

Chapter 6

Leader Competence Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

The changes that have taken place over the last few decades have culminated in the existence of a workforce of different ages and experiences in the organizational context. This diversity of workforce is a challenge for the human resources management not only in the integration processes, but also in the development of competences and in the management of workers' careers. The aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the leader's competences following a model that integrates a great variety of competences grouped in four dimensions: intellectual competences, social competences, management competences, and emotional competences. The survey results show the validity and reliability of the integrative model of leader competence. With this model, organizations can identify the skills that need to be developed to improve leadership effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital transformation context accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, younger generations and older workers coexist within organizations. The aging workforce has significant implications for people, human resource management, organizations and societies (Ciutienė & Railaitė, 2014; Hertel & Zacher, 2018). This scenario reinforces the relevance in the implementation of competence management processes in organizations. The new generations are culturally different and have a greater technological domain. Older workers have the knowledge and experience. "Training is less effective for older than for younger employees. Training effectiveness is measured with respect to key aspects such as career development, earnings, adoption of new skills, flexibility and job security" (Zwick, 2012).

The pandemic has had a major impact on the lives of people, organizations, and societies. Researchers are concerned with understanding the role of leaders and human resource development in the pandemic and post-pandemic contexts (Dirani et al., 2020). Competence development is critical to business success.

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Sometimes, there is a greater concern with younger workers in order to provide them with knowledge and experience. Although older workers are retiring later, it is necessary to prepare the transfer of knowledge to younger ones. In the leadership context, we are witnessing the reform of the baby boomer generation and it is essential to prepare the succession within organizations (Behan et al., 2009; Brant et al., 2008; Giambatista et al., 2005; Groves, 2007; Kowalewski et al., 2011). An individual development plan for workers who can succeed leaders is essential. Organizations must timely plan the succession of their leaders. The pandemic and working in virtual environments are also a challenge for leaders (Chen & Sriphon, 2021), and the need for a “task- and relation-oriented leadership behavior to maintain service employees’ work performance in a virtual environment during crisis situations” (Bartsch et al., 2021).

Competence Management is the HRM practice that ensures an internal policy of continuous promotion of the development of competences that guarantee the business sustainability. The big challenge is to find a model and identify which competences need to be developed by workers. Researchers’ concern with the effectiveness of competences has already been identified in studies carried out in the last decades of the last century. Yukl referred that there is a segmentation of research through theoretical approaches and sought a frame of reference that would integrate the various contributions (Yukl, 1989). In the 21st century, work has an intellectual rather than a physical component and the subject of competences continues to be on the agenda both at the organizational and research levels (Boyatzis, 2008). Therefore, the researchers’ greatest concern on how to develop the competences of leaders is evident.

As a result of the critical analysis of the competence models found in the literature, some weaknesses were highlighted – the wide range of competences; the selection of competences following different focuses (e.g., emotional intelligence, problem solving); and the difficulty in perceiving or measuring the effectiveness of these models and the competences identified, due to lack of knowledge and lack of external validity/generalization (Figueiredo, 2019). Through an integrative model of leader competences presented by Figueiredo (2019), this research aims to understand how leaders and the followers evaluate the effectiveness of the leader’s competences. Considering a broader range of competences, the intention is to make a diagnosis of the competence’s development needs of leaders. It is believed therefore be possible to identify the competences of aging leaders, contributing to the implementation of more appropriate development plans to their needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Concept: Competence

Several differences are found in the use of ‘competence’, ‘competency’, ‘competencies’ and ‘competences’ in the literature. Mulder and Collins (2007) consider ‘competence’ as a general capacity and ‘competencies’ as components of competence. From a European perspective, the concept of ‘competence’ is seen in an orientation towards holistic or professional development and ‘competences’ as its components. The term ‘competency’ maintains a specific or behavioral perspective. Different concepts are associated with the research carried out in the countries. In the US, functional and cognitive competences are increasingly being added to behavioral competences, while in the UK, cognitive and behavioral competences are being added to the occupational functional competence model. In European countries (France, Germany, and Austria), more holistic approaches were adopted (Delamare-Le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

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