



Influence of Leadership Styles on Employees' Commitment to Service Quality

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Abstract Leadership style plays an important role in influencing the employees of any organization and this research study is focused on three star hotel employees in Tamilnadu.

The study was made with conceptual model famed by Ronald Clark (2009). The study has the following objectives: to analyze the impact of participative and empowering styles of leadership qualities on frontline ECSQ; to assess the relationship among employees' attributes and to analyze the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on MCSQ and the employees' role clarity; to assess the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on commitment to service quality by management and the employees' shared customer oriented values and to assess the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on MCSQ and the employees' job satisfaction.

Based on the objectives fourteen hypotheses have been framed to test the significance of the influence of the leadership styles with employees' job satisfaction, role clarity and shared customer oriented values. Two sets of questionnaires based on standard scales were used in the study, one for managers of the hotels and other for the front line employees of the hotel. Bootstrapping was performed to obtain the statistical significance of path coefficients using a t-test. The indirect and total effects were measured using Smart PLS. Sobels' test was performed for mediation analysis.

The findings of the research are (i) participative leadership style is found to be the more suitable style of leadership for Hotel managers since it has significant influence of employees attributes of satisfaction in job, clarity in role shared values. Besides the other findings are also presented.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Hotel Leaders, Employees Commitment, Service Quality

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

"Research has demonstrated that a manager's leadership style has a remarkable impact on employee's behavioral pattern, including their conviction and willingness to adopt and abide by the firm's strategic and marketing techniques and patterns particularly those relating to customer service" (Ahmed et al 1994). Various styles of leadership are followed in the hospitality industry like directive style, participative

style, empowering style, transactional and transformational leadership style. Each style certainly has an impact on the performance and the countenance of the employees. Hotel managers can enhance and keep renovating the employees' commitment towards service quality, by demonstrating the method and practices to themselves (Bowen, 1985; Hartline 1996).

"While different leadership styles have the ability to influence the employees in a variety of ways, identifying the right leadership style remains a monumental task" (Bowen 1985). Employees' job satisfaction in a hotel depends purely on the managerial leadership style which influences their job performance to a greater extent. The Manager also has

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the role of a Chemist who applies various permutation and combination. Sometimes a mix match in styles of leadership can be very beneficial to the organization.

On contrary to the directive leadership, participative leadership involves, initially placing the agenda before the team, inviting view points and consulting with subordinates and considering their opinions and suggestions, debating on the pros and cons, and only after the complete sojourn with his team does the manager take any decision" (Mullins 2005). "It is associated with consensus, consultation, delegation and involvement" (Bass 2011).

"Empowerment Leadership is defined as a process where employees are provided with the necessary authority and autonomy to exercise a larger control over the decisions which is being taken in the workplace" (Conger 1998).

"The influence of the leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction, shared customer oriented values and role clarity also varies according to the style of leadership, which will in turn affect the employees' commitment to service quality"(Clark et al, 2009). "The service offered by the front line employees of the hotel is deeply influenced by the managers or the department heads, whose leadership style is in direct proportion with employees' role clarity, shared values and job satisfaction" (Clark et al 2009).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Hotel industry involves huge investment and capital and to maintain and provide quality service that too in an atmosphere of stiff competition filled with rivalry, it is essential that the right pyramid structure beginning with the Management at the peak, the managers in the next rung supported by the employees in the next rungs is aptly structured and set. Hence there is vital need to study and find the right style of leadership suitable for the hotel industry.

MOTIVATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The hotel industry is by itself a complex, dynamic and varied as the industry deals with the most complex and complicated animal the human and it becomes challenging for the hotels to be competitive to sustain their competitiveness on a continuous uniform platform. "The key to bringing a leader lies in the firm, with the ability to manage change as suggested by Olsen et al, 2008". "Good leaders are thus made, not born. Good leadership is achieved through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training, and the accumulation of relevant experience" (Oslen, 2008). "Leadership theories can fall under one of the following three aspects: leadership as a process or relationship, leadership as a combination of traits or personality characteristics,

or leadership as certain behaviors or, as they are more commonly referred to, leadership skills (Bass 2008)". "In Hotel, the service provided by the frontline employees who are in contact with the guest is influenced by the managerial leadership style and hence the employee's performance also varies accordingly (Charry k 2014)".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empowering Leadership Styles

Sparrowe Raymond T (1994) has explored the antecedents and outcomes of empowering leadership style in hospitality industry and his findings reveal that psychological empowerment among hospitality employees is worthwhile which will increase job satisfaction among employees and job turn over will decrease. He has explored on Employee empowerment in hospitality industry with study on antecedents and outcomes. The results reveal that employees feel more satisfied with their empowerment and also their intention of leaving job will also decrease (Sparrowe 1994).

Michael D Hartline and OC Ferrell (1996) discuss the role of managers in empowering employees to provide better quality service (Hartline 1996). The authors have tested the model of employee service management, which investigates the constructs simultaneously across three interfaces of service delivery path. The findings indicate that managers who are committed to service quality will mostly empower their employees and use behavioral based evaluation.

"Ronald A Clark et al. (2009) clarify the effects of leadership style on hotel employees' commitment to service quality. " The primary aim of this study is to find how the individual unit manager's style of leadership influences the employees to perform their job. "The findings suggest that higher levels of management commitment to service quality were associated with an increase in the use of both participative and empowering leadership. [Ronald clark 2009]" This result indicates that hotel managers who have more commitment to service quality will empower their employees.

Participative Leadership Styles

"Stogdill, R. M., and Shartle, C. L. (1948) have researched on methods for determining patterns for leadership behavior in relation to organization structure and objectives". The results show that the persons working in group oriented work in an organization tend to follow a pattern of consultative or participative style of leadership. Different patterns for leadership are suggested.

Dutton, B. G. (1973) has conducted a research on staff management and staff participation and the results suggest

that managers are the ones who represent the management and employee participation is necessary in order to achieve management objectives and goals.

"Latham, G. P., and Yukl, G. A. (1976) evaluated the effects of assigned and participative goal setting on performance and job satisfaction among a group of employees and they found that there was significant improvement in the performance but less job satisfaction".

"Frontline employees are directly responsible for personalized guest service, service quality, and guest satisfaction- all of which are keys to strong performance" (Hartline 2003). "Industry observers have found that the frontline employees who are satisfied and committed to their jobs, share the hotel's customer-oriented values which can exhibit low levels of role stress and deliver the highest degree of service quality (G Hartline et al 2000)". Considering the importance of leadership style, taking a cue from sales literature one of the areas in marketing is to address leadership styles (Oslen 2008)."

Based on the literature review of various leadership styles, "two leadership styles such as directive leadership and participative leadership are drawn primarily from path-goal theory (House RJ 1974)". "The third leadership style, which is empowering leadership is sourced from transformational theory (Keller 1995)".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are framed considering the theoretical contributions that address the research gap in the hotel industry. The proposed study has the following objectives:

1. To analyze the impact of participative and empowering styles of leadership qualities on frontline employees' commitment to service quality.
2. To assess the relationship among employees' shared customer-oriented values, employees' role clarity, employees' job satisfaction and employees' commitment to service quality.
3. To analyze the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on management's commitment to service quality and the employees' role clarity.
4. To assess the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on management's commitment to service quality and the employees' shared customer oriented values.
5. To access the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on management's commitment to service quality and the employees' job satisfaction.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND HYPOTHESIS FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the Model of Leadership's influence on Employees opinions, which was patterned after Clark et al. (2009). "A leader's style is an embodiment of his personality, environment, education, training undergone by him and personal philosophy" (Hughes, 1999). "This study has been designed to assess the influence of participative leadership style and empowering leadership style on employees' service quality. (Hughes, 1999)".

There are proven theories which state that employees who perceive their managers as adopting consultative or participative leadership behavior are more committed to their organizations, more satisfied with their jobs and higher in their performance because their involvement is welcomed by their leaders (Clark, 2009). "Employees who work for participative leader tend to exhibit greater involvement, commitment, and loyalty than employees who work under a directive leader (Oslen, 2008)."

"Empowering leadership is associated with increased autonomy, increased decision-making latitude, increased upward influence and decreased monitoring (Hartline, 2000, Pelit E, 2011)". "Recent discussions in the academic literature describe empowerment as an aspect of change-oriented leadership (Ozaralli, 2003)."

The empowering leadership theory says "leadership is an art of empowering others". "Empowering leadership comprises of many elements of participative leadership, such as employee involvement and autonomy (Covey, 1998)". "The proposed model measures the influence of management commitment to service quality (exogenous variable) on employee commitment to service quality (Pelit, 2011)."

"This model depicts the mediating role of participative and empowering leadership styles on management's commitment to service quality and the employees' role clarity, shared values which influence employees' job satisfaction and finally measure employees' commitment to service quality in Hotel Industry (Tornow, 2011)". "The model structure is consistent with recent works of scholars who suggest that management's commitment to service quality is reflected in various initiatives that are designed to influence employee's attitudes (Tornow, 2011)". "Constructs derived from both managers and employees' perceptions are included in the model."

The model measures the influence of participative and empowering leadership on employees commitment to service quality. Another facet of the study is the individual hotel itself which implies that each unit consists of some managers and many employees of the same workgroup. "In

the figure below management commitment to service quality (MCSQ) is the main exogenous variable, Participative leadership style (PLS) and Empowering leadership style (ELS) are the main mediating variables which measure the direct effects of Employees commitment to service quality (ECSQ) and indirect effects on employees job satisfaction (Tornow, 2011).” “It also measures the two leadership style influence on employees’ role clarity and shared customer oriented values, which in turn influences the employees’ job satisfaction.”.

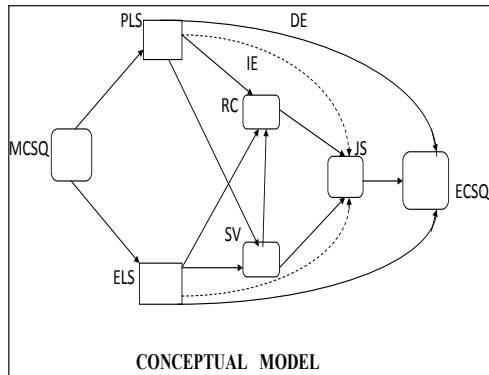


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model - Hypothesized

IE – Indirect effect DE – Direct effect PLS- Participative leadership style ELS- Empowering leadership style MCSQ- Management commitment to service quality ECSQ- Employees commitment to service quality SV- Shared values JS- Job satisfaction RC- Role clarity

H₁ - ELS – ECSQ

H₂ - ELS – JS

H₃ - ELS – RC

H₄ - ELS – SV

H₅ - JS – ECSQ

H₆ - MCSQ – ELS

H₇ - MCSQ – PLS

H₈ - PLS – ECSQ

H₉ - PLS – JS

H₁₀ - PLS – RC

H₁₁ - PLS – SV

H₁₂ - RC – JS

H₁₃ - RC – SV

H₁₄ - SV – JS

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

“Research has shown that empowering leadership influences employee commitment, emotional attachment

and identification with an organization (Hughes 1991)”. “The customer relationship person needs some autonomy in decision making for efficient service”. It is also described as a change-oriented leadership. “Consequently, hotel managers who adopt an empowering leadership style are more likely to translate their commitment to service quality of their employees (Tornow, 2011)”.

Based on the review of literature and the conceptual model path, the following 14 hypothesis have been framed.

H1: Empowering leadership style influences employees’ commitment to service quality.

H2: Empowering leadership style influences employees’ job satisfaction.

H3: Empowering leadership style influences employee’s role clarity.

H4: Empowering leadership style influences shared customer oriented values of management and frontline employees.

H5: Employees’ job satisfaction influences employees’ commitment to service quality

H6: Management commitment to service quality influences empowering leadership style.

H7: Management commitment to service quality influences participative leadership style

H8: Participative leadership style influences employees’ commitment to service quality.

H9: Participative leadership style influences employee’s job satisfaction.

H10: Participative leadership style influences employee’s role clarity.

H11: Participative leadership style influences shared customer oriented values among management and frontline employees.

H12: Employees role clarity influences employees’ job satisfaction.

H13: Employees’ role clarity influences shared customer oriented values among management and its frontline employees.

H14: Shared customer oriented values among management and frontline employee influences employees’ job satisfaction.

SAMPLING METHOD & DATA COLLECTION

Judgment sampling method was adopted based on the experience of the researcher in the industry and data was

collected from 13 three star hotels in TamilNadu and Puducherry. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan sample adequacy table. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan sample adequacy table, data was collected from 309 front line employees and 196 managers from 13 three-star hotel in Tamilnadu and Puducherry. Two sets of questionnaires, one for front line employees of the hotel and other for the Managers of the hotel were issued personally through the HR managers of the hotels. One set of questionnaire based on LBDQ XII (Cook john 1981) was used for managers and another set of questionnaire for the front line employees of the hotel was administered and standard tested scales were used in the questionnaire. The respondents were asked how often they think they engage in the behavior described by the item and asked to circle the suitable answer. The answers were placed in a five point scale starting from A- always B- often, C- Occasionally, D- seldom and E never.

MEASUREMENT & ASSESSMENT

This is multi-level study, and the study model has seven constructs with 50 measure/items; these items of all the

constructs have been adopted from the literature (Clark, 2009 ; Ozaralli, 2003] and modified to suit the Indian hotels.

RELIABILITY OF CONSTRUCTS

According to Nunnally, 1994 “the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is greater than 0.6 indicates that the instrument is reliable”. The over all Cronbach’s Alpha for 50 items and seven constructs was .810 which is much above the cut-off value.

The hypothesis testing was done by examining the path coefficients (beta) between latent constructs and their significance. To test the significance of the path coefficients, the boot strapping technique was employed. The t-value shows the contribution of each variable to the model. On the other hand, p-value shows the significance of the relationship. Fourteen hypothesis proposed to be tested shown in the above model. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	Hypothesis Result
H1	ELS -> ECSQ	0.024	0.559	0.576	Rejected
H2	ELS -> JSS	0.013	0.214	0.830	Rejected
H3	ELS -> RC	0.073	2.053	0.033	Accepted
H4	ELS -> SV	0.011	0.258	0.796	Rejected
H5	JSS -> ECSQ	0.426	6.572	0.000	Accepted
H6	MCSQ -> ELS	0.484	5.909	0.000	Accepted
H7	MCSQ -> PLS	0.580	8.810	0.000	Accepted
H8	PLS -> ECSQ	0.099	2.235	0.026	Accepted
H9	PLS -> JSS	0.121	2.565	0.011	Accepted
H10	PLS -> RC	0.118	2.366	0.018	Accepted
H11	PLS -> SV	0.091	2.424	0.016	Accepted
H12	RC -> JSS	0.260	2.070	0.039	Accepted
H13	RC -> SV	0.562	6.104	0.000	Accepted
H14	SV -> JSS	0.310	2.364	0.018	Accepted

Among 14 hypothesis 10 have been accepted and four was rejected.
The descriptive statistics is shown below in table no.2:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
PLS	196	3.00	5.00	4.55	0.4156	-0.677	-0.529
ELS	196	2.00	5.00	3.79	0.3883	-1.002	3.424
MCSQ	196	2.88	5.00	4.19	0.4337	-0.699	0.395
SV	309	3.00	5.00	3.76	0.4697	-0.504	1.590
RC	309	3.00	4.92	3.85	0.5093	-0.787	1.007
JS	309	2.40	5.00	3.88	0.3937	-0.894	2.095
ECSQ	309	3.00	5.00	4.40	0.5557	-1.698	3.464

- The value of skewness between -1.0 to +1.0 is considered acceptable and in the above table we can find the skewness value is within the acceptable range.
- Kurtosis values were observed between -1 and +3 except two variables [De carlo, 1997]. In the above table, all other values of kurtosis fall within the acceptable limit.
- From this, one can conclude that this data set doesn't require any data transformation procedure.

The hypothesized conceptual model was analyzed using Smart PLS software (Anderson, 1998). Using PLS

simulation, various parameters were assessed and calculated which includes item loading, reliability, and validity tests. PLS-SEM involves a two-step process in which the first step involves solving out the blocks of the measurement model and then estimating the path coefficients of a structural model. Finally, overall model is validated by power analysis test. Bootstrapping was performed to obtain the statistical significance of path coefficients using a t-test. The results of the measurement model show that all the seven constructs are valid measures based on their parameter estimates and statistical significance (Akhter, 2011)."

Table 3: Results of Measurement Model

Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	CA	R ²
ECSQ	0.782	0.519	0.906	0.884	0.211
ELS	0.717	0.485	0.784	0.667	0.235
JS	0.515	0.515	0.687	0.645	0.292
MCSQ	0.858	0.503	0.882	0.839	
PLS	0.769	0.570	0.841	0.747	0.336
RC	0.654	0.507	0.913	0.896	0.022
SV	0.654	0.546	0.877	0.831	0.336

The convergent validity and discriminant validity were also measured and the values within acceptable norms satisfying both validity.

RELIABILITY ESTIMATES

"The factor loadings for all the indicators exceeded the recommended value of 0.5, which is acceptable (Mackinon, 2007)". "The composite reliabilities (CR) for each construct ranged from 0.687 to 0.913, which almost exceeded the recommended value of 0.7 [Fornell, 1981]". Meanwhile, the AVE for each construct ranged from 0.485 to 0.570, which is greater than 0.5 except one case; thus, the cut-off values ensure that at least 50% or more of the variances in the construct are explained by the set of indicators. The collected data are verified for its reliability by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha (CA). "The resulting value ranged from 0.645 to 0.896, which is acceptable (Nunally, 1994)". "The results of the measurement model show that all the seven constructs are valid measures based on their parameter estimates and statistical significance

MEASURING OF INDIRECT AND TOTAL EFFECTS

The indirect effect results indicate that there is significant indirect influence with respect to Management commitment to service quality and Employees commitment to service quality, job satisfaction, role clarity and shared values.

Similarly significant indirect influence has been noticed with respect of Participative leadership style and employees commitment to service quality, job satisfaction and shared values. There was no indirect influence with respect of empowering leadership style and employees job satisfaction, role clarity and shared values. The indirect and total effects were obtained by using Smart PLS,

The total effects show that there is significant influence between management commitment to service quality and Employees commitment to service quality, Empowering leadership style, participative leadership style, job satisfaction, role clarity and shared values." Participative leadership style is found to influence employees' commitment to service quality, job satisfaction, role clarity and shared values. There is also significant impact on Employees commitment to service quality and role clarity, shared values and job satisfaction of the employees.

MEDIATION ANALYSIS

"The Mediating effect can be measured by calculating the change in dependent variable for every unit change in the independent variable that is mediated by the mediator variable [Sobel, 1982]". "In the present study, Sobel's test was conducted to study the mediating effect of PLS and ELS on independent variable (MCSQ) and dependent variables (RC, SV, JS)."

Hence linear regression was performed to study the effect of independent variables on the mediator. Similarly, linear

regressions were conducted with the dependent variable. "The regression coefficients and the standard error were used to calculate the Sobel's regression coefficient using Sobel's online calculator (Soper, 2013)".

Table 4: Sobels Mediation Test Results= PLS

PATH	Test static	P Value
MCSQ-PLS-RC	2.451	0.007*
MCSQ-PLS-JS	2.559	0.005*
MCSQ-PLS-SV	2.325	0.010*

*significant at .05 level

Linear regression was performed with SV as independent variable and PLS as dependent variable. The results of Sobel's t-test was significant with test static 2.325 and p-value is 0.010 ($p < 0.05$). Hence test results indicate that participative leadership style significantly influences mediation role between management commitment to service quality and shared customer oriented values.

Table 5: Sobels Mediation Test Results-ELS

Mediation test	Test static	P Value
MCSQ-ELS-RC	0.771	0.220
MCSQ-ELS-JS	1.473	0.070**
MCSQ-ELS-SV	1.857	0.031*

*Significant at .05 level ** significant at .10 level

Linear regression was first performed with MCSQ as the independent variable and ELS as mediating variable and RC as the dependent variable to determine the un standardized co-efficient beta value and a standard error value. The regression results were not significant. Sobel's test (Table 14) was performed to test the mediating effect of ELS on RC and MCSQ. The results of the Sobel's test ($z = 0.771$; $p = 0.220$) indicate that ELS does not influence role clarity.

Next linear regression was performed with job satisfaction of employee as the dependent variable and ELS as mediating variable to determine un standardized co-efficient and standard error values to perform Sobel's test.

The regression results were insignificant and the Sobel's test was performed to test the mediating effect of ELS on JS and MCSQ. The results of the Sobel's test ($z = 1.473$; $P = 0.070$) indicate that ELS has less significant mediating effect on JS and MCSQ at 0.1 level.

Next linear regression was performed with Shared values of employees as a dependent variable and ELS as mediating variable and MCSQ as independent variable to determine

un standardized co-efficient and Std error values to perform Sobel's test.

The regression results were insignificant, and the Sobel's test was performed to test the mediating effect of ELS on SV and MCSQ. The results of the Sobel's test ($z = 1.857$ $p = 0.031$) indicate that ELS did produce significant mediating effect between SV and MCSQ.

FINDINGS

1. Mediating effect of attitude on the relationship between independent and dependent variable was measured conducting sobel's test. "The test results indicate that Participative leadership style significantly influences mediation role between Management commitment to service quality and employees job satisfaction, role clarity and shared values." Similarly the test was conducted for the finding the mediating effect of Empowering leadership style and the results indicated that ELS had significant mediating effect with shared values of employees and MCSC only.
2. Participative leadership style has a favorable positive impact on the front line employees' commitment to service quality as per the first objective, which is proved in the hypothesis H-8 (accepted) and significant beta values. Management commitment to service quality is complimented by and positively associated with participative leadership style, which is proven with the hypothesis H7. "This shows that Hotel managers who are committed to service quality may be more interested to involve employees' participation in management decisions as they believe that an employee involved in decision making will voluntarily desire that the outcome of his/her decision be fruitful and thus will channelize the thought process to achieve the same". At the same time, empowering leadership style has not been effective enough to influence Management commitment to service quality. Rejection of hypothesis H1 proves the same.
3. The final conclusion is that participative leadership style plays a mediating role in building a plasma of understanding, helps focus on the same vision between management commitment to service quality and employees' commitment to service quality, helps to expand a canopy of uniformity of flow of work towards the same goal. Participative leadership is found to be the preferred style of leadership by employees of the hotel, which motivates them to perform better and brings in more organizational commitment as proven by Hermalin, Sagnak and Shagholi and others (Hermalin, 1998; Borgatta, 1954; Shagoli, 1954). "Participative leadership style is found to strongly influence more on employees' commitment to service quality by direct

influence of shared values and role clarity and indirect influence on job satisfaction of employees.” This has been proved by Kim. S, Huey Yiing, & Likert (Kim, 2002; Rty whu, 2006; Likert, 1967).

IMPLICATIONS TO HOTEL MANAGERS

Based on the findings of this research it is suggested to Hotel Managers that involving hotel employees in important decisions will certainly improve the employees’ commitment to the organization, enhance work prowess, increase confidence and efficiency levels, purify and ease out work ambience because of clarity and unison in goal, and thus create a sense of belonging and finally motivating them in rendering unparalleled quality service to the customers as if they were guests at their own homes. Adapting a participative style of management will be ideal for the hotel industry.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

This study underscores the major belief in the hotel Industry; that is, initiatives directed towards enhancing the hotel’s service quality begin with management. “The hotel manager’s leadership style plays a critical role in channeling the manager’s commitment to service quality to employees (Kim.S 2002).” “The results indicate that the main path of leadership lies in increasing the extent of shared values between hotel and its employees and only participative leadership style has influenced the employees to achieve it”.

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