

# Career assignment essay sample

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



## Introduction

The paper provides an analysis of the literature about Leadership, Culture and Strategic HRM. Definitions and theories are followed by comparisons supported by critiques and applications. Eventually, conclusion is drawn at the end.

## Leadership or Management?

Northouse (2007, p. 3) defines leadership as “ a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” while to contrast Hollingsworth in Rayner and Smith (2005) described management to involve administration, maintenance, structure and control. According to Pawar and Eastman (1997) there is renewed interest in the concept of leadership due to changing patterns of organisation life and social expectations in working environment. Due to the shift, organisations feel the need of becoming more flexible, task or client focused which requires different authority rather than the one typical for traditional (bureaucratic) organisations, Rayner and Smith (2005). In current trends, Mullins (2005, p. 366) sees leadership skill being important for those attempting to “ get things done through other people” rather than just simple managerial instructions coming from higher level of hierarchy. Some academics believe that leadership is similar to management in many ways and both are essential for organisation to prosper (Kotter, 1990), others argue that it differs in typical functions that present management such as budgeting, staffing and problem solving (Fayol, 1916).

Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 221) made the distinction very clear by saying “Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things”. Similarity in Leadership theories, Burns (1978) distinguishes between two types of leadership: one that focuses on simple exchange between leader and follower (Transactional/Managerial leadership) and other one where person engages with others and creates connection which raises motivation and morale (Transformational leadership). Bass and Avolio (1985) explain that transactional leader does not focus on needs or personal development of subordinates and Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) adds that these leaders are influential because it is the best for the subordinates to do what the leader wants. Bass (1985) argued that transactional leadership is efficient as it builds foundation between leader and follower in regards to expectations, responsibilities, contracts, recognition and rewards.

Transactional leader operates within the existing system by: effort-reward relationship based on completion of task or assignment to satisfy followers' needs (Bass and Riggio, 2006) and attention to deviations, mistakes and irregularities as much as taking actions to correct them Bass (1985).

According to Northouse (2007) transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership. Transactional leadership outcomes are only expected outcomes but transformational outcomes go beyond the expectations and according to Lowe et al (1996) transformational leaders were also perceived to be more effective. Liu et al (2011) also argues that team members are not expected to go beyond their team leaders' initial expectations neither they are not motivated to creative solutions to change

the status quo. Instead Bass and Avolio (1990a) argue that transformational followers have ability to transcend own self-interests and full potential.

Plato (1992) critiqued Transactional leadership by saying that it requires a person to sacrifice immediate self-interests, but this did not amount to altruism. Plato (1992) referred to stress, hard work, and thankless task of being a morally good leader. He argues that if just a person is a leader than the role will take toll on life of such a person. Plato (1992) expressed that whereas leadership is not in the person's immediate self-interest it is in long-term interest. Plato (1992) argued that it is in our best interest to be just, because just people are happier and lead better lives than do unjust people. People want leaders to put the interest of followers first (Transformational leadership, Bass (1985) and according to Avolio & Locke (2002, pp. 186-188) " self-interest people who are unwilling to put the interest of others first are often not successful as leaders." Bryman (1992) also criticised Bass and Avolio's (1985) transactional/transformational leadership model by saying that transactional leadership seems to relate to management more than to leadership and that the transformation overemphasises the role of leader in the changing process (Sadler, 1997).

Some critique take the view that House's (1976) charismatic leadership is seen similar to, if not same with transformational leadership but (Bryman, 1992) argued that charisma (the common element) is only one component of transformational leadership which according Yammarino (1993) is important but not sufficient for leader to be successful. Northouse (2007) argues that transformational leadership has potential to be abused as it is concerned

with changing people's values to follow new vision. Transactional/managerial leadership is evidence in Disney. Disney is bureaucratic form of organisation with clear division of labour and hierarchical structure which can be seen within employee's grouping: Upper class prestigious Ambassadors and Tour Guides, Ride operators for skilled work, other ride operators, Sweepers, Food and Concession workers (Van Maanen, 1990). High control over every step of service with clear rules with very little room left for experimentation are also seen in Disney (Van Maanen, 1990). There are set guidelines regarding authority and only little personal interaction left for not supervisors or security (Van Maanen, 1990).

Disney's work objectives and performance standards are explained in training procedures and employee handbook which shows how Disney expect their employees to appear, present themselves, behave towards customers to present certain image Van Maanen (1990). Van Maanen (1990) describes how most of the ride operators aspire to working more glamorous rides such as Pirates of the Caribbean and others working for Autopia are looked down upon as the job requires them to wear mechanic jumpsuits. Even clothing and other aspect of physical appearance affect status within the park. Nowadays even though the bureaucratic style, employees take pride in working for Disneyland (Van Maanen, 1990).

## CULTURE

Van Maanen (1988, p. 3) explain that " Culture in itself is not visible, but is made visible only through its representation" while (Schwartz and Davis, 1981) argues that culture is seen as abstract concept and is referred to state

of affairs within organisation, its values and beliefs. Functionalist concept sees culture as something that organisation has and is directly linked to successful organisational performance (Peters and Waterman, 1982), strong organisational commitment and high productivity and moral (Furnham and Gunter, 1993). Ray (1986) argues about this being symbolic/culture control rather than bureaucratic control. He sees it as process of manipulating culture (myths and rituals) to its goals in order to increase outcome. Schein (2004) offered model for analysing organisational culture at three levels: artefacts, values/ beliefs and basic assumptions.

Schein (1985) suggests that organisational culture is being deeply inserted in unconscious parts of group rather than just being observable behaviours or artefacts. He emphasizes assumptions and beliefs while in comparison to Hofstede (1980) who argues that culture consists of systems of values which are allocated among the blocks that build culture. He sees culture as program of mind that distinguishes the members of one group from another. From critical perspective the organisations is the culture which represents the subjective reality (Smircich, 1983) and according to Morgan (2006) living evolving reality that exists only as pattern of symbolic relationships and meanings though human interactions. Rousseau (1990, p. 158) in his model appears to capture all the key elements of culture ' a continuum from unconscious to conscious, from interpretative to behaviour, from inaccessible to accessible' not just one of few attributes like others.

His Organisational culture is made up of aspects such as patterns of behaviour, observable symbols, ceremonies, underlying values, assumptions

and beliefs. Schein's (2004) have been critiqued by Alvesson (2002) who argues that the functionalist view on culture is simplistic by organisational management. Sociologists argue that culture is more complex and they question the creation through interaction (Alvesson, 2002) and (Schultz, 1995). They described leadership study being over-positivistic where Schultz (1995) argues that positivistic scientific method is not applicable in organisational culture study. Schultz (1995, p. 17) argues that culture is symbolic vision of an organisation and that "An organisation does not have a culture, it is the culture." Alvesson (2002) and Schultz (1995) also critiqued Schein's (1985) point of view of what should leader do to affect culture.

They believe that good leadership is dependent on cultural context not the other way around and suggests ethnographic research into organisational culture to gain better understanding. Some academics believe that organisational culture can be managed by focusing on visible aspects (rituals) that shape behaviour however others argue that cultural deep aspects (beliefs, feelings) must be considered when thinking of changes to culture and not just directly manage the culture (Hatch, 1997). Legge (1995) explained that managing culture which consists of understanding of patterns and the shaping directs but it is not the same as changing the 'rhythms of the ocean' (Legge, 1995, p. 207) Disney's logo describes place as where dreams come true.

Disney offers innovative entertainment experience where cartoons take you to the "Happiest Place on Earth" full of fun, laughter and unforgettable

atmosphere (Van Maanen, 1990). Artefacts are visible elements of the culture such as symbolic resources from history, logo, park design, innovative play areas/rides, animated workforce, friendly greetings, smiles, cheerful behaviour, language -required vocabulary, dress and appearance code (Van Maanen, 1990) Values guiding Disney are “customer is king” (Van Maanen, 1990).

According to Disney (2012) underlying values that guide Disney are innovation, quality in performance, experience for every generation in community, timeless engaging stories, hope in entertainment and respect in people trusting Disney. Disney's Fundamental assumptions in excitement, believe in fun, assumptions of great experience in Disneyland (Van Maanen, 1990). Disney's vision is to become the largest entertainment provider which through University and trainings prepare newcomers on job in Disneyland (Disney, 2012). The rituals, stories and values among the Disney members are in a way part of seductive process of achieving membership and commitment of the employees (Disney, 2012).

### Strategic HRM

Storey (2007) defined Strategic HRM it as process of formulating implementing HR policies which are mutually reinforcing and delivering organisations objectives (HR policies more closely integrated with business strategy) whilst, Marchington and Wilkinson (2008, p. 8) sees it as “distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce...” Fombrun et al (1984) approach



stresses link between business and HR strategies where human resource is seen as similar to all other resources such as land. Whilst the emphasises are place on importance of integrating HR policies with business objectives, the soft model emphasises on treating employees valued which is sees them as source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high quality skill and performance (Legge, 1995).

Storey (1992, p. 34) argues that his model seeks to capture the generic “ recipe” of his respondent’s or their beliefs and assumptions about “ path to follow” towards desired “ achievable states” in people management. It involves beliefs and assumptions, strategic qualities, critical role of managers and key leavers and its purpose is to classify device for determining what is and what is not HRM (Storey, 1992). Storey’s (2007) model points out significance given to role of line managers rather than HR function and he argues that HRM is fundamentally concerned with training, development and performance of management. The contingency school of SHRM explores vertical integration between organisation’s strategy and its HRM management policies. Wright and Snell (1998) highlight that when the fit between business strategy and team behaviour and organisational performance, organisations are more effective and efficient. Gratton et al (1999) point out that the vertical integration where leverage is gained though procedures and policies is seen as important strategic approach to managing people.

Tyson (1997) identifies move towards greater horizontal integration be between HR policies themselves and with line managers. Organisations

needs to consider how they frame their HRM policies and according to Barney (1991) explains that Resource Based View analyse strategy from inside out (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003). Barney (1991) argues that by combination of four resources (value, rarity, imperfect inimitable, substitutable) human and non-human provides an organisation with the opportunity to gain sustained competitive advantage. Legge (1995) criticises soft version of HRM by saying that while management may claim the rhetoric of a new approach and a new concern for workers the actual reality may be harsher. In Storey's mode (1992), even though that clearly distinguished between hard and soft models according to Keenoy (1990) in practise its possibilities were straightened by its ambiguity.

Legge (1995) criticised its applicability of models of integrations and argues for Whittington's (1993) framework which recognises that HRM integration with strategy is complex process which depends on interplay and resources of different stakeholders. Oliver (1997) critiqued application of RBV for being limited because of its focus on internal resources which does not examine the external forces and social context within decisions or resource selection. Wright et al (1994) also critiqued application of Barney's (1991) theory and explains that human resources are deemed to be valuable because they are generally heterogeneous in both supply and demand as people's skills differ and therefore businesses differs in jobs they offer. HRM attracts lots of criticism as according to Marchington and Wilkinson (2008, p. 4) " it can never fully satisfy business imperatives or the drive for employee well-being."

According to Walt Disney (2012) company creates an optimal employee experience while meeting business needs. Their human resource policies include Talent Acquisition, Learning & Development, Employee Benefits and Communication that consist of communicating business initiatives and strategy, employee recognition, work-life assistance, volunteer opportunities, business conduct and ethics practices together practices of social responsibility (Walt Disney, 2012). These all take place in order to fit with business strategy of making profit from making people happy to corporate strategy of creating the “ SMILE FACTORY” (Van Maanen, 1990).

To recap, the paper provides critical analysis of Disney from diverse lenses. First, Even though bureaucratic organisations are rare nowadays we see simply just management rather than Transactional/Transformational leadership Bryman (1992). Second, strong culture, hierarchy chain of company was evident in Disney but through rituals, stories and values Disney members still achieved membership and commitment (Disney, 2012). Finally, Strategic HRM in form of policies and regulations that requires fit to organisation’s strategy “ can never fully satisfy business imperatives or the drive for employee well-being” Marchington and Wilkingson (2008, p. 4) which didn’t seem to be true in Disney’s HR policies are in place to create optimal employee experience while meeting business needs (Disney, 2012)