Identification Of Leadership Strengths And Opportunities With Different Approaches: My Experience

Introduction

This summative reflection is focused on my own experience of leadership whereby I acknowledge my strengths and opportunities and formulate plans for improvement. Understanding that leadership is a vast and complex subject, once said “to have as many definitions as there are people who have tried to describe it” (Northouse, 2019), I will focus this reflection on my experience in my current role.

By analysing traits, skills and behaviours I explore what I have learned about myself as a leader and the implications of these results on my development. Using the results of these studies I have formed development goals to improve my leadership capabilities in the future.

What have I learned about myself as a leader?

Utilising the different questionnaires, I have identified my leadership strengths and opportunities with different approaches. Focusing on the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (Northouse, 2019) I had five of my peers and colleagues measure my personal characteristics and compared these results against what I believe my trait characterises are (Table 1). It is interesting to note that I scored myself lower than my peers in almost every question.

I am still new in my current position and as such, my colleagues and direct leader have only a few months of experience working with me. I believe this has affected their perception of me, as I have changed my behaviours to match their expectations of my role, explaining their high measurements. Being inexperienced in this new position I have deferred to other’s decisions and advice over my own knowledge while I settle, this is potentially the reason that questions 3 and 4 (Table 1) measuring self-confidence and self-assuredness, were the lowest of all the scores.

What are the practical implications of these results on my leadership development?

I have found after completing the Skills Questionnaire (Northouse 2019) I have higher technical skills than conceptual, suggesting that I am suited to supervisory management. This has huge implications for my leadership development, as the goal of my current development plan, which includes the Australian Institute of Business’s Master of Business Administration degree, is to become Top Tier management. While I enjoy technical knowledge and think it is beneficial regardless of what level of management you are, I must improve my knowledge and understanding of conceptual management and learn how to work with ideas rather than things.

The study of followers has never been a major part of the study of leadership, of which I do not agree with. The quote “attitude reflects leadership” (Julius Campbell, 2000) hints at the importance of followers regarding leadership. Simply put, you cannot have leaders without

followers. The moral and effort your followers put in is a direct response to how you manage you team. Being acutely aware of this I have measured to have high human skills and feel this is a factor as to the results from my former employees in the Leadership Trait quiz. Practically this would imply that regardless of the direction I take my followers, whether positive or negative, they will follow me.

What specific development goals and concrete action plans would improve my leadership?

Leadership is a vast and complex subject that no one has managed to accurately describe in one simple definition since academics began studying the subject. People are varied and unique and the same can be said of work environments, there is no simple process or procedure to lead a group of followers. Knowing this and acknowledging the results from the Leadership Trait Questionnaire, it is clear to presume that without constant reflection on one's own leadership traits, skills and behaviours, you cannot grow and progress as a leader in any environment. With that I mind I will be keeping a diary that I will write in each day describing my leadership encounters, and then at the end of the month set some time to thoroughly reflect on my traits, skills and behaviours and analysis my leadership using the concepts learned from my MBA course.

Conclusion

I have learned that self-confidence and self-assuredness are my biggest trait opportunities to improve on, after having my peers complete a Trait questionnaire of me. Currently I am more suited to supervisory management, not my goal top-tier management. To improve these traits and skills I am participating in and planning to complete a Master of Business Administration, but this will not improve my opportunities unless I am constantly reflecting on my traits, skills and behaviours. Without constant reflection on myself, I can never evolve and move forward.