

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP TO SUCCESS OF DIGITAL WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. The dilemma of how to lead a company is spread throughout every industry and the dilemma has intensified due to the disruption caused by industry 4.0 which creates a new digital workplace where employee agility is increased by inculcating new, efficient, digital technologies. To gain faith of the followers, a leader needs to know the rules and behaviors that are supposed to be followed in the time of the 4th industrial revolution that is currently reshaping the world. This paper is constructed by evaluating articles published from 1991 to 2019 and from the ideas of experts in the industry of digital workplaces, and developing a conceptual framework to outline the connectivity and correlation of industry 4.0, Industrial psychology, Multi-generational Workflow and Big Data on Resonant Leadership Style with Employees' first leadership approach to manage the digital workplace of Information technology enabled business process outsourcing (ITES-BPO) organizations. The research also emphasizes how human and machine incorporated research works should follow in the future for Asian context to adapt with industrial psychology for enhancing the employee work-life balance by researching with more proper validation with real-world simulation though pragmatic worldview approach with the research design using explanatory sequential method.

Keywords: Resonant Leadership, Industrial Psychology, Generation-Z, Digital-Workplace

1. Introduction

“That’s cute, but don’t tell anyone about it”, was the response of Kodak management when their employee, Steve Sasson, disclosed about his invention of the first digital camera in 1975 (Mui, 2012). That statement caused the company to file for bankruptcy in 2012. As per the former vice-president of Kodak Don Strickland, “We developed the world’s first consumer digital camera, but we could not get approval to launch or sell it because of fear of the effects on the film market” (Aaslaid, 2018).

Also in 2015, U.S presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's statement of "It would've been better for me to use two separate phones and two email accounts" (Schmidt, 2015) as the defending keynote on her allegation of misuse of personal email on her office-works (Köffer, 2015) eventually cost her the US presidential election in 2016. As shown by the examples, being a Fortune 500 company or a prominent leader does not lead the path to become a successful leader in the 21st century.

A corporate leader needs to understand the dynamics that shape the employees of the 21st century to make a perfect business that is relevant to present volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) in the world. Simply, when a leader treats the staff well, the contented staff will deliver an exceptional output in return, which drives business into success. The leaders using their authoritative, autocratic and even dictatorial powers to control the employees was often seen in some companies in the past, instead of making a relaxed atmosphere for employees. The 21st century workforce of the 4th industrial revolution (IR) at present, will not tolerate the exploitation of labor by employers. Companies will risk employee turnover under the latter leadership circumstances. Employees nowadays are willing to upgrade with taking risks, seeking for more workplace freedom, and will quit the job at the first chance they get from another company where they believe they are appreciated and trusted in their work potential. Employees today demand positive leadership from the leader and a company that recognizes the value of the employees.

With social networking and internet sites dedicated to illustrating what working from company to company is like, whether it's positive or negative, word gets around fast. Thereby, if a company holds a bad reputation for leadership, it will be tough to recruit and hire skilled employees. It will also not be able to afford employee turnover due to poor leadership in the past. Rather than fix the problem, employers simply go out at great expense and hire a new employee but then again retention makes the matter. Therefore, the 21st century request for effective leaders to use a resonant leadership style with employees is to improve employee engagement and create an employee centered culture to ensure the happiness of the employees. But, presently, as leaders, they lack awareness on the new dimensions that need to be considered to use the resonant leadership style and employees' first approach to promote the digital workplace (DWP) concept for the success of the Information Technology Enabled Business Process outsourcing (ITES-BPO) organizations (Wickramasinghe & Kumara, 2010). This problem is taken as the base of this paper.

The objective of this paper is to briefly identify the key dimensions influencing on reshaping the traits of leaders such as self-awareness, authenticity, empathy,

social awareness, relationship management etc. to use resonant leadership style and employees' first approach in order to ensure the success of the digital workplace (Bergdahl, 2018) (Raguseo, Gastaldi, & Neirotti, 2016). Though the technical aspects of DWP are commonly available in the literature (Morgan, 2014) only a limited number of studies address the leadership approach for success in a DWP setting in a ITES-BPO organization. (Wickramasinghe, 2010) (Wickramasinghe & Kumara, 2010). However, the author has identified that future research needs to focus on how to use industrial and organizational physiology in resonant leadership style with employees' first approach in relation to managing the DWP, where the right balance of human and machines is needed to optimize yield for the organization while securing the work-life balance of the followers (Richter & Wagner, 2014). In addition to that, this research aims to contribute to the behavioral science and Human Resource Management (HRM) literature by focusing on resonant leadership in DWP environment. The analysis has been carried out by evaluating past literature to build a conceptual framework to use in further research that would carry on resonant leadership style with employees' first approach from the aspect of managing the success of DWP.

2. Literature Review

Who are Resonant Leaders and what is Employees' First Approach?

Resonant Leaders are in tune with the people around them and aware of what to deliver and when to deliver at the right moment (McKee & Massimilian, 2006). They are comprised with a high level of emotional intelligence, and further elaborate as the capacities of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Clarke, 2015). They possess skills of developing strong, trusting relationships whilst managing their own emotions productively (McKee & Massimilian, 2006). With all this, they are more concerned with the achievement of the business than their own improvement. According to Bergdahl (2018), the Employees' first approach means empowering the employees by making synergic performances based on the team work approach to enable sharing the knowledge, skills and intellectual capabilities to satisfy employee's desires to retain for a longer period of time with the organization.

What is Digital Work Place (DWP)?

The development of DWP is a part of the 4th IR (Elcomcms, 2017) which needs to find the right technologies for knowledge work (McAfee, 2016). DWP is defined as "the collection of all of the digital tools provided by an organization to allow its employees to do their jobs" (Digital Workplace Forum Group Limited, 2013). This "enables new, more effective ways of working; raises employee engagement and agility; and exploits consumer-oriented styles and technologies" (Gartner Inc., 2018). These technologically associated workplaces

connect employees in a collaborative manner regardless of the work location (Benson, Johnson, & Kuchinke, 2002)

4th Industrial Revolution (4th IR) or Industry 4.0 Concept

It is a fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another (World Economic Forum, 2019). We are in an advanced phase of human development, empowered by technology innovations that are proportionate with those of the first, second and third industrial revolutions, which combine the physical, digital, and biological worlds in ways that create both guarantee and risk (Schwab, 2016). Industry 4.0 mainly relies on concepts and technologies like Cyber-Physical-Systems (CPS), Internet of Things, big data, smart factory, self-organization, algorithmic management, artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and smart robots. (Wilkesmann & Wilkesmann, 2018) (Ning & Liu, 2015).

Multi-Generational Workforce

As the baby boomers' generation reaches their retirement age, by 2030, 75% of the workforce will consist of millennials and Generation-Z individuals (Digital Workplace Forum Group Limited, 2018). Moreover, with age and generational expectations, a different sort of values and traits are integrated from one generation to another, such as millennials preferring to have conflict resolution traits rather than working long hours at the workplace compared to the generation Z individuals (Randstad North America Inc., 2019). Furthermore, future employees will demand flexible work practices, career self-directedness with increasing mobility to customize their own work, share information in an open and transparent way in real time, collaborate and communicate in new ways and learn and teach at-will as reverse mentoring (Koulopoulos & Keldsen, 2014) (Morgan, 2014) (Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2016). Resonant leaders need to make changes in the workplace to adopt these behaviors to attract and retain top talent in order to succeed at DWP (McKee & Massimilian, 2006).

Big Data

According to the Bureau of labor statistics in the USA (2019), the productivity of the world has fallen down or stagnated in one phase during the past decade due to industry 4.0 being more human-centric and concerned about the environmental aspect (Köffer, Ortbach, & Niehaves, 2014). Therefore, new productivity measurements to find out the current impact on society by this revolution are needed rather than using the old measurements that were used in the past revolutions (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2018). Put simply, driving an autonomous vehicle will give the driver freedom, satisfaction to the user and efficiency of utilizing the energy, but those cognitive level satisfactions cannot be accurately translated into the traditional measurements to capture real increases in value propositions. Hence, Big Data plays a vital role in VUCA world

decision making process to find the holistic picture of the situation (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2018).

Industrial Psychology

With shortened life span of products and services, employees are required to work swiftly and synergistically to gain more effective output (Saeed, 2005). Stress and overload caused by this situation is called the “dark side” of IT (Information Technology) (Tarafdar, D’Arcy, Turel, & Gupta, 2014). Examples include IT-induced technological stress, misuse, burnout and addiction. Thereby, many employees struggle to find the right balance between work and non-work life, since technologies have blurred the line between the two spaces (Sarker, Xiao, Sarker, & Ahuja, 2012). Hence, a leader needs to use industrial psychological methods to motivate employees through sparing time to hear their voices, and conducting corporate social responsibility projects integrating staff rather than using systematic, conventional approaches that are being used currently in conventional workplaces to support employees’ wellbeing (Hester, Moore, & Yager, 2014) (Porter, Riesenmy, & Fields, 2016). In brief, Industry 4.0, Multigenerational Workflow, Big Data and industrial psychology can be taken as independent constructs of this conceptual framework, which is the key takeaway of this literature review.

3. Methodology

In the methodology, a clarification of how the literature analysis was developed with justifications using methodological literature and the criteria of how research articles were chosen with key words from data bases and time durations are explained. This paper is designed to find out what are the main technical dimensions that need to be considered when using resonant leadership style with the employees’ first approach to make a successful DWP within the scope of an ITES-BPO organization. Thereby, ITES-BPO sector was the base for this framework as it is one of the main employers in South Asia as many IT graduates are being recruited to the field each year and also because it has one of the highest turnover ratios (Wickramasinghe, 2010) (Wickramasinghe & Kumara, 2010) (Jinadasa & Wickramasinghe, 2005) (Sylesh & Viswambharan, 2018). As per Figure 1, at the beginning to extract the keywords, the corn method knowledge gap was used because it is a more convenient and less time consuming approach for analysis (Badewi, 2014). 101 articles have been analyzed from 1991 to 2019 and 20 out of the 101 with the most relevant contents were chosen for this paper. Afterwards, based on the literature review, the conceptual framework was constructed to find what are the independent variables and how these variables effect on dependent variables and up to which extent. At the end, development of recommendations on future research to be conducted in new avenues in this subject area was

carried out to find out what would be the least researched area that needs to be given more.



Figure 1 : Methodology

4. Results/Analysis and Discussion

There are six main constructs under the three sectors in the conceptual framework (Figure 2), Industry 4.0, Multi-Generational Workforce, Big Data, and Industrial Psychology (IP) are four constructs of the technical knowledge sector. Resonant Leadership and Employees’ first approach as Leadership Style and Leadership Approach. Finally, Success of DWP at ITES-BOP as stated in output sector. The constructs are stimulated based on the information that were gathered through the literature review. Under the Technical Knowledge Dimensions, the 4 constructs are positioned as parallel independent constructs with interconnectivity on each other’s outcomes. Resonant Leadership and Success of DWP are located as the dependent construct in the framework to determine the overall outcome of the research. Resonant leadership is kept as the mediating construct between Technical Knowledge and Output. Therefore, Resonant Leadership is also acting as the dependent construct of Technical Knowledge sector constructs as well as the independent construct of Success of DWP initiative at ITES-BPO.

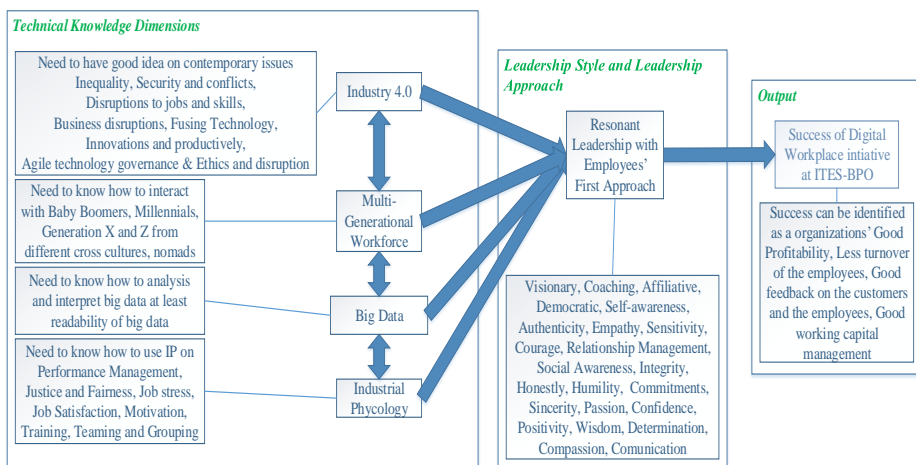


Figure 2 : Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is proposed as per Figure 2 : Conceptual Framework because the success of the DWP is depending on the usage of resonant leadership and employees’ first approach. It can be technically shaped though the 4 different subjects under the technical knowledge which are created as a

way of leadership required on the success of DWP as per the dependent constructs in the conceptual framework. The propositions based on the proposed conceptual framework are as given in Table 1.

Table 1 : Proposition Conceptual Framework

Proposition 1	Expected to have correlation between Industry 4.0 and Multi-Generational Workforce
Proposition 2	Expected to have correlation between Industry 4.0 and Big Data.
Proposition 3	Expected to have correlation between Industry 4.0 and Industrial Psychology
Proposition 4	Expected to have correlation between Multi-Generational Workforce and Big Data
Proposition 5	Expected to have correlation between Multi-Generational Workforce and Industrial Psychology
Proposition 6	Expected to have correlation between Big Data and Industrial Psychology
Proposition 7	Industry 4.0 is expected to influence built the Resonant Leadership and Employees first approach of leadership.
Proposition 8	Multi-Generational Workforce is expected to influence built Resonant Leadership and Employees first approach of leadership.
Proposition 9	Big Data is expected to influence built the Resonant Leadership and Employees first approach of leadership.
Proposition 10	Industrial Psychology is expected to influence built the Resonant Leadership and Employees first approach of leadership.
Proposition 11	Resonant Leadership and Employees first approach of leadership.is expected to stimulate Success of DWP in ITES-BPO

5. Conclusion and Implications

To embed the future employee attitudes into organizations, leaders need to inculcate emerging organization behaviors like loyalty, integrity and protection for the whistle-blowers (Hanke, 2018). The 2018 Gallup survey reveals that the confidence Americans put on their leaders and organizations are very low because of the current system which was set in the 20th century, and is purely driven on a singular vision where only revenue and profit were important (Clapham, Meyer, Caldwell, & Proctor, 2014). Instead in the 21st century, big data has a pivotal role due to the millennial and Generation-Z workforce associated with IOT (Internet of Things) have changed the expectations beyond the profit to new dimensions like sustainability, corporate ethics, etc. (Atwijuka

& Caldwell, 2017). Upgrading the workplace using smart layouts and enabling to work from co-work spaces using cloud based systems to improve the mobility and flexibility of the workforce along with gamification to continue evaluation with interacting peers and customers are the main steps that can be initiated to follow a more employees' first approach (Sarangi & Shah, 2015). By giving the freedom to become intrapreneurial using the flatter hierarchy or by adopting the manager-less business concept together with building the innovation ecosystem to grow ideas from introducing democratized learning can be used to practice a more resonant leadership style over the employees (Sarker, Xiao, Sarker, & Ahuja, 2012). This can be done by collaborating with freelancers for better output and prosperity and by working in a globally distributed yet smaller team-based workforce culture to face the fourth industrial revolution. Ultimately, all these factors contextualize to direct the focus of the future organization to creating a place of "want" instead of a place of "need" (Morgan, 2014).

This analysis is predominantly based on the literature. Therefore, the main limitation of the paper is that the objective is tested in a limited way to derive the outcome from secondary data. In addition, careful consideration of the literature identified that the majority of research has been conducted only in the western world environment. Therefore, there is a huge void in the research literature on how to integrate resonant leadership and industrial psychology tactics to retain the multi-generational workforce by keeping them motivated at work in a setting apart from the western context. These limitations are the key takeaway for conducting future research, which will be expected to create guidelines and methodology to enhance the employee work-life balance using resonant leadership style with employees' first approach through industrial psychology in South Asian ITES-BPO business entities. To have more validation with the real-world, research can be exercised through a pragmatic worldview approach with the research design using the explanatory sequential method (Creswell, 2014).

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