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Assessment 1

*Essay: Critical reflection on own experience of leadership based on experience and observation
inside Sainsbury's organisation*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is considered an eminent management function allowing organizations with effective and fuller utilization of resources to achieve the reaffirmed organizational goals and objectives. As per the insights by Alrowwad, Abualoush and Masa'deh (2020) an affluent approach to leadership is seminal in providing a cohesive vision and mission to the organization thus, fostering uniformity within the actions to attain underlined organizational objectives.

BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION

Sainsbury's is recognized as the second-largest retail chain in the UK focusing on providing convenient shopping and great value food to customers at affordable prices. Besides, the organization has more than 600+ supermarkets followed by more than 800 convenience stores in the UK (Sainsbury's, 2023). Besides, Sainsbury's operates within the UK supermarket industry with its private-label brands namely, Sainsbury's Bank, Tu, Nectar and Argos.

PURPOSE OF THE ESSAY

The present essay would focus on critically evaluating the complexities associated with effectively leading and managing organizations thereby, reflecting on personal experiences to critique the leadership approach within the selected enterprise. In addition, the essay features the implementation of varied leadership and management theories referring to the selected organization.

REVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT THEORIES AND MODELS

CONTINGENCY THEORY

As per the insights gathered by Nawaz and Khan (2016), the Contingency theory states that the content and approach of leadership styles depending on the situation at hand. Referring to the statement it can be underlined that there are no apparent and stringent measures to actively lead and manage the external and internal dimensions of an organization. Hence, leaders need to readily adapt to the prevailing situations. Additionally, the implication of contingency leadership theory provides a cohesive and coherent perspective on management and organization thereby, quantifying the chances of problem-solving within the organization. Furthermore, the implication of contingency leadership theory further provides managers with greater flexibility and autonomy to suffice organizational roles and responsibilities by neglecting the universal principles. However, irrespective of the effectiveness of the Contingency theory in an organizational context it is susceptible to criticisms of unreliability, as the proficiency of leadership cannot be measured (Sivaruban, 2021).

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT THEORY

As per the views of Taylor (2023), Taylor's Scientific Management Theory is directed towards improving the efficiency of the workforce. Besides, the implication of the Scientific management theory is based on the four underlined principles of "not Individualism, Harmony, not Discord, Cooperation, and Science, not a rule of thumb". Additionally, one of the underlined pros associated with the implication of Taylor's Scientific management theory is its emphasis on higher-level management following the performance of employees at varied organizational levels. Merkle (2022) contradicted that the application of the Scientific Management theory facilitates the idea of "a one-size fits all approach" thereby, being at odds were the present perceptions of continuous management, management by objectives, along with business process reengineering.

FULL RANGE LEADERSHIP (FRL) MODEL

As per the inferences gathered by Nawaz and Khan (2016) the Full Range Leadership (FRL) Model underlines a set of nine leadership factors such as intellectual stimulation, idealised influence (behaviour), management-by-exception (passive), contingent reward, laissez-faire, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, contingent reward and lastly, idealised influence (attributed). Besides, the implication of the nine leadership factors further leads to the foundation of three broad leadership approaches such as transformational including the aspects of inspirational motivation, idealised influence (behaviour), intellectual stimulation, idealised influence (attributed) and individualised consideration.

Additionally, the transactional approach to leadership confines the aspects of management-by-exception (passive), contingent reward, laissez-faire leadership, management-by-exception (active) and other attributes. Lastly, the Laissez-faire leadership style underpins the absence of a cohesive leadership stance, thus highlighting the presence of greater autonomy to contribute to the decision-making process. Irrespective of the effectiveness of the model, the model fails to advocate for a specific leadership style.

MCKINSEY 7-S MODEL

The McKinsey 7-S Model is a detailed framework critically analysing the effectiveness of the organizational design. According to the purview of Thapliyal, Paul, and Sharma (2021), the application of the McKinsey 7S model is dedicated to assessing the effectiveness that can be attained by leveraging the attributes of skill, shared values, style, staff, strategy,

system and structure. Additionally, the interconnection between the proponents of the 7S model highlights the relationship between the hard and soft “s”. Besides, such interconnection underpins the influence of the changing environment on other factors. One of the plausible limitations of the model includes its long-term approach to assessing organizational attributes.

EXPERIENCE REVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

Referring to the insights gathered from the above discussion it can be underlined that the implication of coherent leadership and management theories and approaches plays a seminal role in providing a uniform mission and vision to the employees. Recently, I worked at Sainsbury’s as a management trainee. Besides, the internship program lasted for four months, however, over four months I analysed the scope and extent of the leadership approaches and strategies by the higher, middle, and lower levels of management. Reflecting on my experience I can affirm that the management and leadership approach underpins the aspects of effective collaboration between employees by fostering equal participation between varied departments to attain the core values of the organization.

In addition, as a part of my experience, I can state that the constant communication between employees at varied levels limited the recurrence of conflicts within Sainsbury’s. Furthermore, throughout my experience I observed that the managers emphasise proper delegation of roles and responsibilities thereby, underlining the duties of employees to limit the recurrence of issues. Besides, I also observed that the manager relies on establishing real-time communication both verbally and non-verbally to readily adapt to the prevailing organizational changes.

For leadership development plan, refer to appendix

TOOLS AND THEORIES

SWOT

Benzaghta *et al.* (2021) Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) is a strategic planning framework implemented to evaluate the feasibility of the internal environment. The SWOT analysis for Sainsbury’s has been conducted as below:

Strengths	Weakness
• Coherent private-label products: Sainsbury’s has an expansive range of private-label brands to cater to the evolving taste and preferences of UK customers. Some of the individually owned brands by Sainsbury’s are Sainsbury’s Bank, Tu, Nectar and Argos (Sainsbury’s, 2023) • Brand Image: Due to the brand’s	• Diminishing Returns: The rising costs of materials due to high inflation rates, followed by prevailing price wars within the industry have limited the share of returns for Sainsbury’s.

affluent market presence followed by its large-scale operation, it has managed to develop and sustain an affluent brand image. Additionally, the diverse product segment of the brand has further helped the brand in establishing a multinational presence	
Opportunities • Global Expansion: Considering the evolving taste and preferences of customers there is an apparent need for expanding into different nations. Besides, the affordable price as well as quality products further quantify the chances of expansion. • Rampant technological development: Sainsbury's has been leveraging state-of-art technological innovations within its operations to provide an immersive experience to customers.	Threats • Increasing Prices and Rising Inflation: The galloping inflation rates followed by the falling disposable income in the UK have led to a cost-of-living crisis (The Economist, 2022). Besides, the costs of livening the crisis in the UK limit the extent of customer spending thus, questioning the profitability of supermarket brands. • Excessive competition: There exists high competition from industry players such as Morrisons, Tesco, Asda and others.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of Sainsbury's

(Source: Self-Developed)

APPLICATION OF THEORIES AND MODELS TO THE LEADER OF SAINSBURY'S

From the above discussion, it can be underlined that excessive focus in adhering to leadership models and theories helps in effectively managing the core organizational approaches. In light of the leadership approach at Sainsbury's is based on the core values of continuous improvement and adapting and fostering change. As per the claims of Harrison and Imam (2017), Sainsbury's has undergone the most significant transformation

in terms of management restructuring. Besides, such an approach has been undertaken to save operational costs thereby, maximising the profitability stance. Thus, confining to the postulates of the Contingency Theory it can be underlined that the brand relies on leveraging the position of the leader to establish effective employer and employee relationship. In the perceptions of Huang, Liu, and Huang (2021), the implication of contingency theory suggests that the leader is the most significant link within the leader-subordinate relationship.

Besides, some of the significant competencies required by contingent leaders include effective negotiations, management of conflicts and lastly, developing and sustaining long-term relationships within the workplace. Besides, the implication of contingency theory helped Roberts to adhere to a realistic view of the management and organization thus, allowing him to effectively tackle the recurrence of real-time issues. As a result, concerning the evolving taste and preferences of customers in the wake of the pandemic, Roberts has focused on enhancing the value of its products at low prices. Such the Price Lock promotion campaign was introduced by Sainsbury's affixing the price of more than 2,000 items for eight consecutive weeks. Besides, such an approach not only allowed Sainsbury's to maximise returns but also, added to the competitive advantage of the brand (Sainsbury's, 2022).

Besides, Simon Roberts positive energy, optimistic stance and resilient attitude are some of the major characteristics that makes him a transformational leader. Besides, referring to the insights gathered by Harrison and Imam (2017), the apprehensive leadership behaviours of store managers of Sainsbury's play a seminal role in fostering stability thus, eliminating the recurrence of uncertainties at convenience stores. Additionally, to limit the plausible aftermath of the COVID crisis on the organization, Simon Roberts relied on effectively assessing the changeover strategic thinking. As a part of such an initiative, Robert focused on cohesively examining the impact of the pandemic on customer buying behaviours (Reuters, 2020).

On the other hand, referring to the McKinsey 7 S Model, it can be stated that Roberts relies on actively integrating aspects of strategy, skills, style, system, and shared values to foster and adapt to change within the organization. Considering the expansive restructuring process at Sainsbury's Robert emphasised placing teamwork at the heart of the strategy thereby, contributing to the long-term value-creation process. Moreover, as a response to the ongoing price wars with the UK supermarket industry, Roberts has relied on the use of ethical sourcing strategies to limit the carbon footprint of its operations. Considering the rising sales estimates followed by the rampant increase in differentiated product portfolios Sainsbury's has been focusing on channelising growth and profitability to recover from the COVID aftermath. Although, the company has recently invested approximately £ 500 million to keep product prices significantly low as compared to its competitors (Butler, 2022). Thus, Roberts focused on curbing product prices to the bottom line, irrespective of the increasing material costs. Besides, such an approach likely questions the feasibility of the management to limit the impact of macroeconomic factors on the scope and extent of operations at Sainsbury's.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above analysis that a cohesive and rigid stance to leadership plays a significant role in quantifying the chances to attain organizational effectiveness. Referring to the insights gathered from the above sections it can be stated that Sainsbury's leadership approach is a mix of contingency leadership styles focusing on shaping one's leadership app-approach based on the prevailing stances. Besides, such an approach plays a significant role in motivating employees to coordinate efforts and fulfil the predetermined organizational goals and objectives. Besides, Simon Roberts's positive and robust approach towards leadership and management of employees is targeted towards developing a sustainable future for the brand in both the long and short run.

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APPENDIX: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<i>What are my Leadership development Objectives?</i>	<i>What leadership activities do I need to undertake to achieve my objectives?</i>	<i>Where will I develop my leadership to achieve my leadership objectives?</i>	<i>Target date for achieving my objectives</i>
To become self-aware	Before proceeding with tasks, I need to make sure that I am aware of my competencies and flaws. I think writing down priorities plays a significant role in enhancing self-awareness. Also, attaining regular feedback from colleagues, peers and managers could help in being self-aware	At the workplace	24/04/2023
To enhance my ability to effectively adapt to internal and external changes	Categorically assessing the prevailing changes within the industry to determine the plausible course of action. I think effectively analysing the responses of global leaders to limit the aftermaths of the pandemic would help me to understand the change process in an organizational context.	At the workplace	28/05/2023
To foster effective delegation of roles and responsibilities	Identifying the pertinent strengths and weaknesses of colleagues by effectively evaluating the designated roles and responsibilities is likely to	At the workplace	28/06/2023

	strengthen my delegation skills		
To practice rational decision-making	Focusing on the use of critical thinking and problem-solving approaches to effectively gauge specific situations. I think I need to enhance my leadership skills to facilitate rational decision-making. Additionally, I think observing the methods and approaches to foster effective communications by global leaders can help me enhance my decision-making skills	At the workplace	21/04/2023

Table 1: Leadership Development Plan

(Source: Self-Developed)