

Leadership Styles in the Restaurant Business

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to answer the question: what are the most effecting leadership styles for the restaurant business that support job satisfaction and employee morale while also helping to produce the best work? This paper utilizes an interdisciplinary approach and discusses the question while looking at three disciplines: management, psychology, and sociology. Through this research, it was proven that relation-oriented, coaching, and participative leadership styles were among some of the more positive and productive styles, while the pacesetting style was among the most damaging.

Key words: task-oriented leadership, relation-oriented leadership, change-oriented leadership, participative leadership, coaching leadership, pacesetting leadership, burnout, engagement.

Leadership Styles in the Restaurant Business

Introduction

There are many different styles of leadership for a restaurant manager. Choosing and perfecting the right style of leadership is something that affects all staff and how the restaurant runs. The leadership of the management can affect the morale and outcomes of the staff in a number of different ways. This paper discusses what are the most effecting leadership styles for the restaurant business that support job satisfaction and employee morale while also helping to produce the best work? In order to properly answer this question this paper will look at this topic from an interdisciplinary approach. An interdisciplinary approach will help to broaden the field of study and help to look at the question from multiple angles. The chosen disciplines for this paper include business, psychology, and sociology. The sections of this paper that look at each discipline individually and then find common ground and integration between the three disciplines to form a more complex opinion and answer. This paper also explores conflicting interests in the disciplines. This paper is being researched to further the author's own knowledge of research and help her in her career and as a restaurant manager, hoping to be a General Manager in the near future. This paper discusses the different leadership styles of restaurant and hospitality managers and looks at the effects that the leadership style has on the staff.

There are many key terms that are used throughout this paper. Among them are the multiple leadership styles that are looked at. This next section goes over the key terms and their definitions. Task-oriented leadership is defined as the leaders who focus more on completing the task perfectly (Khuong 2016, p. 2). Relation-oriented leadership is when the leader focuses more

on the relationship and welfare with employees (Khuong 2016, p. 2). Change-oriented leadership is defined as a leader who is more adapted to change (Khuong 2016, p. 3). Participative leadership is a leader who encourages and motivated their staff to help make decisions and rely on their opinions (Khuong 2016, p. 3). Coaching Leaders focus on the development of staff and training (Goleman 2017, p. 5). Pacesetting leaders expect perfection and self-dedication (Goleman 2017, p. 5). This section will also go over some of the keywords and concepts that this paper will discuss namely, burnout and engagement. According to Christopher Krone of Cornell University, “Burnout describes a condition whereby frequent and sometimes intense involvement with people over long periods of time in emotionally demanding roles may lead directly to chronic stress” (p. 83). Danon Carter (2013) states “Employee engagement describes employees who display a passion for their work and organization, which reflects in commitment and contribution to organizational success” (454.)

Management

The first chosen discipline that this paper discusses is management. This discipline goes into a deeper dive of the leadership styles and the specific traits of each. In the different leadership styles, there are many different styles and characteristics associated with them. For task-oriented leadership, the leader focuses more on structure and set forward tasks. According to Khuong (2016), they focus on assigning tasks, setting the rules, and their communication with their team (p. 2). This is a straighter forward approach and does not leave much room for interpretation. This leaves less room for communication errors and for the staff to not know what they are doing. Communication errors can be detrimental in the restaurant business. In a case study written by Caitlynn Murry (2020), she states that “communication errors due to different management styles and conflicts that arise between managers can lead to employees’ low job

performance, lack of organizational commitment, and high turnover” (p. 5). The next leadership style is relation-oriented leadership. “With a relation-oriented leader, subordinates are allowed to raise their voice, share their idea or opinion and leaders take those into consideration before making a decision. Opposite with task-oriented leadership, in relation-oriented leadership, the communication between leaders and followers is informal which can help avoiding misunderstanding and fast recognizing mistake to fix it” (Khuong 2016, p. 2). This quote from Khuong highlights some of the differences between the relation-oriented and the task-oriented. Even though there is not as much structure with the relation oriented there is more of an emphasis on relationships and respect. This can help the team to feel like they are a part of everything and their voices matter. In change-oriented leadership, the leader tends to have good communication skills to persuade the team for change (Khuong 2016, p. 3). They focus mostly on how to adapt to new environments and creativity. “It is also proved that change oriented leadership positively affects employee motivation, organizational commitment and evaluation of leader’s competence” (Khuong 2016, p. 3). Participative leadership ties back with relation-oriented leadership whereas it focused heavily on the team. In this style the team is more self-motivated and self-directed. This has been proved to lead to higher job satisfaction (Khuong 2016, p. 3). This style, however, is more informal and would not work for all staff. The staff needs to have a high level of motivation and sense of direction for this style to be effective. Coaching leadership focuses more on the staff and helping them grow. This style is one of the more hands on and in one that is the not used very often (Goleman 2017, p. 44). This style can be very effective and can foster a sense of appreciation in the staff and shows that the leader cares and wants to work with them. The last leadership style that will be discussed is pacesetting leadership. This style is the most demanding and least effective of the mentioned above. In this

style the leader sets very high-performance standards and demands that everyone follows through with them, or they get replaced (Goleman 2017, p. 35). This style destroys the restaurant atmosphere and does not foster any sense of self-worth. In this style, the leader pushes too hard and creates too much competition and pressure among the workers.

Psychology

The next discipline that is discussed is psychology. Psychology will look at some of the bigger psychological factors to working in a restaurant. One of the bigger problems right now facing the workforce is burnout. Burnout can cause very low mental health and work life balance. It can also cause a decrease in work productivity and increases in employee turnover. All of these problems can cause stress for the employee as well as the company. According to Joseph Lederer (2017), "Burnout has been labeled as the largest occupational hazard of the twenty-first century" (p. 81). Burnout can be prevalent in all fields of work and can be caused by many different factors. Some of the more prevalent factors for the restaurant business include long hours, lack of training, unpredictable situations, no support, and poor customer interactions (Krone 1989, p. 840). Another cause of burnout can be not feeling seen or heard, and getting passed for promotion (Lederer 2017, p.83). On the opposite side of burnout, there is employee engagement. When employees have high engagement, they have better mental and even physical health. Employees with higher engagement are more passionate and have a higher work output. They feel appreciated and they have much less turnover rates.

Sociology

The last Discipline that this paper will look at will be sociology. Sociology will look at the problem from more a group setting and looks at how leadership affects the whole staff and

not just one person. One of the bigger factors in job satisfaction is overall atmosphere. A study done by Diego Bufquin (2018) showed that a major factor contributing to work was the atmosphere that the leader produced, and if they were being fair and respectful (p. 1828). The leader needed to foster a sense of the whole staff and not just the individual. Another way that the staff were kept engaged was with “warm and competence” evaluations (Bufquin 2018, p. 1828). This would be where the leader would use positive attributes to describe the employee and share the feedback with the employee. This feedback gave the team a sense of belonging and created a better work environment. It also helped the employees to see what the rest of the staff felt about them and how they can continue to improve on their positive attributes. It also can provide a bit of an insight into what they need to work on. Another societal impact on leadership and management includes economic and financial challenges. “On the other hand, several economic and financial variables have pushed companies to new standards, forcing them to redefine business processes in the past decade” (Huertas-Valdivia 2019). This quote goes over some of the struggles that the management staff can face. The restaurant business can be very unpredictable, and it is usually a tipped job for the front of house employees. This means that the staff does not have consistent money coming in. This can cause challenges for the staff, and a lot of the time this falls back on the management. The staff needs to know that when they are at work they are being valued and appreciated, and that their time is valued, and they are making money. This can fall on the management to make choices to make sure that that is happening. This also involved empowering employees. “In hospitality, empowered employees are more able to manage successfully unforeseen situations that might occur during service encounters, which often require workers ‘to depart from the script’” (Huertas-Valdivia 2019).

Common Ground

In the three disciplines there are a lot of topics that relate to each other and create common ground. Pulling the information together and integrating the three disciplines is what makes this research interdisciplinary. In the sociology and psychology disciplines, this paper went over the key aspects of how employees are feeling and some ways to incorporate changes. The management discipline focused more on the leadership styles of the leadership. This next section will combine the two and integrate them together by focusing on the traits of the leadership styles that overlap with the psychological and sociological factors. The leadership style that would be associated most with burnout, according to the traits listed above, would be the pacesetter leadership. The intense goals and unrealistic expectations match with the traits that were described by Krone. High engagement can be associated with a few of the management styles. Two of the bigger ones that it would associate with are participative leadership and relation-oriented leadership. As both of these styles focus directly on the involvement of the staff, it encourages high engagement and involvement. Looking at the atmosphere, there are a lot of different styles that would either have a negative effect on the atmosphere or a positive effect. One major negative effect is the pacesetter style. A positive effect would be relations and coaching. With coaching, taking the time to work with each member individually sets a good environment for the staff and helps ease any tension that might be in the workplace. The coaching would also translate well into the “warm and competence” evaluations. Taking the time to individually work with each member of staff and help work with them will create a better environment for the entire team. Financial and societal impacts can be harder to determine what type of leadership style would be best to adapt to that. Good communication skills and a strong adaptation to change will help us to cope with any financial struggles. This would fall into task-oriented leadership and change-oriented leadership.

Disciplinary Conflicts

The next section will go over any disciplinary conflicts and how they affect the research. There are not many disciplinary conflicts when it comes to how leadership styles affect employee morale. There was however a conflict in how the moral effects job production. This quote from Khuong (2016) “In this research, even though it showed a low correlation, the result stated that positive mood has a negative relationship with job performance. This unexpected result was not supported by previous studies. However, explored that even though positive mood can yield various ideas, the idea’s quality is not at highest” (p. 2) showcases the small conflict that showed a slight decrease in work productivity with a positive mood. However, this was the only instance where this result was found.

Constructing a More Comprehensive Understanding or Theory

The following section will go over ways to create a better understanding of the theory. The best way to create a better understanding of the theory would be to see the different leadership styles and the aftermath in person. This research paper was done though a series of literature reviews. Reding and researching about a topic can be different than actually seeing the research and experiencing it fist hand. This should give a better understanding of and knowledge of the dynamic between staff and management.

Reflecting on, Testing, and Communicating the Understanding or Theory

The last section of this research will go over ways to test, reflect on and communicate the theory. Testing of this theory is difficult in small settings. Most of the journals used in this research paper were large scale tests and they encompassed a lot of different staff from many different restaurants. In order to replicate this research for an indivial, I believe that the best

course of action would be to find examples of leaders who already use the certain leadership styles and to interview and communicate with the staff to see how they felt and handled the different styles. Most people who work in restaurants have worked with many different leaders in their careers and can attest to at least a few of the leadership styles mentioned above. Reflecting on and communicating the information outlined is crucial for the research to mean anything. Unfortunately, "...Poor management is common in the workplace, and it is difficult to find the proper solutions to handle such situations" (Murry 2020, p.53). Using this research and others like it can help bridge the gap and inspire a better management team. If the research is not really looked at and evaluated, then nothing will ever change and nothing will ever improve. Management and leaders really need to take the time to self-reflect and see what style and category that they use and see if it is harmful or helpful. Only then will things start to get better in the restaurant business.

Conclusion

In the restaurant business, along with many other types of jobs, there are many different types of people and leaders that one can come across. Some of the leaders and management are helpful and some are hurtful. This paper defined some of the major leadership styles and looked at the repercussions that arose from them. Throughout this research shown that the relation-oriented, coaching, and participative were some of the more productive and helpful styles included. The leadership style that proved to be the most harmful was the pacesetter style.

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