

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN SARAWAK

Leviana Andrew ¹, Siti Fatimah Abdul Latiff ¹, Satriani Burhan ¹

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Sarawak
Email: leviana141@uitm.edu.my

Accepted date: 28-02-2019

Published date: 15-07-2019

To cite this document: Andrew, L., Abdul Latiff, S. F., & Burhan, S. (2019). Leadership Styles and Quality of Work Life Among Administrative Staff at A Public University in Sarawak. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 4(22), 44 - 52.

Abstract: *Today's organizations need effective leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment that leads to a better organizational performance. The authority to lead not to be in the person, different organizational culture existed, lack of the leadership attributes, and role overload were the dilemmas experienced by the leader. This study utilized a correlational quantitative design with 85 administrative staff at selected departments and faculties at a public university in Sarawak. The aim of the study is to identify to what extent the leadership styles practiced by the top management that affect the quality of work life as well as to examine the relationship between leadership styles and quality of work life among the administrative staff. These responses were collected by using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Quality of Work Life (QWL) Questionnaire. The findings revealed that both transformational leadership style and transactional leadership styles are correlated with the quality of work life indicating positive, strong, and significant relationships. The study also found that both transactional and transformational leadership styles were practiced by the top management at selected departments and faculties in this university. Therefore, it is important to understand the type of leadership styles practiced since it will affect employees' quality of work life. Apart from that, management can use these findings to assist leaders to improve their leadership skills as well as can shaping effective leader in such a way as to enhance employees' quality of work life.*

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, quality of work life*

Introduction

The Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a philosophy of a set of principles, which holds that, people are the most important resources in an organization. Gupta and Sharma (2011) suggested that quality of work life is a vital factor for organizational performance and an effective factor to motivate staff at work. From the aspect of leadership, according to Cornerstone (2014), leadership style drives successful human capital management by creating an environment that encourages and empowers employees. As these leaders search for places to find fulfilment, they

must evaluate the potential for increased quality of life resulting from the choices that they make.

A study from Weib and Sues (2016) found that there is a significant effect of transformational leadership on quality of work life. Transformational leadership applied by qualified leaders encourages employees to work more efficiently. However, the issue of dimension empowerment occurs and be challenges in organization when the different generations work in the same place stressed because of their different perceptions towards their work environment. Leadership style drives successful human capital management by creating an environment that encourages and empowers employees (Cornerstone, 2014). Nevertheless, there is still a need to be considered by organizations in promoting quality of work life due to several things considered unsatisfactory by the employee as the indicator of career development. The problem that usually arises among the staff either in school or university was that some persons do not have the authority to lead. According to Mulford (2003), he founded that there was a growing understanding that leadership was embedded in various organizational contexts within school or university communities, not centrally vested in a person or an office. The real challenge facing most schools are no longer how to improve but, more importantly, how to sustain improvement. Sustainability will depend upon the school's internal capacity to maintain and support developmental work and sustaining improvement requires the leadership capability of the many rather than the few.

Literature Review

Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Quality of Work Life (QWL) can be defined as an extent to which an employee is satisfied with personal and working needs through participating in the workplace while achieving the goals of the organization (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2015). According to Bono and Judge (2003), personal needs are satisfied when rewards from the organization, such as compensation, promotion, recognition and development meet their expectations. The elements that are relevant to an individuals' quality of work life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job. Rowe (2011) stated that QWL reflects a concern for people experience at work, their relationship with other people, their work setting and their effectiveness on the job. A study regarding QWL and career advancement had been carried out among academicians in university by Parsa, Idris, Abu Samah, Abdul and Parsa (2014). In this study, most of respondents perceived moderate level of QWL (73%) and perceived high level of career advancement (62.2%). It can be concluded that improving quality of work life of academics in universities may have a high impact on educational and personal development. In addition, Mirkamali and Thani (2011) had been doing comparative QWL study among faculties of University of Tehran (UT) and Sharif University of Technology (SUT). The study found that the QWL factors had a positive and significant relation with job satisfaction. While the mean score implied that the professors in the mentioned university had a fairly unfavourable of QWL the result also shown that there is no significant difference between the level of QWL whereas a noticeable difference can be seen only between social integration and cohesiveness among the professors. From social cohesiveness point of view, the faculties of SUT possess a higher position. The work environment that is able to fulfill employees' personal needs is considered to provide a positive interaction effect, which will lead to an excellent QWL (Nahavandi, 2002). On the other hand, Barzegar, Afzal, Tabibi, Delgoshaei, and Koochakyazdi (2012) stated that individual dimensions of leadership behavior are found positively and significant correlated with QWL. The dimensions are including leader's personal characteristics and management

style, treating the subordinates with trust and respect, promoting organizational values, supportive supervision, motivating subordinates and in-person recognition, clarifying vision and expectations.

Leadership Styles

Throughout much of the history of organization, leadership was a role held by an individual. Kouzes and Posner (2011) have defined leadership as the art of mobilizing others to set goals and reach aspirations. The current era not only demands having a competitive edge and sustained profitability but also the maintenance of ethical standards, complying with civic commitments and establishing a safe and equitable work environment. Leadership is one of the critical elements in enhancing organizational performance (Rowe, 2001). According to Gray and Starke (2007) leadership is a quality of an individual that inspire the followers for achieving their goals. Leadership is not only to direct the follower but also assist in a critical condition when they require support. Leadership is combination of two aspects, which is process and property. Leadership is process of influencing the subordinates through direction and also supports for achieving their desired objectives, on the other hand property as the inborn quality of an individual that is attributed for getting success through followers. The Full Range Leadership Theory (Bass and Avolio, 1991) comprises the three typologies of leadership behaviour which are transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Transformational and transactional leadership are viewed by different authors as either competing or complementary. Studies have shown that the transformational leadership style is more effective than the transactional leadership style and is positively correlated to the performance of businesses (Benjamin & Flynn, 2006). Rejas, Ponce, Almonte & Ponce (2006) carried out an investigation in Chile, which was aimed at finding out whether or not leadership style influences the performance of small firms. They revealed from their study that transformational leadership has a positive impact on performance, whereas transactional leadership and laissez-faire style had negative impacts.

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership was a process that develops the leadership capacity of all team members by inspiring, motivating, and effectively engaging them to achieve outstanding outcomes (Rolfe, 2011). Another perspective about this leadership style was described transformational leaders as those with vision, ability to communicate, develop trust, and encourage growth of followers (Zubain, Mulla, & Venkat, 2011). Transformational leadership theory focused upon the influence leaders have over the climate of their organization (Alabduljader, 2012). A transformational leadership style would foster high levels of commitment, trust, and loyalty that lead to positive organizational performances (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016). Empirical evidence showed that transformational leadership is strongly correlated with employee work outcomes such as: lower turnover rates, higher level of productivity, employee satisfaction, creativity, goal attainment and follower well-being (Eisenbeiß and Boerner, 2013). Transformational leaders provide constructive feedback to their followers, encourage them to think creatively about problems, and show the ability to convince them to exert effort, their subordinates should generally benefit from such influence and more easily achieve higher levels of formal performance (Cavazotte and Hickmann, 2010). In this point of view, Seibert, Wang, Courtright (2011) stated that leaders increase followers' the intrinsic value of performance and confidence, leading to higher motivation levels. Therefore, even though transactional leadership results in expected performance, performance beyond expectations is potentially resulted from transformational leadership. Effective styles of leadership can contribute to the enhancement of performance when new challenges arise

(McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). Theory of transformational leadership is very important in field of leadership and many studies show that there is positive relationship of transformational leadership and other dependent variable like satisfaction, commitment, motivation and performance of the employees (e.g. Kane & Tremble, 2000). For instance, studies have shown that managers in different settings, including the military and business found that transformational leaders were evaluated as more effective, higher performers, more promotable than their transactional counterparts, and more interpersonally sensitive (Rubin et al, 2005). Moreover, recognizing the leadership's effects on performance is essential as some researchers view leadership as a main motivating force for enhancing job performance. In another study transformational leadership had large influence on followers' performance and innovation than transactional leaders as well as it was more significantly associated with team cohesiveness, work unit effectiveness and quality of work life as compared to transactional leadership (Zhu, Chew & Spangler, 2015; Zagorsek, Dimovski & Skerlavai, 2008). Thus, it has been empirically shown that transformational leadership is positively linked to perceptions, attitude and job performance of the leader.

Transactional Leadership Style

Bass (2006) presented that transactional leadership create the basis for relationships between leaders and followers according to specifying expectations, clarifying responsibilities and providing recognition and rewards in order to achieve the expected performance. Transactional leadership refers to a quantity of leadership frameworks which collection the exchange takes place between the leader and employees which brings a shared benefit to them (Northouse, 2010). This leadership focuses more on influences other people become their member through the rewards or punishment system involving honouring behaviours that are identified to be correct and erase bad behaviours by corrective means. The transactional leaders used rewards in form of recognition and praise, promotions, merit increases, honors, or bonuses (Wegner, 2004). Such contingent reward behavior ultimately will improve job performance of the followers. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers (Bass, 2008). These exchanges allow leaders to accomplish their performance objectives, complete required tasks, maintain the current organizational situation, motivate followers through contractual agreement, direct behavior of followers toward achievement of established goals, emphasize extrinsic rewards, avoid unnecessary risks, and focus on improve organizational efficiency. In turn, transactional leadership allows followers to fulfill their own self-interest, minimize workplace anxiety, and concentrate on clear organizational objectives such as increased quality, customer service, reduced costs, and increased performance (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). A similar research carried out by Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Hassan & Waqas (2012), to determine which leadership style can increase the performance of employees of some selected private schools in Pakistan, demonstrated that transactional and transformational leadership styles are both positively associated with employee performance. However, transactional leadership was found to be more significantly related to employee performance than transformational leadership style. Hence, leaders of institutions of higher education who need to retain faculty members should consider creating hiring policies and criteria designed to employ transactional leaders when hiring new staff and train existing leaders to employ transactional leadership practices (Bohorquez, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

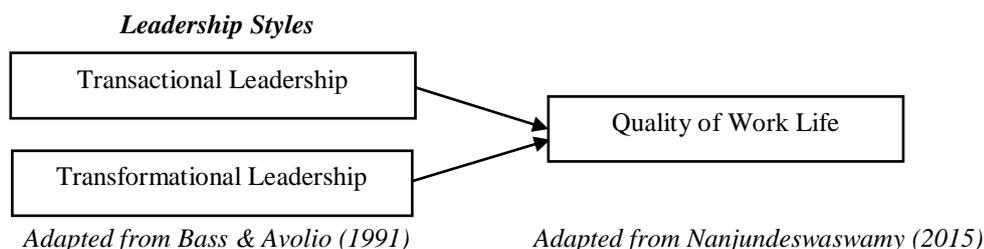


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was based on Bass and Avolio (1991) and Nanjundeswasamy (2015). Therefore, there were two (2) research objectives that had been highlighted in this study:

- RO1: To determine the relationship between transformational leadership and QWL among employees at a public university in Sarawak.
- RO2: To determine the relationship between transactional leadership and QWL among employees at a public university in Sarawak.

Findings and Discussions

Methodology

The aim of this study was to find out whether there are relationships between transformational leadership, transactional leadership and the quality of work life. This study was a correlational research and focused on the administrative staff at selected departments and faculties at a public university in Sarawak. Only five faculties were selected to be the respondents in this study and there were 150 administrative altogether. Based on this numbers, the minimum sample size as required by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was 108. The instrument was constructed from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) which was used by Bohorquez (2016) in Perception of Leadership Styles, Organizational Commitment and Burnout it Faculty of Colombian Universities and the instrument for QWL was adapted from Nanjundeswaraswamy (2015) in his article “Quality of Work Life: Scale Development and Validation:.. Prior to the actual data collection, the researchers conducted a pre-test in which they sat down with three random selected respondents who made some comments to the questionnaire for improvement. The data collection procedure begins with obtaining formal approval from the Registrar of the university and the questionnaires were distributed through the Registrar’s Office. At the end of the data collection period, only 85 questionnaires were returned and used from the 108 that were distributed.

Table 1: Demography Information of Respondent

Demographic	Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	38	44.7
	Female	47	55.3
Educational Level	SPM	31	36.5
	STPM	20	23.5
	Certificate	2	2.4
	Diploma	15	17.6
	Bachelor Degree	11	12.9
	Master	6	7.1

Working Experience	Less than 3 years	5	5.9
	4- 9 years	21	24.7
	10 – 15 years	25	29.4
	16 – 20 years	16	18.8
	20 – 25 years	15	17.6
	More than 26 years	3	3.5

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the results of mean for Transformational Leadership style which scored the highest (M=3.49, SD=.485) followed by Quality of Work Life (M=3.43, SD=.423) and Transactional Leadership style (M=3.30, SD=.360). It can be concluded that all variables have average mean scores. This shows that leaders in the selected organization were practising both leadership styles.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles and Quality of Work Life

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Transactional Leadership Style	3.30	.360
Transformational Leadership Style	3.49	.485
Quality of Work Life	3.43	.423

Reliability Test

Table 3 shows the reliability test results for all variables. For the purpose of this study, the minimum acceptable value of .600 for Cronbach Alpha was used as proposed by Nunnally (1976). Based on the information in Table 3, Transformational Leadership has the highest internal consistency with Cronbach Alpha value of .938, followed by Quality of Work Life (.837) and Transactional Leadership style (.657). It can be concluded that all variables have good internal consistency.

Table 3: Reliability Test

Variables	No. Of Items	Standard Deviation
Transactional Leadership Style	12	.657
Transformational Leadership Style	20	.938
Quality of Work Life	15	.837

Correlation

Table 4 shows the Pearson's Correlation test results. There was a strong, positive and significant relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Quality of Work Life ($r=.638^{**}$, $p<.01$). As transformational leaders focus on nurturing their subordinates, this finding confirmed that the respondents believed it is true. The respondents believed that the leaders highlighted the importance of having a strong sense of purpose at the university and this led to a sense of belongingness with the university and eventually, feel comfortable to work and satisfied with their jobs. As a result, there is a strong social integration and cohesiveness among the respondents. Besides, when leaders consistently talk optimistically about the direction of the department/faculty, the respondents believed that they are responsible for accomplishing tasks and projects or voluntarily assuming more responsibilities which will lead into the same direction. It was also observed that the leaders also treat their subordinates as an individual rather than just a member or group which makes them feel appreciated and respected. Baek

(2012) mentioned that the transformational leaders can make their subordinates perform beyond expectation, due to the fact that transformational leaders focus on current as well as on future needs of their subordinates' internal drivers. These finding is consistent with Bateh and Heyliger (2014) who found that the productivity of the faculty members were increased when the deans of schools share their visions enthusiastically.

There was also a strong positive and significant relationship between Transactional Leadership Style and Quality of Work Life ($p=.638^{**}$, $p<.01$). It showed that the implementation of transactional leadership style would promote high quality of work life among the administrative staff at selected departments and faculties at a public university. They perceived that when their leaders link the reward to job performance, it improves their motivation, self-esteem and willing to take additional responsibilities with their job. These findings were supported by Dessler and Starke (2004) who found that the leader that implement the transactional leadership style would maintains and preserves harmony working relationships coupled with promises on rewards for satisfactory performance. Additionally, the respondents believed that their leaders directed all their attention toward failure to meet standards and eventually, this affect the respondents' productivity. Duddy (2015) confirmed this in his study in which transactional leader may also manage by exception whereas the followers may receive negative reinforcement, corrective criticism or negative feedback. When negative reinforcements are introduced, such as punishment or neglect, it will lessen the quality of work life. Similarly, when positive reinforcements are introduced, such as empowerment, praises, and rewards, it will enhance the quality of work life.

It can be summarized that both variables in Leadership Styles were highly correlated with Quality of Life.

Table 4: Correlation between Leadership Styles and Quality of Work Life

Variables	A	B	C
(A) Transactional Leadership Style	1	.736**	.687**
(B) Transformational Leadership Style		1	.638**
(C) Quality of Work Life			1

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Conclusions and Recommendations

All in all, the results indicated both transactional and transformational leadership styles were practiced by the top management at a public university in Sarawak and both leadership styles were highly correlated with Quality of Work Life. This impied both leadership styles were equally important factors to QWL. Both leadership styles were practised depending on the situation. Since the respondents were in the government sector, the procedures for punishment and reward was very clear. Nevertheless, both leadership styles would enhance the level of quality of work life among the administrative staff in terms of autonomy of work, compensation and rewards, work environment, as well as the job satisfaction and job security. The findings of the study added value to the existing body of knowledge of leadership styles and quality of work life to the employees in organization, specifically to the administrative staff at selected departments and faculties in higher educational institutions. It was recommended that future studies could include different leadership styles such as Autocratic, Laissez-Faire, and Participative. Apart from that, it would be interesting to embrace other components of quality

of work life that were disregarded in this study such as organization culture and climate, relation and cooperation, training and development, facilities, and adequacy of resources.

References

- Alabduljader, S. (2012). The Transactional and Transformational Leadership in the Kuwait Commercial Banks Sector: Which one is More Applied? *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(19), 211-219.
- Asencio, H., Mujkic, E. (2016). Leadership Behaviors and Trust in Leaders: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Government. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 156-179.
- Barzegar, M., Afzal, E., Tabibi, S. J., Delgoshaei, B., & Koochakyazdi, S. (2012). Relationship between Leadership Behavior, Quality of Work Life and Human Resources Productivity: Data from Iran. *International Journal of Hospital Research*, 1-14.
- Bass, B. M. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, & managerial applications* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Free Press
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E (2006). *Transformational leadership*. Mahwah, New Jersey 07430: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bateh J., Heyliger W. (2014). Academic Administrator Leadership Styles and the Impact on Faculty Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 34-49.
- Benjamin, L., Flynn F.J. (2006). Leadership Style and Regulatory Mode: Value from Fit? *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 216-230.
- Bohorquez, N. (2016). *Perception of Leadership Styles, Organizational Commitment and Burnout in Faculty of Colombian Universities*. Bono, J.E., & Judge, T.A. (2003), "Self concordance at Work: Toward Understanding the Motivational Effects of Transformational Leaders," *Academy of Management Journal*, 46, 554-571.
- Cavazotte, F. & Hickmann, M. (2012). Effects of leader intelligence, personality and emotional intelligence on transformational leadership and managerial performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(3), 443-455. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.10.003
- Cornerstone. (2014). *Creating the Next Generation of Federal Human Capital*. The 2014 State of Human Capital Management Report.
- Eisenbeiß, S. A. and Boerner, S. (2013) A Double-edged Sword: Transformational Leadership and Individual Creativity. *British Journal of Management*. 24(1), 54–68.
- Gray, L. J., & Starke, A.F. (2007). *Organizational Behaviour Concepts and Applications*. London. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Gupta, M., Sharma, P. (2011). Factor Credentials Boosting Quality of Work Life of BSNL Employees in Jammu Region. *Sri Krishna International Research & Educational Consortium*, 438-448.
- Hayati, D., Charkhabi, M., & Naami, A. (2014). The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement in Governmental Hospitals Nurses: A Survey Study. *Springer Plus Open Research Access*, 3-25.
- Kane, T.D. and Tremble, R.T. (2000). Transformational leadership effects at different levels of the army. *Military Psychology*, 12(2), 137-60.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2011). Leadership: Good, better, best. *Organizational Dynamics*. 26-40.
- Eisenbeiß, S. A. and Boerner, S. (2013) A Double-edged Sword: Transformational Leadership and Individual Creativity. *British Journal of Management*, 24(1), 54–68.
- McGrath, G. R., & MacMillan, I. C. (2000). *Entrepreneurial Mindset: Strategies for Continuously Creating Opportunity in an Age of Uncertainty*. Harvard Business School Press Books.

- Mirkamali, S. M. & Thani, F. N. (2011). A Study on the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among faculty members of University of Tehran(UT) and Sharif University of Technology (SUT). *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 179 – 187.
- Mulford, B. (2003). *School Leaders: Challenging Roles and Impact on Teacher and School Effectiveness*.
- Nahavandi, A. (2002). *The art and science of leadership*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, nj:PrenticeHall
- Nanjundeswaraswamy, T. S. (2015). Quality of Work Life: Scale Development and Validation. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 281-300.
- Nanjundeswaraswamy, T.S. & Swamy, D. K. (2014). Leadership Styles. *Advances In Management*, 57-62.
- Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership, Theory and Practice* (5th ed.). Sage: Thousand Oaks.
- Omolayo, B. (2007). Effect of Leadership Style on Job-Related Tension and Psychological Sense of Community in Work Organizations: A Case Study of Four Organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 4(2).
- Paracha, M. U., Qamar, A. Mirza, A. & Waqas, I. (2012). Impact of Leadership Style (Transformational and Transactional Leadership) on Employee Performance and Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction Study of Private School (Educator) in Pakistan. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 2(4).
- Parsa, B., Idris, K., Abu Samah, B., Abdul, N. W., & Parsa, P. (2014). Relationship between Quality of Work Life and Career Advancement among Iranian Academics. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 108-111.
- Rejas, L. P., Ponce, E. R., Almonte, M. D., & Ponce, J. R. (2006). Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A Study of Their Influence in Small Companies. *Ingeniare-Revista Chilena De Ingeria*, 14(2), 156-166.
- Rowe, W., 2001. “Creating wealth in organizations: The role of strategic leadership”, *Academy of Management Executive*, 15, 81-94.
- Rubin, R.S., Munz, D.D and Bommer, W.H. (2005) Leading from Within: effects of Emotional Recognition and Personality on transformational Leadership Behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 845 – 85.
- Sadeghi, A., & Pihie, Z. A. L. (2012). Transformational leadership and its predictive effects on leadership effectiveness. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3(7), 186197.
- Seibert, S. E., Wang, G., & Courtright, S. H. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of psychological and team empowerment in organizations: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 986-1003. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0022676>
- Weib, E., & Suess, S. (2016). The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Effort-Reward Imbalance. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37.
- Wegner, L. (2004). Organizational leaders and empowered employees: The relationship between leadership styles, perception of styles, and the impact on organizational outcomes. Capella University. From ProQuest database
- Zagorsek, H., Dimovski, V., and Skerlavaj, M., 2009. “Transactional and transformational leadership impacts on organizational learning”, *Journal for East European Management Studies (JEEMS)*, 14(2), 145-165.
- Zhu, W., Chew, I. K. H., & Spangler, W. D. (2015). CEO transformational leadership & organizational outcomes: The mediating role of human-capital-enhancing human resource management. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(1), 39-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.06.001>