencer, I was asked to lead or train newer team members. Initially, I became nervous but I accepted this opportunity and provided training to all team members. Firstly, I introduced myself and knew about everyone as I believe that making people comfortable is the main skill of leadership. I found that my communication skills are good and this skill made me able in communicating and knowing about all members (Whitehouse, C.L. and et.al., 2022). After making them feel comfortable, I let them know about the work and the company. It is important for team

members to have clarity about job roles. For involving them in training session, I asked some basic questions related to their past job and appreciated. I believe that when employees are being appreciated then they are more likely to trust, engage and enjoy their work. After that, I provided training with some real-based examples and made sure everyone is getting all these things. I gave them practical examples and sessions so that they can understand as how to communicate and satisfy customers. My main focus was to get them involved with the company's work and let them know about their job role that was customers' service. I focused on improving relation with them by communicating and listening to them. I asked team members to work in a team and gave them some scenario regarding customers' services. For involving them I made this session in a funny manner. I tell them the best ways of working in a team and it was one of my best experiences. As I was leading to new team members so, I used autocratic style of leadership where employees are not being given an opportunity to take decisions. All decisions were taken by me because the team was new and at this stage, it is not possible to give them an opportunity to take decisions. I believe that autocratic style of leadership is good when it is a large organisation, when employees are new and when there is a need of urgency to make decisions. Along with autocratic, I used transformational style of leadership by which I encouraged and inspired team members to innovate and bring ideas by which they can satisfy different behaviour of customers of Marks and Spencer. I believe that transformational is an effective style of leaders as it increases trust of employees (Gibbs, 2022). It motivates people for working hard and innovatively so that we can improve our performance. For using this style, we need to possess commitment to active listening, tolerance for intelligent risks, trust, an ability to inspire participation and willingness to accept responsibility.

Feelings: In regards to my experience of leading to new team members, I can say that it increased my skills to the great extent. It increased my communication, patience, decision-making and team working skills. When I asked team members to work in a team and communicate each other's by assuming them customers, I analysed their skills and weaknesses. It improved my observation skills and I believe that leadership is one of the best job role as it allows us to learn new things. I learned number of things while providing training to new members as some of them were very calm and flexible. All challenges and tasks, given to them, accepted by them in a very polite and efficient manner (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020). It improves my skill and I learned the way of adjusting in a new environment and changing situation. This experience of leadership improved my flexibility skill.

Evaluation: In regards to this experience, I want to highlight some positive things that happened to me. I can say that this experience improved me as a personally and professionally. I came to know that leadership is not about control and management as it is only leadership where we need to invest at least 50% of our time in leading our self like own purpose, ethics, principles, conduct and motivation. I also believe that the time we invest, reflects back and teach us new things. It never vain. So, on the basis of this, I can say that this experience improved my performance and boosted my confidence. Along with some positive things, there are some things that did not go well in this experience such as: handling different perspectives. A leader is the one who values different perspectives of people but sometimes different perspectives can lead to conflicts. So, I want to improve the area of dealing with different perspectives, I want to improve critical evaluation, time management and problem solving skills (Clark, Harrison and Gibb, 2019). I believe that I am lacking behind in time-management and this weakness can make use frustrated. So, on the basis of this experience, I can say that it was a good experience and I am looking for such leadership opportunities so, I can develop my self professionally.

Analysis: In regards to the experience, I can say that leading a new team is not an easy task as we need to get familiar with them in order to make them feel comfortable. Understanding the behaviour of new members can be a difficult task but my peers support, helped me out in accepting and completing this task or experience.

Conclusion: On the basis of my leadership experience, I can say that leadership is one of the best profession because it improves the performance of our own and others as well. I have shown all those skills that make a leader successful.

Along with this team training, I was given other opportunity of leading a project in which I had to focus on improving an efficient team. I developed the team in an efficient manner. All members had experience so, I used democratic style of leadership. This is the style in which leaders give an opportunity to all its members regarding decision making. They ask for suggestions and consider their views. When I used this approach then it made employees feel valued and it increased their engagement. On this basis, I can say that democratic style of leadership is effective as it can help out us in improving relations with others.

Action plan: On the basis of my leadership experience, I must say that I am lacking behind in time-management, decision-making, interpersonal and numerical skills. I need to improve all these skills so that I can develop my career (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2020). I want to become a

successful leader and want to become an idol for my followers. With the help of professional development plan, I can improve all of these areas.

Leadership development objectives	Leadership activities for improving area	Place to improve area	Target date
Interpersonal	Negotiation, empathy and emotional intelligence are some skills that I want to improve. For improving these skills, I will compare and relate my skills with successful leaders. When we read successful stories of leaders and the way they used to keep themselves positive then it can have great impact on us. So, by reading and comparing myself with successful leaders, I can motivate myself and can improve these skills.	At workplace	30 May, 2023
Time-management	For improving time management, I will use some online available software as it can help me out in managing my time. I will focus on decreasing procrastination and by preparing weekly time-table, I can improve this skill.	At workplace	25 May, 2023
Numerical skill	I believe that for improving quantitative skills, we need to focus on numbers rather than words such as rare, common and others. I will take training and guidance from my seniors and leaders at workplace. Practicing at home, I can improve this skill.	At workplace and at home	15 June, 2023

On the basis of my experience of leadership, I can say that leadership theories play a vital role. We all need to adapt style of leading as per the current situation and capabilities. I believe that transformational and democratic style of leadership, are best. These both styles increases trust, motivate employees, improve relations, bring innovation and lead productivity. A leader can make team members feel valued when they give them an opportunity to make decisions and suggest ways of improving the overall performance of organisation.

Learning from experience: On the basis of my experience of leadership, I can say that it improved my communication, team working, flexibility, decision making and creativity skills. I came to know that there is no particular age of learning as we all can learn number of new things from anyone and anywhere. While leading to team members, I learned different ways of completing a task. I learned the way of working under pressure and adjusting in any situation. When we have flexibility or an ability to adapt changes then we can work in any situation and it can protect us from frustration and stress. I came to know about different styles of leadership and the best style if transformational (By, 2021). This style satisfies the needs of employees and leaders and encourage them for striving hard. I came to know that I am a democratic leader as I prefer to give an opportunity to other to take decision and give suggestion. I feel good when I receive different opinions and suggestions as it improves the decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

The above reflective report has critically analysed and explored a range of different experiences and learnings which has been gained while interning at marks and spencer. As marks and spencer is large scale organization it has helped in securing great experience and knowledge which has been explained. Gibbs reflective model has been used to effectively explore the learnings and shortcoming of the entire experience. At last a detailed action plan has been formed when majorly the skills like leadership, information and technology and numerical skills has been emphasized. Overall the reflection has been well presented and explained

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