

The multifaceted qualities of leadership have incited a diverse manifestation of the concept and has inarguably increased both academic and professional interest in the subject. A contested scenario overarches the interpretation of leadership, varying from whether it is a concept in itself or just a buzzword, the notions it constitutes, the sources from which it emanates, manners through which it is exhibited, and the consequential outcomes of its presence. The boundless range of variables dominating this field leads to its equivocal understanding, of which disputed nature intensifies scholar interest specifically in what constitutes its effective application. Increased awareness of leadership's potential role within the contemporary organisation, specifically the corporate performance, has put the subject at the crux of business studies during the second half of the last century.

To such extent, this study formulates an all-encompassing account of the development of leadership theory amongst different theoretical schools that emerged across time and cultures. Such account identifies the diverse interpretations of what constitutes leadership, its actual relevance to personal and professional life and the way it is epitomised. A comprehensive understanding is attained through the detailed recognition of the divergent scholar beliefs predominating the effective application of leadership.

On the basis of the academic observations, this study sets out to achieve an insight into the origins of leadership, its characteristics and development. A practical dimension is attained through an investigation into the interpretational stance held by different members within the management team of a Malta-based hotel with regards to such topics. The analysis delves into an evaluation of the research participants' perceptual understanding of the effective leadership constituent elements that are currently possessed with ones that are regarded as being required. Such insight is achieved through a qualitative research design and semi-structured interviews are conducted across the three management levels. These observations contribute towards the broader knowledge of leadership, by focusing on the specific work environment.

The findings of this study showed that leadership is perceived as being a process, entailing the exertion of leadership influence on followers. Leadership is embodied within the person's character and behaviour, whilst it is effectively applied by individuals who possess certain inherent characteristics and pursue their development. A detailed account of leadership in the Hotel is achieved, including existing organisational efforts aimed to develop such competences and eventually the current management performance in terms of the exhibition of leadership capabilities. The study observed how training programmes and the performance review system is commonly perceived as having such development as their purpose. Management was found to exhibit strong empathetic behaviour and acknowledge organisational inputs on the individual level in a productive manner. The team was criticised for lacking valuable communication exchanges with other members, which shortcoming indicated that it is potentially impinging upon management's ability to understand the emotional aspect of employees.

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