EST 1892 LSBU

Management and Organisations

Individual Report

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Table of contents:

Introduction: 2
Task 1: Case study 3
Question 1: 3
Question 2: 4
Question 3: 5
Task 2: Reflective writing 6
Task 3: Recruitment plan 7
i. Job advertisement: 8
ii.Recruitment Resources: 11
3.2 Selection plan: 11
3.3 Development plan: 12
Conclusion: 14
References: 14

Introduction:

This report aims to explore the complexities of managing organisations through examining leadership, workplace cultures, and navigating factors affecting the business environment. Furthermore, Human Resources strategies will be applied through a staff resourcing and development plan.

Task 1: Case study

Question 1:

Kotter (1990) may identify Amahle as displaying transformational leadership through her abilities to motivate, empower others with opportunities for development, and prioritizing her vision to revive Mthembu's performance. Through Amahle actively working with others and consulting team members prior to decision-making, a democratic leadership style is observed (Likert,1961).

Alternatively, it may be argued that Amahle's qualities more closely resemble those of a manager. The Blake Mouton Grid (Reddin,1970) may be used to identify Amahle as working towards a 'team management' style, where managers motivate subordinates to reach optimal production. Furthermore, Amahle exerts expert and referent power to engage employees (Raven,1959).

However, researchers have criticized the examination of management and leadership as isolated approaches - Birkshaw (2012) suggested that a person may possess both qualities but exert them under different circumstances. Furthermore, Tourish (2016) suggested that an infatuation with status may risk overlooking the individual's weaknesses. For instance, Amahle makes the fundamental attribution error (Harris, 1967) by focusing on Mthembu's personal factors but neglecting external factors, including concerns Mthembu raised with changes Amahle previously made. Amahle's failiure to successfully influence processes related to achieving goals may evidence weak leadership (Stogdill,1950). Contrastingly, Amahle's quality of leadership may not be defined by Mthembu's behaviour, as employee behaviour is self-directed (Pink, 2011).

Question 2:

The ‘Situational Leadership’ theory (Hershey and Blanchard,1982) is classified as a contingency approach. As per the original Hersey-Blanchard model, leaders were advised to adapt their approach based on the maturity level of subordinates and their willingness to complete certain tasks. Recently, a revised model was published. The ‘SLII’ theory argues leadership styles should be adapted based on the competence and commitment of employees (Blanchard,1988). Here, the effectiveness of Amahle’s leadership approach will be examined under both models.

When Mthembu relocated to Ubuntu’s sales department, he displayed moderate competence. This was evident as whilst he was recognized for proactivity, efficiency, and dedication, he lacked technical knowledge. Furthermore, Mthembu was described as “committed.” Resultantly, Amahle may have exerted the ‘supporting’ and ‘participating’ leadership styles - these styles have been observed in 90% of high-performing leaders (Hambleton et al.,1982).

As Mthembu’s performance declined, the models suggest Amahle should have changed her approach. Due to Mthembu displaying some competence but low commitment, the ‘coaching’ and ‘selling’ leadership styles should have been implemented. However, Amahle failed to adapt to the new circumstances. Her ‘participating’ and ‘supporting’ leadership styles remained prominent. This was evident through Amahle continuously displaying high relationship and low directive behaviour. For instance, Amahle assigned Mthembu major projects and worked with him rather than instructing him. Furthermore, Mthembu was able to deceive Amahle regarding the project’s progress, signaling that he was insufficiently supervised.

If Amahle had successfully adapted to the ‘coaching’ style through displaying high directive and relationship behaviour, Mthembu’s performance may have significantly improved (Hambleton and Gumbert,1982). Researchers suggest that leaders who demonstrate high support and directiveness to subordinates may positively impact employee satisfaction (Picolo et al.,2012). Satisfied workers may become 13% more productive (Oxford University,2019).

However, the SLT theory has been subject to criticism. It has been widely argued that there is limited empirical evidence used to support the approach (Blank et al.,1990). Furthermore, terms such as follower ‘competence and commitment’ are subject to interpretation bias. For instance, the halo effect may lead supervisors to forming an overly positive view of employee development level (Ones et al.,2005). This was demonstrated by Amahle, who “sometimes downplays the seriousness” of Mthembu’s behaviour. Resultantly, an improper adaptation to new circumstances negatively affected overall team performance.

To conclude, Amahle demonstrated the ‘supporting’ leadership style throughout this scenario. However, the SLT theory suggests that the ‘coaching’ leadership style should have been implemented to respond to Mthembu’s new behaviour.

Question 3:

As highlighted by Stuart (1995), “organisational change... often requires changing the culture too.” A task culture may currently be perceived as dominant in Ubuntu (Handy,1996) due to the Amahle’s emphasis on the completion of tasks within autonomous and flexible teams. However, Mthembu’s non-compliance with Amahle’s directions is adversely impacting the team’s capacity to successfully deliver projects. Resultantly, implementing a role culture may be beneficial as there is an enhanced emphasis on individual responsibility and accountability (CMI,2015). However, a role culture alone may not address the underlying issues of Mthembu’s wellbeing and financial concerns. The pluralist approach argues that multiple cultures may be present in an organisation (Martin,1995). Therefore, alongside role culture, it is essential to maintain elements of a person-oriented culture to address Mthembu’s concerns effectively. For instance, organisational culture may ensure that the employee’s hierarchy of needs are satisfied (Greenberg & Baron,2003). Particularly, through ensuring that the physiological and security needs of employees are internalised in organisational culture, employee performance will significantly improve (Maslow,1954).

To conclude, fostering a ‘quality of working life’ culture (ACAS,2019) may be more appropriate than implementing a ‘role culture,’ as emphasis should be placed on addressing physiological needs as opposed to enhancing tighter authoritarian control.

Task 2: Reflective writing

Through this reflection, three primary insights will be extracted from each topic and applied to my organisational experiences. The relevance of each topic to my future career will be highlighted.

During week two, I learnt that adapting organisational strategies to conditions in the external environment is crucial for business survival. Tools such as PESTEL analysis enable

organisations to adjust to external trends and changes, facilitating strategic planning and informed decision-making (Morrison et al.,2017). The ability to effectively conduct PESTEL analysis will be highly beneficial to my future career, as marketing is a dynamic field where continuous change is inevitable (Rust,2020). Furthermore, I will be able to manipulate trends such as shifts in consumer behaviour to meet market demands. Next, through learning about environmental dynamism, uncertainty and munificence (Dess and Beard,1984), I have been able to adopt a multifaceted view of the business environment. Lastly, familiarity with Porter's Five Forces allows me to understand the attractiveness of different industries, crucial for my future as an entrepreneur (Porter,1989).

During week six, I learnt that informal groups and countercultures may drastically impact organisational performance. Group membership fosters compliance with informally established norms of acceptable behaviour to satisfy the "psychological and social needs" of individuals (Mullins,2023). As per the Hawthorne Studies, this membership may restrict the production levels of workers to a socially acceptable standard (French,1953), leading to behaviours such as 'social loafing' (Ringelmann,1913). Through this module, I became conscious of a similar dynamic occurring in my workplace; I usually feel uncomfortable and excluded when I surpass the output of other group members who deliberately work slowly. Next, I was surprised to learn that highly performing groups may pose challenges to organisations. Intergroup bias may occur, leading to the alienation, denigration and stereotyping of other teams (Hewstone et al.,2002). Following reflection, I identified this occurring in my secondary school institution; children in higher ability sets manifested hostile behaviour towards others. A culture of toxicity was fostered. Lastly, learning about Tuckman's theory of group formation prompted me to consider my university group work experiences (Tuckman,1965). Our innovation may have been inhibited as we hadn't progressed past the 'storming' stage. Understanding the complexity of group formation and development will help me to work collaboratively and positively contribute to team dynamics. Furthermore, I recognised that engaging with in-class discussions is an effective way to build psychological safety, maximise innovation and avoid groupthink. This may allow me to prepare for enhancing team performance the workplace.

During week eight, I learnt that the approach management takes towards implementing change is pivotal as it may determine the degree of employee receptivity. For instance, employees often demonstrate resistance to organisational change (Folger et al.,1989). This resistance may be irrational and occur due to survival mechanisms activating in the amygdalae (Riches,2013). To

mitigate resistance, Lewin (1951) suggests presenting factual and testimonial evidence to employees to justify the change and encourage rationality. This understanding will benefit my career as I can identify ways to build social support in favour of change. Next, through reflection on Kotter's '8-step' model (Kotter,1996), I identified that deviating from core steps when planning change may be detrimental. For instance, the management team of my college aspired to undergo academisation but failed to 'build coalition' with employees and key stakeholders beforehand. As a result, staff engaged in months of strike action as a form of protest. This has taught me that the change process is lengthy and systematic, but failiure to implement it effectively can have serious consequences. Furthermore, this experience underlined that a 'marching platform' approach to change may lead to resentment and toxicity (Lewin,1951).

Task 3: Recruitment plan

The aim of this task is to enhance understanding of HR functions through practical application.

Recruitment team:

The following staff will be involved in the recruitment process.

Management Team:

- Director of Operations
- Project Administrator
- Business Unit Manager

HR Team:

- Senior Talent Acquisition Partner
- Training Manager
- Hiring Manager

i. Job advertisement:

Job description:

- **Job Title:** Business Analyst
- **Grade:** Junior Position
- **Location:** London
- **Duration:** Full time contract

Context:

As a Junior Business Analyst, you will work with world-class clients at our London Headquarters. You will be expected to embody the company's core values, including integrity, commitment and innovation.

Job Purpose:

The primary job purpose entails stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, rapport building and data reporting.

Key Tasks & Responsibilities:

Key tasks include:

- Communicating with stakeholders to understand project requirements;
- Assess profitability of strategic initiatives;
- Analyse KPI's and other key metrics;
- Maintain a rapport with key stakeholders;
- Collaborate with cross-functional teams.

Occasional tasks include:

- Research emerging technologies.

Performance Standards:

- Project must align with stakeholder expectations regarding quality, budget and timeframe.

Working conditions:

- Salary: £32,000 – 38,000 (depending on experience).
- Hours of Work: 40hrs/week. This may be altered at the company's discretion.
- Holidays: Following the Working Time Regulations, you may claim holidays for the hours you have worked.

Our Benefits Include:

- Complimentary access to online courses and training opportunities;
- Access to industry-leading software;
- Recognition and rewards schemes in place.

Equal Opportunities Employer:

We welcome candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Person Specification:

Essential requirements:

- **Skills, knowledge and competencies:**
  - Minimum educational requirement: Bachelor's Degree achieved in a 2:1 or above;
  - Familiarity with Excel;
  - Knowledge of industry trends and developments.
- **Experience:**
  - 1-2 years of experience in a customer-facing role.
- **Personality characteristics:**
  - Ability to perform well under pressure;
  - Excellent communication skills.
- **Development potential:**

- Candidate must complete regular on-the-job training.

Desirable requirements:

- **Skills, knowledge and competencies:**
  - Negotiation skills.
- **Experience:**
  - Internship experience in a similar field.
- **Certified qualifications:**
  - Ownership of accredited certifications.

Recruitment budget:

Recruitment budget may entail:

- Advertising costs - £2,000
- Onboarding training costs - £400
- Interviews and assessment costs - £4,000
- Background checks - £1,200
- Referral scheme bonus - £300

Total approximate cost: £7,900

ii.Recruitment Resources:

Firstly, as current employees are proficient in understanding the organization's culture and objectives (Ricardson,2018), internal recruitment will be considered. Employee referral schemes will be used as referred workers have low turnover rates and high performance (Van,2013). As digital advertisements effectively target highly talented applicants, this will be used as an external recruitment tool (Russo et al.,2000). Lastly, social media will be leveraged as it has evolved into a tool widely used to facilitate recruitment (Ali et al.,2020).

3.2 Selection plan:

An effective selection process is central to organisational survival (Omisore and Okofu,2016). Through this plan, a selection process will be proposed and justified.

Firstly, curriculum vitaes will be collected as this allows the candidates' education, qualifications and experiences to be examined, ensuring compatibility with the job requirements (McEnitre et al.,2011). Applications will be sifted through keyword scanning.

Following this, interviews will be conducted to discern whether the candidate has the requisite qualifications for the job (Highhouse et al.,2016). Furthermore, interviews may allow interviewers and applicants to determine the person-organisation fit (Bangerter et al.,2012). This was supported by Feldman (1977), who proposed that interviews provide vital communication between two parties which prompt the consideration of whether a "mutually beneficial" relationship may be achieved. Behaviour description interviews may be optimal, as examining past behaviour may provide insight into potential future behaviour (Janz,1989).

Due to the reliable and predictive nature of psychological testing (Harris et al.,1990), it has been identified as a best practice for candidate selection (Terpstra and Rozell,1993). Particularly, there has been a major adoption of personality and ability tests (Keenan,1995). However, whilst personality traits may influence work-related habits (Motowidlo et al.,1997), the candidate's ability to perform key tasks may provide a superior indication of performance and competency (Campbell, 1990). Resultantly, situational judgement tests may be implemented (Christian et al.,2010). This method is argued to measure "tacit knowledge" and "practical intelligence" (Wagner and Sternberg,1985). These competencies are crucial to Business Analysts, who frequently engage in complex tasks such as problem solving and stakeholder engagement.

Finally, cognitive abilities will be assessed. For instance, Raven's Progressive Matrices test may be used to test 'general cognitive abilities' (Raven,2000). These skills are vital to the day-to-day tasks of Business Analysts, including problem-solving and data analysis. However, cognitive testing should be carefully applied, as scores may be affected by test-retest reliability (Scharfen,2017).

Selection Team:

The selection team will consist of the Senior Talent Acquisition Manager, Hiring Manager, and Line Manager.

References and background checks:

Reference checks will be used to ensure accuracy of candidate behaviour and assess past behaviour (Hendricks et al.,2019). An external agency will be used to conduct reference and background checks. A DBS check and SC clearance is vital.

3.3 Development plan:

Development plans offer far-reaching benefits for employees and the organisation. Through aiming to enhance employees' performance abilities (McCauley & Hezlett,2001), human capital is nurtured. This creates competitive advantages for firms and strongly correlates with high firm performance (Campbell et al.,2010). Through this, vital tacit and explicit knowledge may be attained (Nonaka et al.,1995). Employees may be encouraged to self-identify opportunities for growth through reflecting on gaps in their own skillset (Fugate et al.,2004). This may be achieved through the 'Four Stages of Competence' cycle, wherein the need for development becomes consciously recognised, and appropriate action is taken to enhance performance (Burch, 1970). Here, methods of learning and development will be proposed and justified.

The learning and development paradigm has shifted, with 35% of employees actively engaging in self-directed learning methods (ATD, 2016). For instance, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) allow learners to complete training remotely. Through these courses, 67% of employees have gained the ability to apply newly developed skills and knowledge to their jobs (Hamori,2018). Whilst trailblazing companies have adopted this as a cost-effective training technique, the low completion rates of MOOCs may, to some extent, signal ineffectiveness (Jordan,2010). Resultantly, additional forms of training may be proposed.

Recent literature has highlighted the important role of supervisors in encouraging employees to engage in learning activities (Colquitt et al.,2000). Following the Leader Member Exchange Theory (LMX), it has been suggested that employees who frequently communicate with supervisors are statistically more likely to learn voluntarily (Walumbwa et al., 2009). Resultantly, mentorship opportunities may be offered which involves pairing supervisors with newer

employees. This pairing may encourage learning based on observation, imitation, and vicarious experiences (Bandura,1977). Furthermore, the interpersonal skills of supervisors may be developed through this behavioral modelling technique (Latham,1979). As both parties may receive benefits, the likelihood of engagement is increased (Homans,1958). In contrast to remote learning, mentorship fosters proximity between employees and authority figures which may enhance employee compliance with training initiatives (Milgram,1963).

Next, the effectiveness of learning will be reflected on through the Learning-Transfer Evaluation Model (Thalheimer,2018) which measures key takeaways, perceptions towards training, and practical application of the learnt skill to the employees' occupation.

In conclusion, development plans are central to achieving organisational success. Following employees conducting their own needs assessment, methods of development such as MOOCs and supervisor-employee mentorship schemes will begin. A systematic reflection on this continuous learning process will be undertaken.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, a balanced approach between management and leadership is needed. Organisational strategy and culture may be adapted to meet changing demands. A comprehensive HR recruitment and development strategy is vital to source necessary talent and sustain competitive advantages.

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