My leader? You mean my Boss?!

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SENIOR PROJECT

TOPIC: My leader? You mean my Boss?!

The impact of leadership in the employee satisfaction in hospitality in Albania!!!

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Abstract

Leadership, despite being a broad concept, is exhibited in different forms by different people who are in charge. Displaying diverse levels of leadership is a form of professionalism and education. The difference in the level of employee satisfaction can be linked to the impact of these opposed styles. This papers' focus is on the influence of different leadership style in hotel industry in Albania. Lacking professional education and training, this concept is extensively confused with being a boss. This paper focuses on whether or not there is a strong correlation between leadership level and employee satisfaction in hotels in Albania. There are two methods used; a poll distributed to 30 young adults who are seniors in high school and the MLQ questionnaire distributed to current employees in 6 big hotels in Tirana, Albania. The results highly support the hypothesis which states that the connection between the two is very strong.

Key Words: Leadership level; Employee satisfaction; Hospitality Impact; Albania.

__"Employees don't leave the company, they leave their bosses". Marcus Buckingham__

Leadership is quite a broad concept, widely used every day describing people that are in charge. When referring to the business environment, however this concept becomes a bit more abstract and requires definition and various layers. In hospitality, due to the nature of this industry (people oriented), there are multiple styles that a leader may exhibit in different situations and with different followers at hand. Each leadership style is an indicator of the organizations' culture and leadership influence on the employees. (Babalola, 2016). Building relationships and fostering a suitable leadership style creates meaningful interactions and increases job satisfaction. When looking at the leadership it is a multi-dimension notion, where each dimension functions as a separate cell. (Babalola, 2016)

Burns in 1978, concluded that there are three main leadership levels that deeply affect the perception and satisfaction. The identified levels are; laissez-faire, transactional and transformational leadership (Figure 1, Appendix 1). These highlighted levels are the core differentiations that distinguish between a boss and a leader. Nowadays the hospitality industry is facing a vast shortage of leaders, but is overflowing with bosses. The underlined characteristics for each style point directly its role and importance for the company. According to Burns (1978) laissez-faire is the starting point where the leader displays an avoidance of responsibilities, fails to assist and motivate the followers. When demonstrating the transaction level, the leader serves more of an observer that monitors the performance and only acts when it is needed to ensure the continuity. The highest level is the transformational leadership style raises the employees'

motivation and morality by highly engaging them. This level also shifts the interest towards company interest.

Bass (1997) further studied the transformational level leaders are critical for the company when referring to reaching a higher employee satisfaction. (Figure 2, Appendix 1). These types of leaders focus on collaboration instead of competition and therefore become more approachable and inspiring for the employees and potential employees. Owing to their charisma, mutual respect and unbiased sense of responsibility in the team, transformational leaders are the most valuable asset for a company. (Bass, 1997). According the studies conducted by Lam (2011) the results show that the leaders' style surely affect employee performance and satisfaction. The study of Saad (2018) states additional instance of transformational leaders' personal attributes such as constant communication, appreciation for their performance and independence to express themselves, leads toward high employee satisfaction. (Figure 3, Appendix 1).

Additionally, there is another factor to be considered when referring to a successful leadership style which is quality delivery analyzed in a multi-dimension SERVQUAL (service quality). The valuable factor is the correlation between two of these levels, more specifically transformational and transactional style. (Newman, 2001) This parallel applies correspondently to control quality versus assure quality. According to our lectures, Newman author and studier of service quality designed one of the most successful models of questionnaire known to this day. He calls the relationship among these two levels, as 'let's do business' type of approach that a boss may exhibit in the work place. According to Newman, a leader delivers quality by building his leadership upon the firm foundation of vision-mission tie that every company has. Furthermore, he argues the idea that the human eye lacks the attention to these details and

therefore only registers above the three-standard-deviation, not the average. (Newman, 2001). The ability to center around what is lacking, makes a transactional leader successfully transition into a transformational one. SERVQUAL is moreover, used as an effective diagnostic tool to measure the success of a transformational leadership style despite the practical difficulties entailed in its implementation. (Newman, 2001). According the same author, the multi-dimensional service delivery quality sets the bar to differentiating not simply among company image, but most importantly between leaders and their impression in employee satisfaction. There are alternative routes to measuring success and the most reliable one is through satisfied employees that reflect that to customers through every interaction.

The main factor in being a successful and effective transformational leader is to allow an opportunity to both internal and external customers to actively participate in the co-creation. (Chan; YI-Hsuan; Wan-Jun. 2015). Being involved in the process of crafting value inspires customers and employees by making them feel appreciated and esteemed. This is the first step towards moving into a higher and better level of leadership and reaching the ultimate goal of outmost employee satisfaction. This can be done in various stages (Figure 4), but the respect and meaning given to the employees by encompassing their efforts and notions into the process, makes them feel more empowered and create a better SERVQUAL multi-dimension for these internal customers, who at the end of the day represent the face of the company. According the Chan; YI-Hsuan; Wan-Jun (2015) the employee satisfaction and enthusiasm for their job and the company, is reflected on the customer perception and even more, on the way how the vision-mission of the company is translated into real actions and results. This particular dynamic element is the key to transitioning from one leadership level to the other and reaching the highest employee satisfaction. Creating the right work environment is essential when building a strong

chain between leaders and employees. The cycle is vital in order for the employees to highly perform and participate in the added value to the service and making it exceptional. This, undoubtedly is an end result of them being satisfied with their job and wanting to give their best and beyond, by exceeding requirements.

The leadership style contributes in creating the right organizational culture within the company. That is what distinguishes one successful company from the others and what boosts up the satisfaction and willingness of the employees to work. (Mushtaq, 2013). The statistics of Mushtaq (2013) studies highlight that the focus on staff needs and expectation significantly build up their confidence and satisfaction. Experiencing the value and having the work environment function for them not against them is another factor of satisfaction. (Babalola, 2016). The emphasis is also transferred into educating and training the employees as a trait of transformational leadership.

Another crucial contributor in deepening the leadership style and willingness to work gap is the image of the hotel. Bednarska (2019) found that in Poland students of hospitality are reluctant to work within the industry due to their beliefs that tourism won't offer them the values they expect. These values were stated to be the ones as; empowerment within the company, fairness, etc. When this same study was spread closer to our region, the results were almost the same. The hotels image is hugely affected by the leadership style. This builds a strong bond between employee satisfaction, positive workplace attitude and the outcome of the potential young employees' willingness to join. Results show that the transformational level of leadership inspires individuals to join the company in the first place. (Bednarska, 2019).

Another example that reflects the importance of leadership level is in the 'Parador Hotels & Resort' in 2013-2014 recognized a drop in the overall performance due to the employee dissatisfaction. The motive for that was researched to be primarily in the failure of incorporating the 3 main reasons; appropriate leadership style, impartial work environment created by the bosses and the irrational organizational culture influenced by the leaders. Due to these findings they determined that leadership is the foundation stone in hospitality and tourism industry. (Pawirosumarto, 2016).

Referring to a more nearby example, Dubrovnik, the surveys found out that transformational leadership was positively influencing job satisfaction and performance. (Kuznin & Walker, 2018). The importance of having motivation and well-founded work ethics has proven to result successful, not only towards guests, but more importantly towards the employees. (Kuznin & Walker, 2017). Moreover, broadening the performance perception among employees helps achieve full potential and on long-term conveys the ultimate goal of attaining sustainable team with satisfied employees, succeeding in their performance. (Patiar, 2015). Employee participation in decision-making towards the shared values of the company, guides towards spiral progression of development and leaning. This can be reached through intensive training, especially the leaders. (Coad, 1998).

Albania is a relatively small country where the tourism is rapidly increasing with 45% in the last 10 years. (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). They expect it to increase by 10% more in the coming 5 years. This growth requires professionals to lead the hotel market industry. However, currently specific education focusing in this industry is still lacking. There is a shortage of professionals due to the missing education and training. (Ministry of Tourism and Environment,

2018). As a result, even the leadership doesn't meet the standards and badly impacts the employee satisfaction.

In Albania, the most popular leadership style noticed is the transactional level, which results in lack of willingness of young people to work there. (Sheshi & Kercini, 2017). However, according the same study, traces of transformational level is present, but solely on private and/or foreign owned brands, due to their education and ongoing training to maximize employee performance and satisfaction. This results in a shortage of motivation for the youth to be willing to work. These results were based on more financial and accountant type of business/company. Dai (2013) ranks trust as one of the most essential quality in the transformational leadership level, due to the positive and just relationship between the leader and the employees. Leadership is a pattern of behavior that focuses primarily on the followers to assist them to grow, achieve the goals and increase satisfaction. (Pawirosumarto, 2016). Nevertheless, in Albania the gap between the leadership level and employee satisfaction in the hotel industry has not been thoroughly researched until now. (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). There is no clear acknowledgement if hotel leaders in Albania do at least acknowledge the existence of such levels of the way they lead.

Thus, this paper will try to answer some questions regarding the leadership style in Albanian hospitality industry, more specifically hotels, and how the professionals influence in the willingness to work in this industry.

Hypothesis 1- There is no significant correlation between leadership style and willingness to work in hotels in Albania.

Hypothesis 2- There is a strong correlation between the transformational leadership style and the willingness to working hotels in Albania.

METHOD

Employee satisfaction increases through respect and support of the leaders to coach them through exceeding expectation and improve effectiveness. (Garcia, 2016). A study conducted by Garcia (2016) shows that employees prefer to work aside their leaders and not look upon them from below. On base of this, a poll questionnaire was conducted in Tirana, Albania (2019) with 30 senior high schools students, while they were attending an international educational fair. From the overall analysis, 8 young students that answered positively stated that they would be willing to work only due to the potential for further growth that can be noted at the recent years. (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). This gap clearly describes how rapidly the importance of the leadership style impact in hospitality is growing among the future generations.

The attempt to measure the correlation between the leadership style and the employee satisfaction was conducted through the MLQ questionnaire (multifactor leadership questionnaire) by Avolio J.B and Bass M.B in 1995. This particular questionnaire is still considered the most valid one to indicate the leadership style effects. MLQ was distributed in 6 hotels in Tirana, Albania; three of these hotels were 4 stars and three were 5 stars. The chosen departments to conduct the questionnaire within the hotels were the front desk department and the food & beverage department. The official version of it from Avolio and Bass (1995) is in English language and has in total 40 questions divided into 5 sections; three of which focus on the leadership styles, one on the work performance effects and the last one on additional comments, which is optional. The questionnaire was handed to them personally and it was collected back after being filled out. Since the original version of the questionnaire was distributed, it was in English language and the selected people to whom it was dispensed were comfortable and confident in answering in English language.

RESULTS

When analyzing the research, the results were such that sustained the second hypothesis about the strong correlation between leadership style and employee satisfaction. There are only a few bright conclusions to address, mainly generated by the small number of satisfied employees, who felt that they were happy with their job due to the lack of deep understanding of their job description tasks. Unfortunately, the positive and satisfied employee number makes up only 10% of the total results. According to 5% of this category of employees, working the basic and generic everyday duties makes their work easier in their perception. In addition, they rarely had any eye-to-eye contact with their leader. The other 5% of the same category felt that being left unsupervised and getting no feedback or rewards reinforced their necessity to simply perform the daily and routine responsibilities.

When examining the differentiation of the three leadership styles and their impact on employee satisfaction, the results show that the alteration among the three levels is irrelevant. The transformational, transactional and laissez-faire differ from each other with only 1%, which in the long run is insignificant. The meaningful end result is that the results hardly reach the neutral; leading to the bottom line that leaders in Albanian hotels don't display neither level, therefore act more as bosses, by so creating a huge gap on the employee satisfaction. The majority of the respondents composed of 50%, expressed dissatisfaction due to the lack of massive motivation, guidance and relationship with the person in charge. The other 40% of the respondents state that their main source of dissatisfaction in the workplace is that despite of them being the front line employees that are in-direct contact with the customers, they are unappreciated and often unrewarded.

Validating these results, the poll answers reveal that the willingness among young, potential employees on working in the hospitality industry in Albania is also very low owing to the perception of this dissatisfaction from current employees. The Poll, conducted on 30 young students, on the other hand concludes in an assessment that the main issue that hotel industry is facing today in Albania is leadership, and more specifically, professional leadership. It had a full 100% answers and results. This study shares similarity aligned in findings with Pope (2018) where he proved that seeking employee input, ethics standards at work, voicing opinions leads to genuine embodiment of higher creativity and productivity among employees

Moreover, the results show that the lowest rated respondents of 8% answered positively regarding their willingness to work in hospitality in Albania because of their perception that the leaders have a vision and mission. However, the negative answers, being the highest of 92%, reflect that they are very unwillingness to be part of the industry. It is due to the fact that there the potential, vision and mission that the company may have are never translated into actions and worse never communicated to the employees. This replicated on them feeling inferior, unappreciated and disoriented concerning their performance, responsibilities and expectations. The disconnection of the relationships and lack of personal interaction with the leader ultimately influenced the declining rank of work performance and on the bottom line the employee satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The concluded results of the poll questionnaire where out of the 30 total potential youth, 92% of them answered negatively based on lack of qualified leaders and missing professional education. Equally, the highest 90% of the dissatisfaction of the current employees highly

cultivates reasons that bring a deficiency in progression and further development of the industry.

According to the official page of the ministry of youth and employment in Tirana, Albania (2018) there is no dedicated major of tourism and hospitality industry in the educational system. This further leads to individuals owning their private hotels and therefore running them, without the proper education and training. Consequently, the youth is vastly reluctant to working in the industry as they feel unappreciated and with no opportunities to progress. Their unwillingness deepens the gap and creates a scarcity in the market for employees and a shortage in professionals. Potential employees' refusal to even consider applying for a position in hospitality industry is also connected with the lack of opportunities for them to participate, contribute and make a difference in the company. The leaders due to the lack of professionalism and knowledge act like bosses and require satisfying their own ego and maximizing profits.

When examining the MLQ questionnaire results, it sheds light to the blurry picture of what causes the disbelief and indisposition of the youth to engage in working in hospitality in their own country. The current employees additional comments broaden the portrait of how not having a specific leadership style, makes them feel confused and unacknowledged at the work place. Since there are no adequate trainings and education, the leaders act like bosses and don't exhibit any leadership skills or style. The three leadership styles transformational, transactional and laissez-faire are unknown and below neutral line. The only higher results were at the 5 star hotel currently run by a foreign management and the employees there felt competent, responsible and satisfied with their job. These results provide evidences in favor of the second hypothesis, that there is a strong correlation between leadership style and employee satisfaction.

Lack of professionalism, education and trainings make the so called 'leaders' focus shift from allowing employees display their strengths and capabilities into working mechanically for

the salary at the end of the month. The companies don't provide a mission-vision drive thus, employees don't feel open to share and align their values and goals with the company, which further leads to their dissatisfaction in the work place. The end results clarify that these individuals are failing at their duty as leaders, due to the lack of understanding of what these position stands for. They aren't helping their employees find their meaning and purpose at work and this practice is the opposite of what a leader does.

Creating a standard and determination to solely focus in profits lowers the effectiveness of the employees and as a result the success of the company. Another factor where these individuals fail as leaders, but act as bosses, is when they fail they create a working environment where the employees unleash their talents and potential everyday while performing their mundane tasks. This consequently lowers their engagement, excitement and performance which rest in lower satisfaction and company image. The right balance would be between serving a purpose and earning the salary, but bosses in Albania misbalance it by merely focusing into profit margin and materialistic gain.

SUGGESTION & LIMITATIONS

There are, however a few restrictions about this paper. Firstly, this paper only observed 6 hotels in the capital, which doesn't generalize the situation for other cities and/or hotels. Secondly, there were only 2 departments of the hotels that were asked to answer the questionnaire, the front-line employees which are in-direct contact with the customers daily. This restricts the knowledge for other departments, mainly the back office employees. Additionally, a big limitation to this paper is that there is no division in the demographic of the population interviewed; no age, gender or the length of their experience in the hotel industry partition.

Lastly, the focus of this paper was specifically on the leadership style and not in additional and further benefits and working conditions and criteria for hotel industry. All of the up-mentioned restriction consent to more space for further studies and allow the consideration that there is a possible flexible margin when analyzing further the hotel industry and the approach which they are led.

For future reference, in order to make the study better and more effective, the suggestions are that it must be conducted to a wider scope by surveying a broader number of hotels including in other cities of Albania. Secondly, it can be piloted to more than just 2 main departments, including other back-of-the-stage departments which are not in-direct contact with customers on a daily basis. Addionally, a suggestion would be to shift the focus of the paper to center the attention if these hotels are foreign run or domestic run and what the variances among the two are regarding the satisfaction. Moreover, a more specific concentration can be put in the demographic and professional education effects. Lastly. another theme that can be stressed out, are the further potential benefits that employees have regardless if the person in charge exhibits leadership behavior or boss-like behavior. A more concentrated paper can emphasize on additional influencers on employee satisfaction and how they are established in the hospitality industry in Albania from equally foreign owned and domestic owned hotels.

Based on all the up-mentioned results, the conclusion is that there is an immediate need for professional and specific education and training for hospitality industry employees and potential employees. There have to be foreign seminars and trainings offered, to enhance the performance of leaders by well-informing their level of leadership, but also, in the same time, provide benefits to employees and increase their level of job satisfaction.
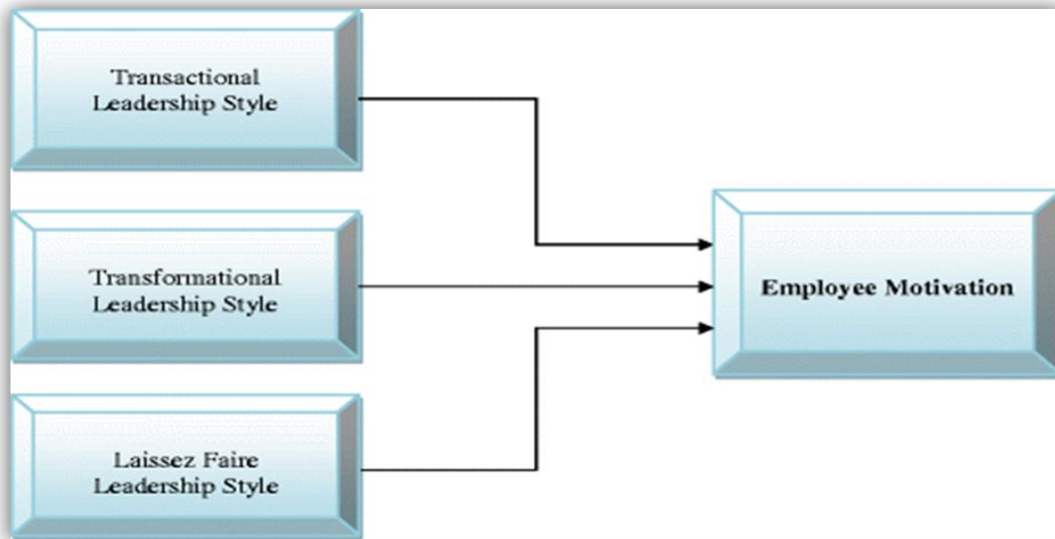
APPENDIX

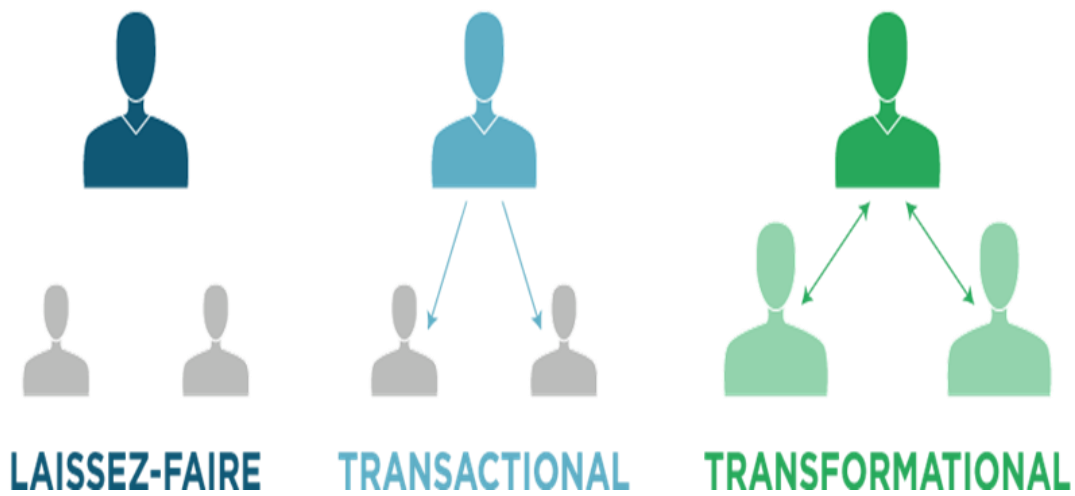Figure 1. Burns leadership style (source).

Figure 2. Communication manner according leadership style according to Bass (source)

Figure 3. Steps of becoming the transformational leader according Burns & Bass (source)
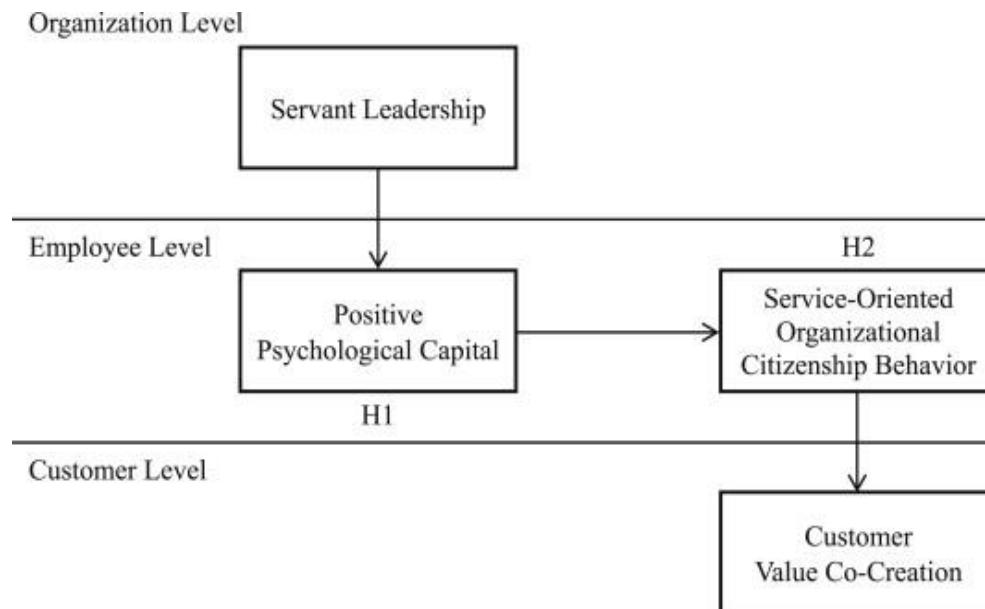

Figure 4. Key contribution levels. (source).

Poll questions:

1. Name 1 reason that would MAKE you work in the hotel industry in Albania?

2. Name 1 reason that would make you NOT work in the hotel industry in Albania?

# respondents	Q1 - reasons FOR working in hospitality	Q2 - reasons AGAINST working in hospitality
1	Demand is high, growing industry	-
2	Foreign leadership - positive influence	-
3	-	Lack of professional leaders
4	-	Low income
5	Potential in increase salaries	-
6	-	Leadership standards missing
7	-	Lack in motivation to work by the leaders
8	Has known an increase in the recent years	-
9	-	Missing qualified leaders
10	Foreign leaders bring more potential for growth	-
11	-	Lack of respect & appreciation for the employees
12	-	Lacking a proper education on the field/industry
13	Further growth in the future	-
14	-	Lack of respect & appreciation for the employees
15	-	It isn't developed enough
16	New opportunities to network with foreigners	-
17	-	Missing qualified leaders
18	-	Lacking a proper education on the field/industry
19	Has known an increase in the recent years	-
20	-	Lack of professional leaders
21	-	Not enough importance/emphasis given
22	-	Lack of trainigs to build opportunities
23	-	Lack of respect & appreciation for the employees
24	-	Missing qualified leaders
25	-	Lack of respect & appreciation for the employees
26	-	Low income
27	-	Nepotism focus & low chances of progress
28	-	Leadership standards missing
29	-	Missing qualified leaders
30	-	Lack of respect & appreciation for the employees
TOTAL	8/30	22/30

Table 1. Poll results questions
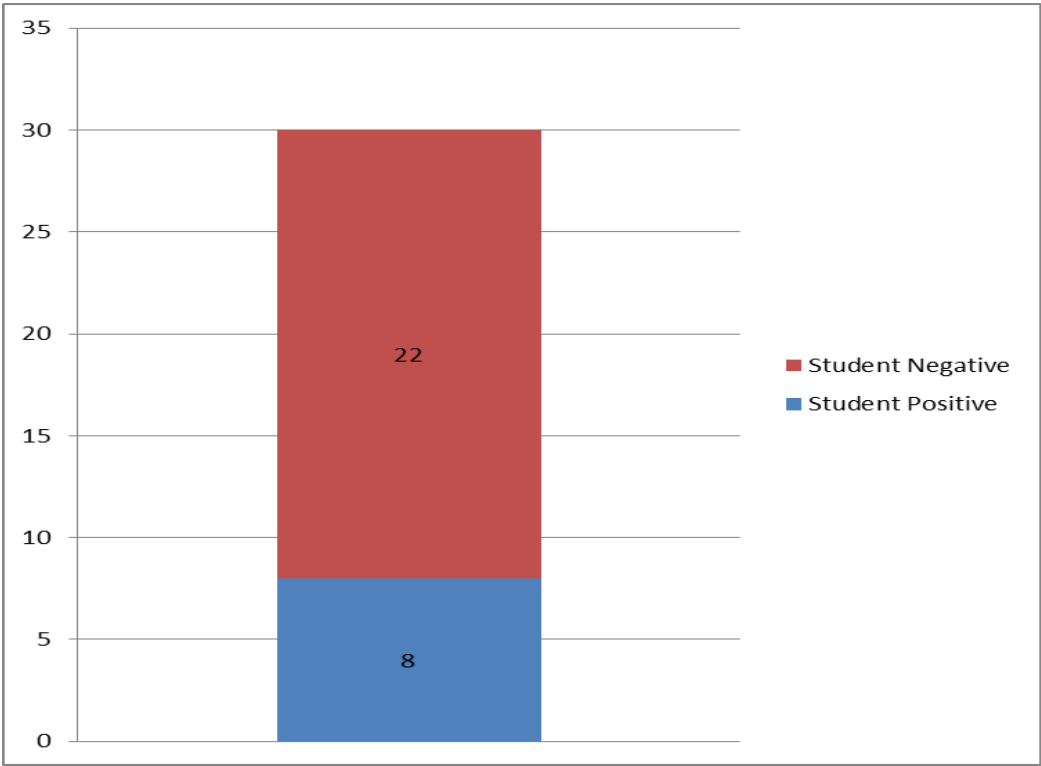
Poll Results

Chart 1. Illustration of poll questionnaire results

LEADERSHIP STYLE & EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

YOUR LOGO
HERE

To help me provide benefits that meet my needs and requirements, please complete this survey and return it to Rea Paparizo.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Transformational Leadership					
My supervisor has a clear vision for the future					
My supervisor acts as my role model					

My supervisor is consistent in following his/her values					
I trust my supervisor					
My supervisor is charismatic and optimistic					
My supervisor inspires and motivates me					
My supervisor raises my awareness for organizational interest					
My supervisor trusts the work I do					
My supervisor encourages creative thinking					
My supervisor stimulates me to achieve set goals					
My supervisor encourages my intellectual participation					
I feel free to openly communicate my ideas					
My supervisor helps my personal development					
My supervisor treats every subordinate as an individual					
My supervisor is proactive with my wants and needs					
My supervisor includes me in decision making					
Transactional Leadership					
My supervisor clarifies role and task requirements					
My supervisor provides me with material rewards, such as pay raise or bonus on the fulfillment of obligation					
My supervisor provides me with psychological rewards, such as compliments, on the fulfillment of obligation					
My supervisor has clearly set objectives for me to follow					
My supervisor monitors the outcomes, whether the objective is achieved or not					
My supervisor keeps track of mistakes					
My supervisor actively deals with mistakes, in order to achieve goals					
My supervisor rather tells me what I have done wrong then what I did right					
My supervisor engages only when problems appear					
My supervisor does not care about problem solving					

My supervisor focuses on failures					
I feel my supervisor does not exist when work standards are met					
Laissez-faire Leadership Style					
My supervisor escapes from making decisions					
My supervisor abandons responsibility and authority					
My supervisor does not care about my work					
My supervisor does not provide instructions nor feedback					
Work Performance					
I am satisfied with my job					
I give my best when doing the given task					
I care about my work					
I cannot perform any better than I do now					
I am a highly motivated employee					
I understand my job					
I have a good relationship with my supervisor					
I contribute to the overall performance of the organization					
Additional Comments:					

Figure 1. The MLQ questionnaire used to collect my data

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