



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND EMPLOYEE TASK PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at examining the impact of leadership development strategies on employee task performance. This study adapted coaching/mentoring, training/development, and integration/delegation as strategies of leadership development, while the contingency theory was adapted as the theoretical foundation for the study. Findings revealed that the combined effect of these identified factors has an impact on employee task performance. The leadership development strategies prove a synergic effect and increase the overall employee task performance. The paper concludes that leadership development strategies have a significant impact on employee task performance thus we recommend that management should ensure that relevant coaching and mentoring programs are put in place to help employees improve their level of task performance, and continuous training should be organized for employees to improve their level of performance.

KEYWORDS: *Task Performance, Leadership Development Strategies, Coaching, Training, Integration*

1. INTRODUCTION

In every organization, employees are the most important assets. Their roles are fundamental to achieving all organizational goals and objectives in the workplace. Therefore, all implemented work cultures, strategies, and policies should produce a more favorable work environment that promotes growth and personal development for every employee. This is because every employee leans on the system's support in the discharge of responsibility. Unless an employee's career training is linked to organizational goals, employees are, in other words, free to act in any way that meets their objectives. To prevent this, a strategic leadership development program is required. Through a structured and guided development strategy, employees will be assisted in reaching their full potential. Since the advent of globalization, which has transformed existing business models, researchers have given a lot of attention to the concept of leadership. What is undeniably true is that effective leadership has influenced others to achieve desired outcomes (Hegarty & Moccia, 2018).

Whereas leadership can also be defined as guiding people to do things they have never done before or facilitating employees to show commitment to their work and contribute their best efforts to help organizations succeed (Leroy, Segers, Van Dierendonck, & Den Hartog, 2018), team leaders are constantly faced with the task of moving the team from where they are to a more desirable place. Process changes are required by the oil and gas industry's work culture for employees to be more efficient, effective, and satisfied at work. To develop an effective workforce, leadership strategies should engage best practices in training, skills, education, and the accumulation of relevant experience. While the need for leaders and leadership practices has changed significantly with time, there has been a relatively significant increase in leadership over the years. This concept has been reshaped over time resulting in current ideas on leadership which propose that the best form of leadership is to act by the situation and respond with specific actions that aid in the resolution of contingencies (Zeb, Ahmad, & Saeed 2018).

Such responses are products of intensive and target-driven training. Since studies have found that leadership practices have a notable impact on employees' behavior and contributions to the organization and, consequently, result in an impact on employees' performance and productivity, researchers have also investigated leadership practices and training strategies for their ability to improve employee performance by influencing attitudes, motivation, and behavior (Marescaux, Winne, Forrier 2019). Both the improvement in employee performance and the efficient leadership strategies deployed towards achieving them have been found to have an impact on organizational culture and success. Therefore, to manage employee-related uncertainties in a dynamic business environment, appropriate leadership styles and practices must be adopted. In essence, leadership consists of every quality and skill that could affect the realization of objectives and the well-being of employees in an organization (Putri, Mirzania, & Hartanto, 2020). Organizations gain maximally through effective leadership that stimulates employees' ability to adapt their attitudes and behavior to varying job roles and demands within the organization. Despite the various studies that have



been carried out, there still seems to be a low level of employee effectiveness. As a result, this study focuses on the evaluation of leadership development strategies, styles, and practices, as well as their relationship with employee workplace effectiveness.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of Study

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between leadership development strategies and employees' workplace effectiveness and the specific objectives of this research are to:

- i. Investigate the effect of coaching & mentoring on employee task performance.
- ii. Study the relationship between coaching & mentoring and employee task performance
- iii. Identify the effect of training & development on employee task performance

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Leadership Development Strategies

The concept of leadership development involves the processes by which employee competencies and preparation for leadership and management roles within the firm are developed. A leadership development strategy is deployed towards the development of abilities and the formation of perspectives for motivating and guiding persons toward the accomplishment of certain goals. It comprises elements such as education and growth, individual decision-making involvement, coaching, job empowerment, and authorization. (Ollrich, 2005). In today's economic and competitive environment, leadership development is becoming an increasingly vital and strategic requirement for firms. (Sheri-Lynne, & Parbudyal 2007). Leadership, therefore, is the ability to motivate others to work hard to achieve specific goals. This will be explored in the study and the connection between leadership development and leadership strategies will also be assessed. The research of Turner, Baker, Schroeder, Johnson, & Chung, (2018), indicate that the formulation of leadership development strategies helps in clarifying the way leadership strategies are executed. The research also explored the implication of leadership development strategies for recruitment and talent management, and its results outline approaches to leadership development. Furthermore, it revealed that many businesses fail to align the goals of leadership strategy, leadership development strategies, and business strategy, and this, consequently, disrupts successful leadership development.

Overall, the coaching and mentoring sessions influenced employees and leaders to develop supporting skills, own each other's problems, and offer professional support and development. This supports the view that coaching and mentoring sessions facilitate improved communication between leaders and employees, build a more supportive culture, and distribute leadership roles (Yarborough, 2018). Therefore, leadership development practices are essential in delivering individual-level leader outcomes. In line with the points mentioned above, Subramony, Segers, Chadwick & Shyamsunder (2018) support the view that leadership development practices influence the development of interpersonal skills, knowledge, and abilities. Their study reveals that human capital and social capital mediate the relationship between Leadership Development Programs (LDPs) and sales growth which in turn reflects the underlying impact of investing in leadership and delivering organizational performance.

2.1.2 Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are not new phenomena in the realm of human resource management training and development. Coaching and mentoring are human activities that are focused on the learning and development of individuals (Neupane, 2015). Coaching is a method of delivering large-scale results because it initiates a powerful working relationship and a unique communication style between participants. It can address goal setting, strategic planning, creating engagement, motivating and inspiring, teamwork, problem-solving, career development, delivering feedback, appraisal, and relationship alignment in the workplace in a variety of ways. (Whitmore, 2017).

Coaching and mentoring improves employees' talents through an effective learning process that goes beyond typical training approaches. It analyses skill inadequacies and plans/organizes internal development programs to bridge identified skill gaps to change employee behavior and improve work performance (Gilley, 1996). Individual growth is the primary goal of coaching and mentoring, and many firms are now focusing on creating successful coaching and mentoring programs to boost employee morale and productivity (Hahn, 2008).

According to Bartlett (2001), there is a positive relationship between coaching/mentoring and employee commitment, and HR professionals should adapt new research methods to demonstrate to organizational decision-makers that coaching and mentoring contribute to desired workplace attitudes, which may influence behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. According to Lee and Bruvold (2003), comprehensive coaching and mentoring programs are favorably associated with productivity, staff retention, and organizational success. Although the source of competitive advantage indeed refers to human resources rather than the strategies used to attract, utilize, and retain them, coaching and mentoring may be regarded as a solid beginning point for developing a pool of superior employee resources and talents (Agwu & Luke, 2015). In the business sector, the workforce is critical since it is the engine that drives business operations and organizational growth (Talukder & Jan 2017). Many intrinsic and



external factors can influence workforce performance (Talukder & Jan 2017). Coaching and mentoring are essential extrinsic variables that drive workforce and corporate performance achievement (Sidhu & Nizam, 2020).

2.1.3 Training and Development

Training and development are one of the most important aspects of an organization's human resource management. It refers to learning activities aimed at acquiring specific knowledge and abilities to complete a specified goal (Cole, 2002). Training focuses on a specific activity or duty, such as the need for efficient staff to operate newly acquired machinery or an efficient sales force to maximize sales volumes. Furthermore, training and development is a systematic and planned function that helps to modify employees' behaviors through learning activities, programs, and events that assist in achieving the abilities, knowledge, competencies, and skills to do the job successfully and efficiently (Hinkin & Tracey, 2010). Training and development is thus a systematic process of growing people's professional understanding, knowledge, and abilities to help them improve organizational and individual performance. According to Dessler (2011), firms can achieve their commercial objectives, overall organizational values, and mission, and foster an innovative culture through staff training and development and performance enhancement. It can also help to boost the company's productivity and profitability by improving personnel competencies.

Furthermore, the specialized skills, knowledge, and competencies gained via training and development help to improve employee satisfaction, which in turn helps to reduce staff turnover (Siddiqui, 2008). Training and development also provide competitive advantages for companies by reducing accidents, scarp, and damages; eliminating performance deficiencies; meeting additional needs of employees, and encouraging them to stay in the associated company for an extended period, all of which help to improve customer service (Aswathappa, 2007). As a result, training and development in a firm are one of the most important tools for improving staff competence, and work qualities, strengthening management accomplishment, lowering production costs, increasing employee morale, and decreasing employee turnover (Cole, 2002). They also help to bridge the gap between organizational occurrences and desired employee competence levels. According to Singh (2014), numerous scholars debate the necessity of training and development as well as the costs associated with these activities, but they all agree that training and development improve individuals' capacities.

According to most authors, staff training is a sophisticated human resource strategy that can have a significant impact on an organization's success (Adefope, 2017). Organizations can increase their employees' leadership development by offering refresher courses, organizing scholarships, doing on-the-job training, or sending their employees to formal education to improve their talents for organizational performance goals. Employees may also choose to fund their professional development. This should be well accepted so that after acquiring new abilities that improve organizational performance, employees are considered for advancement as a motivating element, and a motivated workforce almost always assures good performance (Kinya, Cheronon, & Moguche, 2020).

2.1.4 Integration and Delegation

According to Heller and Hindle (1998) delegation can range from a major appointment such as the leadership of a team to other smaller tasks, such as the examination of reports in an organization. Effective delegation involves the situation of increased responsibility that can provide the subordinate with an enriched level of satisfaction as well as a greater sense of self-worth. Effective delegation is a type of employee psychological empowerment that often, forms the basis for superior performance. The unending process of effective delegation is integral to the manager's role. The process begins with the analysis, selecting the tasks that the manager could, and should delegate when such tasks are selected, the parameters of each should be clearly defined. This helps the delegator to appoint an appropriate subordinate and to provide as accurate information about the job as possible. In any role, proper briefing or orientation is essential because the delegator cannot hold people or the employee responsible for vague or undefined tasks so delegated (Ugoani, 2020).

The critical factor that an organization needs to succeed involves developing abilities in subordinates and motivating and empowering them. A good leadership style enhances delegation and can motivate subordinates better for higher performance. Also, a leader's attention to corporate goals can motivate subordinates most effectively. Effective motivation depends on having clear objectives which will be achieved with good management. Abilities are learned, and never inborn, therefore, the processes of training, and development are necessary to develop abilities based on skills. Delegating authority is a measure of psychological empowerment that can effectively boost employee performance. It is a unique leadership technique that helps subordinates and allows them to participate in decision-making and enhances subordinate feelings of self-esteem and encourages the development of open communication and relationship building in the workgroup (Ugoani, 2020).

Effective delegation enhances learning. Learning develops the mind and objective reasoning. It is useful in terms of personal development and a sense of growth that builds confidence. As confidence increases, so will self-control and self-awareness which broadens the ability for performance. Zhang, et al (2017) posit that authentic leadership promotes positive emotions among employees and therefore encourages them to seek feedback from their superiors. According to them, when power and authority are delegated to employees, they have more freedom to work autonomously and experience a range of positive outcomes such as higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovative behavior, and task performance. They emphasize that psychological empowerment is positively related to increased intrinsic task motivation.



Consequently, the delegation of authority to employees gives the customer a higher level of care and attention, builds customers' positive perceptions of the organization, and creates loyalty and mutual respect for an organization (Al-Jammal, Al-Khaawneh, & Hamadat, 2015). The results of applying this principle have enhanced employees' competence, provided different functional rights to them, and the necessity to transform from dictatorship to democracy which is associated with modern trends of management and employees' desires and wishes. In addition, managers will be able to maintain their positions and preserve the process of facilitating business affairs and employees' loyalty, enabling them to be retained through achieving performance efficiency (Al-Jammal, Al-Khaawneh, & Hamadat, 2015).

2.1.5 Employee Task Performance

Task performance can be defined as the proficiency with which an individual worker executes major job-related tasks. The concept of task performance can be likened to other synonymous concepts such as – “job-specific task proficiency”, “technical proficiency”, and “in-role performance” like work quality, work quantity, and job knowledge.” (Campbell, 1990; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Maxham, Netemeyer, & Lichtenstein, 2008). Task performance is defined as the proficiency with which job incumbents execute activities that are officially known as part of their jobs which add to the organization's technical core either directly by executing a part of its technical process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). The studies note that the level of contribution should be included in task performance; direct contributions in the case of production employees or indirect in the case of supervisors. Also, Murphy (1989) defines task performance as “the accomplishment of tasks within an incumbent's job description.” Furthermore, as days go by, more focus is on specific aspects of task performance such as innovation and customer-focused behavior which have significantly become relevant as institutions place a larger emphasis on customer service (Sonnentag & Frese, 2001).

Task performance is a job incumbent's behavior that relates to the individual's ability to transform raw materials into goods and services specific to the job and core technical skills. (Cheng, Chiu, Chang, & Johnstone, 2014). The key elements related to the task performance concept are knowledge, skills, ability, attitude, work itself, and commitment (Cheng & Osman, 2021). Murphy and Margulies (2004) define task performance as the accomplishment of tasks within an incumbent's job description. Campbell et al. (1993) also include elements related to task performance in their taxonomies of job performance (e.g., core technical proficiency, general soldiering proficiency, job-specific task proficiency, and non-job-specific task proficiency).

Researchers conceptualize task performance as behaviors that contribute directly or indirectly to the technical core and behaviors that are recognized as part of the job or job description. However, Rotundo (2000) notes that restricting a definition of task performance to include only those behaviors listed in a job description is problematic because job descriptions for the same job may differ from one organization to the next, which makes it difficult to compare performance across organizations. Furthermore, Rotundo notes that jobs are constantly changing without these changes being reflected in job descriptions. Therefore, measures of performance that depend on the content of a job description may not be accurate. Based on these arguments, Rotundo recommends that task performance be viewed as actions and behaviors that contribute directly or indirectly to the production of a good or the provision of a service.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study anchors its root on the contingency theory which recommends that no leadership style is precise as a stand-alone as the leadership style used is reliant upon the factors such as the quality, situation of the followers, or several other variables. “According to this theory, there is no single right way to lead because the internal and external dimensions of the environment require the leader to adapt to that particular situation”. In most cases, leaders do not change only the dynamics and environment, employees within the organization change. In common sense, the theories of contingency are a category of behavioral theory that challenges that there is no one finest way of leading/organizing and that the style of leadership that is operative in some circumstances may not be effective in others (Greenleaf, 1977).

Contingency theorists assume that a leader is the focus of a leader-subordinate relationship while situational theorists opine that the subordinates play a pivotal role in defining the relationship. Although situational leadership emphasizes mostly the leader, it translates the significance of the focus into a group dynamic. “These studies of the relationships between groups and their leaders have led to some of our modern theories of group dynamics and leadership”. The theory of situational leadership proposes that the style of leadership should be accorded to the maturity of the subordinates (Bass, 1997). “The situational leadership model, first introduced in 1969, theorized that there was no unsurpassed way to lead and those leaders, to be effective, must be able to adapt to the situation and transform their leadership style between task-oriented and relationship-oriented”. Contingency theory focuses on the selection of leadership in the environment where the leadership is required; whichever type of leadership fits the best in the organization is applied there. This theory indicates that there is no singular form of leadership style which is suitable for all industrial environments but, instead, it varies from organization to organization.



2.3 Relationship between Leadership Development Strategies and Employee Task Performance

Imran and Tanveer (2015) examined the impact of training and development on employees' performance in banks in Pakistan. The study aimed to examine how training and development impact the performance level of employees in banks in Pakistan. The study employed the descriptive survey design. Data collection was done using a questionnaire with a sample size of 150 through convenience and referral sampling to select employees from six banks in Pakistan. Data collected were analyzed using frequency tests and bar charts on the response rates using SPSS. The result of the study revealed that training and development had a positive impact on the job performance of employees in the banks. The result also showed that training and development had a positive impact on job knowledge, work quality, functional skills, motivation, and loyalty thereby improving performance.

Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) examined the effect of mentoring on employee job performance in the Nigerian service sector. The study aimed to evaluate employee job performance by considering the effect of mentoring on the performance of employees in the Nigerian service sector. The study used the descriptive survey research design with a population of 460 employees and the sample size of 250 employees was drawn using the Taro Yamane sample determination formula while the quota sampling technique was used in the distribution of the research instrument. The instrument for data gathering was a well-structured questionnaire while the analysis was carried out using correlation and regression models through SPSS and Microsoft Excel statistical tools. The result of the study showed that mentoring and its dimensions are positive and significantly related to employee performance in the Nigerian service sector.

Prechawong, Anmanatrakul, Pinit, and Koul (2020) conducted a study on the influence of mentoring and coaching relationships on the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of vocational teachers in Thailand. The study aimed to investigate the pros and cons of mentoring and coaching for teachers and examine the effects of mentoring and coaching relationships on the job satisfaction and life satisfaction of teachers. The study used a sample of 44 vocational teachers selected from 7 provinces. Data was collected using questionnaires and the analysis was carried out using correlation and linear regression statistics. The result of the study revealed a strong, positive and significant relationship between mentoring and coaching and the job satisfaction of vocational teachers in Thailand.

Sidhu and Nizam (2020) also explored coaching and employee performance using the mediating effect of rewards and recognition in the Malaysian corporate context. The study aimed at examining the impact of workplace coaching on employees' performance in Malaysia. The study adopted a survey research design. The study used the convenience sampling technique in selecting respondents for the study. The questionnaire was used to collect data for the study and the data collected were subjected to analysis using SPSS Amos Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modelling, and Regression Analysis. The results of the study revealed that coaching had a positive and significant impact on the performance of employees in Malaysia.

Neupane (2015) examined the effect of coaching and mentoring on employee performance in the UK hotel industry. The research aimed to find out if coaching and mentoring affected the performance of employees in the UK hotel industry. The study used the cross-sectional survey method. A sample of 172 managers and supervisors was chosen for the study using a convenience sampling technique. The data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using the arithmetic mean, correlation, and regression with the aid of SPSS 20. The result of the study confirmed that coaching and mentoring are positively related to employee performance. The result also revealed that coaching has a significant and positive correlation with the overall performance of the organization.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research findings of this study, it is very evident that there is a significant and positive relationship between coaching and mentoring, training and development, and integration and delegation which all form the dimensions of leadership development strategies with employee task performance. This suggests that there is a direct link between leadership development strategies and employee task performance. When organizations put in place necessary leadership development strategies that are aimed at developing and improving the employees, it will help in the enhancement of the workplace performance of employees. Thus, we recommend that:

- Management should ensure that relevant coaching and mentoring programs are put in place to help employees improve their level of task performance.
- Management should make sure that there is continuous training for employees to improve their level of performance in terms of tasks assigned to them.
- Management of oil and gas firms should create an environment that gives room for delegation of authority that will help employees in their quest to develop their leadership skills.

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