Minimising attainment deficit: a grounded theory of the leadership process in a large, public sector bureaucracy

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Minimising Attainment Deficit:
A Grounded Theory of the Leadership Process in a Large, Public Sector Bureaucracy

PhD Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explains the concept of Minimising Attainment Deficit. This is a leadership process whereby leaders help workers fulfil their expectations of achieving their potential in their work.

The purpose of the research was to generate a theory of the leadership process within a large, slow change, public sector, engineering bureaucracy. The aims were to discover the main concern of workers and to explain the leadership processes that resolved this main concern. The substantive processual theory of minimising attainment deficit has been presented as the basic social process which resolves the main concern of workers wishing to minimise the gap between their current work reality and that level which they perceive themselves to be capable of attaining.

A qualitative approach to the collection and analysis of data was adopted through the use of orthodox grounded theory. Its aim was to generate rather than to test theory. This research has contributed knowledge relevant to practitioners in the substantive area by identifying the main concerns of participants and the process by which these concerns can be resolved. It has also identified opportunities for further research that may significantly progress the continually evolving understanding of the leadership process.
Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr Robert Jones, for his patience while I stumbled through the intricacies of Grounded Theory, and for his invaluable guidance throughout the research. The subtle difference between Glaser’s orthodox Grounded Theory and Strauss and Corbin’s conceptual description was not, at first, apparent to me. Dr Jones guided my learning so that I was able to choose the methodology that would allow me to generate a Grounded Theory.
Contents

1 Introduction and Context of the Study ................................................................. 1
  1.1 Aims and Purpose of the Study ........................................................................... 1
  1.2 Significance of the Study ................................................................................... 2
  1.3 Introduction to the Study Problem ..................................................................... 3
  1.4 Background to AGRO ....................................................................................... 4
    1.4.1 Organisation Size and Complexity ............................................................... 5
    1.4.2 Public Sector Characteristics ....................................................................... 6
    1.4.3 Engineering Origin ...................................................................................... 7
    1.4.4 Absence of Tumultuous Change ................................................................ 9
  1.5 Behavioural Context of AGRO ....................................................................... 11
    1.5.1 Job Security ............................................................................................... 12
    1.5.2 Task Orientation ......................................................................................... 12
    1.5.3 Risk Aversion ............................................................................................ 13
    1.5.4 Control and Compliance .......................................................................... 13
  1.6 Thesis Structure ................................................................................................ 14
  1.7 Summary .......................................................................................................... 15

2 Research Design .................................................................................................... 17
  2.1 Nature of Social Science .................................................................................. 17
    2.1.1 Ontology .................................................................................................. 17
    2.1.2 Epistemology .......................................................................................... 17
    2.1.3 Human Nature ......................................................................................... 18
    2.1.4 Methodology ........................................................................................... 18
  2.2 Selecting a Research Design ............................................................................ 19
  2.3 Quantitative vs Qualitative Approaches in Leadership Research ...................... 22
    2.3.1 Why a Qualitative Approach? ................................................................... 25
    2.3.2 Types of Qualitative Studies ..................................................................... 26
    2.3.3 Qualitative Research in the Present Study ................................................. 28
  2.4 Symbolic Interactionism .................................................................................. 31
    2.4.1 Research Implication of Symbolic Interactionism ..................................... 34
  2.5 Why Grounded Theory? .................................................................................. 35
    2.5.1 Orthodox Grounded Theory ..................................................................... 38
      2.5.1.1 Concentration Site and Early Interviews ............................................... 39
2.5.1.2 Open Coding and Initial Category Building ........................................... 39
2.5.1.3 Constant Comparison Method................................................................. 40
2.5.1.4 Theoretical Sampling .............................................................................. 41
2.5.1.5 Core Category ......................................................................................... 42
2.5.1.6 Transition from open coding to selective coding.................................... 43
2.5.1.7 Saturation ................................................................................................ 44
2.5.1.8 Theoretical Coding.................................................................................. 45
2.5.1.9 Memoing ................................................................................................. 45
2.5.1.10 Sorting.................................................................................................... 46
2.5.1.11 Emergent Framework.......................................................................... 46
2.5.1.12 Writing Up........................................................................................... 47
2.6 Summary ............................................................................................................. 48

3 Data Collection and Analysis .................................................................................49
3.1 Role of the Researcher ........................................................................................ 49
  3.1.1 Researcher Bias ........................................................................................... 50
3.2 Initial Scoping Interviews ................................................................................... 51
3.3 Emerging the Grounded Theory Model .............................................................. 54
  3.3.1 Open Coding and Initial Category Building ............................................... 54
  3.3.2 Re-categorising the Data ............................................................................. 57
  3.3.3 Participants’ Main Concern......................................................................... 59
  3.3.4 Core Category ............................................................................................. 62
  3.3.5 Selective Coding ......................................................................................... 63
  3.3.6 Towards Saturation ..................................................................................... 64
3.4 Summary ............................................................................................................. 66

4 Minimising Attainment Deficit - the process .......................................................67
4.1 The Leadership Process....................................................................................... 67
4.2 Subordinate Actioning......................................................................................... 70
  4.2.1 Subordinate Perceptioning .......................................................................... 70
  4.2.2 Subordinate Emotioning.............................................................................. 72
  4.2.2.1 Moderating Emotions.............................................................................. 74
  4.2.3 Subordinate Behaviouring........................................................................... 76
  4.2.3.1 Moderating Behaviours........................................................................... 81
  4.2.4 Workplace Consequences.......................................................................... 82
4.3 Leader Actioning................................................................................................. 83
4.3.1 Leader Perceptioning ................................................................. 85
4.3.2 Leader Concerning .............................................................................. 86
4.3.3 Leader Probleming ...................................................................................... 87
4.3.4 Leader Strategising ...................................................................................... 87
4.4 Summary ............................................................................................................. 89

Introduction to Chapters 5, 6, and 7 ................................................................. 91

5 Subordinate Centred Strategies ................................................................. 93

5.1 Subordinate Status ........................................................................................... 94
  5.1.1 Perception of Subordinate ................................................................. 95
    5.1.1.1 Expectations ............................................................................... 96
    5.1.1.2 Limitations ................................................................................. 97
    5.1.1.3 Emotions .................................................................................... 97
  5.1.2 Subordinate’s Needs ............................................................................. 98
    5.1.2.1 Development ............................................................................. 98
    5.1.2.2 Support ...................................................................................... 99
  5.1.3 Subordinate’s Situation ...................................................................... 99
    5.1.3.1 Performance Impediments ..................................................... 100
    5.1.3.2 Atmosphere ............................................................................. 101

5.2 Develop Subordinates ............................................................................... 101
  5.2.1 Team Involvement ............................................................................. 103
    5.2.1.1 Ownership .............................................................................. 103
    5.2.1.2 Participation ............................................................................. 104
    5.2.1.3 Contribution ............................................................................. 104
  5.2.2 Positive Guidance ............................................................................ 105
    5.2.2.1 Mentoring ................................................................................. 105
    5.2.2.2 Feedback ............................................................................... 107
    5.2.2.3 Confidence ............................................................................. 109
  5.2.3 Skills Enhancement ........................................................................... 110
    5.2.3.1 Training ............................................................................... 111
    5.2.3.2 Work Experience ................................................................. 112
    5.2.3.3 Learning Opportunities .......................................................... 113

5.3 Support Subordinates ............................................................................. 114
  5.3.1 Providing Help .................................................................................. 115
    5.3.1.1 Assistance .............................................................................. 117
7  Leader Centred Strategies.................................................................154

7.1 Cognitive Processes.............................................................................155
  7.1.1 Enhance Perceptions.................................................................156
    7.1.1.1 Incident..............................................................................156
    7.1.1.2 Role Model.........................................................................157
    7.1.1.3 Self Perception.................................................................158
  7.1.2 Enhance Understanding..............................................................159
    7.1.2.1 Capability...........................................................................160
    7.1.2.2 Behaviours........................................................................161

7.2 Accomplishment Strategies..............................................................162
  7.2.1 Self Improvement........................................................................163
    7.2.1.1 Performance.......................................................................164
    7.2.1.2 Behaviour..........................................................................165
  7.2.2 Image Improvement.................................................................166
    7.2.2.1 Credibility...........................................................................166
    7.2.2.2 Character..........................................................................167
  7.2.3 Positional Improvement.............................................................168
    7.2.3.1 Approach...........................................................................169
    7.2.3.2 Work................................................................................169

7.3 Summary............................................................................................170

8  Literature Comparison.........................................................................172

8.1 Situational Analysis and the Leadership Process..........................173
  8.1.1 Non Grounded Theory Studies.................................................176
  8.1.2 Grounded Theory Studies.......................................................180

8.2 Linkage between leader action and subordinate behaviour........186

8.3 Linkage between subordinate behaviour and leader action.........190
  8.3.1 Servant Leadership.................................................................191
    8.3.1.1 Place service before self-interest......................................193
    8.3.1.2 Nourish others and help them become whole.................194
    8.3.1.3 Inspire trust by being trustworthy.................................197
    8.3.1.4 Listen first to express confidence in others..................200
  8.3.2 Socialised Power.......................................................................201
  8.3.3 Individualised Consideration..................................................203
  8.3.4 Super Leadership....................................................................204
8.4 Summary ........................................................................................................... 206

9 Implications and Conclusions .............................................................................209

9.1 Achievement of the Purpose and Aims of the Research ............................... 209
9.2 Significance of the Thesis and Its Contribution .............................................. 210
9.3 Implications for Practitioners ........................................................................ 212
9.4 Implications for Further Research ................................................................. 214
   9.4.1 Leads to Future Research ......................................................................... 214
   9.4.2 Comebacks ........................................................................................... 215
   9.4.3 Elevation to Formal Theory ..................................................................... 216
9.5 Criteria for Evaluating the Grounded Theory of Minimising Attainment Deficit
   9.5.1 Fit ........................................................................................................... 218
   9.5.2 Relevance ............................................................................................. 219
   9.5.3 Workability .......................................................................................... 220
   9.5.4 Modifiability ......................................................................................... 220
9.6 Summary ........................................................................................................... 222

References .................................................................................................................... 224
Figures

Figure 1.1 Social Architecture and Values and Behaviours 11
Figure 2.1 Subjective-Objective Dimension in Social Science 19
Figure 2.2 Linked Elements in Research Design 21
Figure 3.1 Theoretical Model After Two Interviews 56
Figure 3.2 Leader Facilitates Work 61
Figure 3.3 Sequence of Leader-Subordinate Behaviours 62
Figure 4.1 Leadership Process: Core and Sub-Core Categories 68
Figure 4.2 Phases of Subordinate Actioning 70
Figure 4.3 Subordinate Perceptioning, Emotioning and Behaviouring 70
Figure 4.4 Subordinate Status Continuum 71
Figure 4.5 Positive Emotional Reactions 72
Figure 4.6 Negative Emotional Reactions 73
Figure 4.7 Subcategories of Subordinate Behaviours 76
Figure 4.8 Properties of Beneficial Behaviours 77
Figure 4.9 Properties of Detrimental Behaviours 78
Figure 4.10 Categories of Workplace Consequences 82
Figure 4.11 Phases of Leader Actioning 84
Figure 4.12 Leader Perceptioning, Concerning, Probleming and Strategising 85
Figure 4.13 Minimising Attainment Deficit – the Basic Social Process 90
Figure 5a Leader Strategies and their Properties 92
Figure 5.1 Subordinate Centred Strategies 93
Figure 5.2 Properties of Subordinate Status 94
Figure 5.3 Properties of Develop Subordinates 102
Figure 5.4 Properties of Support Subordinates 114
Figure 6.1 Environment Centred Strategies 128
Figure 6.2 Properties of Reduce Communication Barriers 130
Figure 6.3 Properties of Operational Planning 136
Figure 6.4 Properties of Create Positive Atmosphere 145
Figure 7.1 Leader Centred Strategies 154
Figure 7.2 Properties of Cognitive Processes 155
Figure 7.3 Properties of Accomplishment Strategies 163
Figure 8.1 Trends in Leadership Theory and Research 177
Figure 8.2 Categories and Relationships in the Study of Leadership Effects 187
Figure 8.3 Rational-Emotive Behaviour Model and the Meaning Chain 190
Figure 9.1 Interaction of Sub-Core Variables and Their Phases 210

Minimising Attainment Deficit