

# Concept paper

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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Quantitative Study on Restructuring of Leadership Training in Retail

Management [Course]

[Professor's name]

[Date]

Quantitative Study on Restructuring of Leadership Training in Retail

Management

The presence of competent leaders is a bare necessity in the modern retail industry and an essential pre-requisite for its sustenance and growth. Most of the retail companies today expect their managers to handle the dual role of a manager and a leader. The requisite training, however, is not provided by the companies to their managers. This results in a gap in their performance as they attempt to perform their role as a leader. (Boak, 2001) The context of my study is to evaluate the need for the restructuring of leadership training in retail management.

The need for able leadership in the retail sector was upheld in the 'Retail Davos'- the Retail Leadership Forum held on the 13th and 14th of September 2011. This event hosted by the global business advisory giants like Goldman Sachs, Korn/Ferry International and OC&C Strategy Consultants, discussed the role of leadership in the modern era of retailing. According to the speakers at the forum, the retail leaders in future will require " a new set of leadership skills in order to adapt to the changing dynamics in the fast paced industry." (Harrison, 2011) This has become a pressing issue on the regional as well as global level. And this is what makes this research problem a matter of substantial business interest.

## Problem

In the present business era marked by fierce competition, many global and local retailers are awakening to realize their most critical survival challenge in the forthcoming years. Already caught in the cobweb of competition, pricing, consumer preferences and global extension, the new challenge that has baffled the retail industry is the need for competent leaders. (Florida, 2006; Higgs, 2001; Stalk, 1992) The retail heads across the world have understood that in order to achieve successful organizational growth, it is vital to find and engage the right leadership. (Lengnick-Hall, 2003; Shim, 2002) Studies in retail leadership conducted by Korn/Ferry in collaboration with the World Retail Congress have shown that the lack of right leadership talent can severely affect the development and expansion of retailers, thereby hampering their business growth. (Morel-Curran, 2008) My study looks forward to critical evaluating the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management. The research methodology to be used is a quantitative study with a quasi-experimental design and the method to collect data will be through surveys.

## Purpose

The purpose of the study is to critically evaluate the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management and to suggest a few ways of doing the same. The central idea is to study the phenomenon by surveying the opinions of the people from the industry on this issue. Based on their opinion and a parallel overview of the studies conducted in this domain, a need analysis will be done for leadership training in retail managers. The different variables that affect the performance of managers as leaders will be

examined and based on that a set of ways to impart the requisite training will be suggested. By doing so, we will be able to identify the gaps that exist in the current leadership practices amongst retail managers. This will help them to watch out for ways to overcome the current inadequacies and devise the much needed strategies to improve upon their business performance and organisational growth.

### Research Questions

The broad purpose of this study is to critically evaluate the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management and to suggest a few ways of doing the same. For the sake of better analysis and greater comprehensiveness, the research problem has been fragmented into two main research questions that will guide this study.

#### RQ 1 RQ 2

RQ1: Do the current trends in the retail sector indicate the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management?

H10- The current trends in the retail sector do not indicate any need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management.

H1a- The current trends in the retail sector significantly indicate the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management.

RQ 2: Will restructuring of leadership training have any positive impact on the performance of retail organisations?

H10- Restructuring of leadership training will have no positive impact on the performance of retail organisations.

H1a- Restructuring of leadership training will have significant positive impact on the performance of retail organisations.

## Methodological Approach

### Research Method

A study of the trends in leadership in the retail sector, in the past and the present times, will enable us to track the changes that have crept into the sector over the decades. This will lay down the foundation for conducting consequent research on the need for competent leaders and their role in the growth and performance of a retail business. This will be corroborated by the opinion of the experts from the retail industry, obtained through the surveys. The results of the undertaken survey, together with prior research in this field will be alluded to in order to suggest ways of restructuring and improving leadership training in the retail organisations.

### Research Design

The research design to be used in this study is a quasi-experimental method. It will be based on a quantitative methodology and the method of data collection will be through surveys. The questionnaire for the same would be devised keeping in mind the current leadership trends in the retail sector and the growing need for leadership training. The quantitative method will be used as it will provide a more concrete and measurable evaluation of the need for restructuring of leadership training in retail management. This will be supported by a qualitative assessment of studies and research already existing on this subject. Thus a coherent and balanced stance that would combine both the former and present-day parameters would be ideal for the purpose of this study.

### Sample

The group of respondents who will be approached as part of this research

will consist of 60 people who are a part of the retail sector for not less than 5 years. The population will be a mixed composition of persons who have worked as executives, managers and leaders in the retail sector for a substantial period of time. The selection of respondents will be done through a stratified random sampling technique, to ensure that there is a balanced distribution of respondents from different tiers of organizational structure. This will ensure that the survey effectively collects data from different segments of an organization and thus accumulates a comprehensive set of opinions.

#### Data Collection Instrument

The various channels that will be used to collect data from the respondents will include surveys- both offline and online, face to face interviews, telephonic interviews and interactions over emails and online chats. The whole purpose of this activity will be to collect as much data as possible within as less time as possible. Since all the respondents will be working professionals currently engaged in the retail sector in key positions, it will be really hard for them to give me adequate time. So in order to facilitate the procedure for both ends, I would use a combination of online and offline modes of data collection.

#### Contribution to Knowledge

The retail companies and training firms all over the world have accepted the current need for leadership training of their managers ranging from the store managers to the assistants and the leads. (Mohr Retail Website) For instance, Apple Inc. has planned to bring in a major restructuring of its retail stores in 2014-15. (Gurman, 2014) In keeping with the need of the times,

many studies have been conducted by earlier researchers that have slightly hinted at the need for leadership training in retail. However none of them have specified what needs to be changed in the current state of things, who are the people who need to be trained and which are the parameters that should be addressed by such training. These gaps in prior research will be addressed in my research.

### Review of Relevant Scholarship

#### Criteria for Selecting Relevant scholarship

As my study is meant to be supported by a qualitative assessment of scholarly work already existing on this subject, I have reviewed some of the literature developed in this field of inquiry. Review of the existing literature on this issue would help me perform my ground work and gather some background idea and information before I delve into my specific research problem.

#### Extension of Theory and Practice

My study will be based on a global research of best practices in retail. The results of my research and the conclusions derived from it will help the retail organizations to frame training strategies for employees who handle supervisory functions or are involved in direct dealing with customers. The recommendations would help the retailers to devise training techniques focused on changing individual behaviors which will influence the entire team. The resulting changes in leadership stance across the sales, service and operational verticals will be instrumental in driving organizational performance and stimulating organizational growth. (Hampton, 1986)

#### Rationale for Groups Studied

Derek Stamoulis (2010), as part of his study on “ Critical Leadership Attributes”, has conducted a survey of retail industry stakeholders to extract their opinion on the critical leadership attributes and skills. (Stamoulis, 2010)

Stuart Gilson (2001) in his book “ Creating Value through Corporate Restructuring” has examined the challenges faced by the retailers when they attempt to launch a restructuring program. (Gilson, 2001)

Cairns et al in (2010) in their article in the European Business Review have explored the role of leadership in corporate restructuring phase for retail organizations. (Cairns et al, 2010)

Most recently, McNulty (2013) in his “ Learning the Leadership Lessons of Retail” has asserted that “... it isn’t just the physical environment or the merchandise; it’s the people” who need to be restructured from time to time in order to propel business towards growth. (McNulty, 2013)

### Summary

Nowadays in the retail sector, the role of a manager has been largely outstretched. It no longer is limited only to the traditional tasks of managing, supervising and controlling, but has moved beyond that to include the task of leadership as well. But for the development of leadership skills, both general and industry-specific, proper training and guidance is very important. The same view has been upheld by existing research and literature on the subject. The survey that will be conducted as a part of my study will further corroborate these theoretical evidences and fortify their validity. The resulting inferences will be insightful in framing new strategies and policies for the leadership training of managers in the retail sector.

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