

LEADERSHIP AND WELL-BEING IN THE ALGARVE HOSPITALITY

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ABSTRACT

The well-being of staff within organisations is particularly important in relation to human resources and management. Organisations need to develop behaviours that increase well-being amongst employees.

The study in progress aims to explain well-being-promoting leadership demonstrating the differences between leaders that promote well-being and leaders that do not, as well as to explain well-being in the five-star hospitality as a product of the actions of leaders.

A qualitative methodology has been employed in order to elaborate a questionnaire (well-being promoting leadership scale – ELPB) that is proofed against the common problem organisations face when people's actions do not match their words.

A pilot study was carried out in two Algarve hotels in May, 2010. The aim was to test the methodology by applying the ELPB scale in real-case scenarios, as well as undertaking interviews with employees and managers.

The pilot study permitted analysis of the staff's perception of a well-being-promoting leader, therefore resulting in two dimensions that allow for a differentiation of the staff's perception of leaders.

KEYWORDS

Leadership, Well-Being, Hospitality, Tourism Experience, Good Practices.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP AND WELL-BEING TO ORGANISATIONS

The well-being of staff within organisations is particularly important in relation to human resources and management. Management makes managers and leaders responsible for the organisation's results. It can be said that the difference between managers and leaders establishes that the role of the managers is to build an enthusiastic and motivation-filled environment for the staff, while the role of leaders is to ensure that the employees' behaviour is in line with the organisations' goals. The latter

reinforces the idea that organisations need to develop behaviours that increase well-being amongst employees, demonstrating, on one hand, the importance of the behaviour of managers and leaders in promoting and sustaining high levels of well-being, and, on the other hand, the impact of the leader's behaviour on subordinates: well-being is correlated with an organisation's success and performance (Wright and Cropanzano, 1997); employees with high levels of well-being perform better than ones with lower levels (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002); the relation and reciprocity observed in the behaviour between manager/subordinate displays that the subordinates' well-being affects the leader's behaviour (Van Dierendonck et al, 2004).

2. BUILDING A WELL-BEING PROMOTING LEADERSHIP SCALE (ELPB)

The study in progress, which serves as a basis for this summary, aims to explain well-being-promoting leadership, demonstrating the differences between leaders that promote well-being and leaders that do not, as well as to explain well-being in 5-star hospitality as a product of the actions of leaders. A qualitative methodology has been employed for that goal - the Kelly Grid Method - in order to elaborate a questionnaire that is proofed against the common problem organisations face when people's actions do not match their words, or, in the words of Argyris (1999), theories stated differ from theories in use.

Such methodology, as shown by Sousa and Monteiro (2005) allows for a body of work that is both quantitative and qualitative, including both interviews structured according to the Kelly method to elicit constructs, and the elaboration of a questionnaire from which the answers can be assessed statistically.

3. INTERVIEWS TO ELICIT BIPOLAR CONSTRUCTS

In order to elicit constructs related to well-being promoting leadership 12 interviews were carried out, in accordance with Georges Kelly's methodology (1963). The interviewees were staff from two hotels within the target-audience. Three of them were considered by peers to be promoters of well-being while one was not. One hundred and two (102) constructs were observed (specific behaviours, as said by one employee himself). Later, these were analysed by 3 independent judges (1 manager involved in 5 star hotels and 2 university professors). Twenty-four (24) bipolar constructs remained, forming the wellbeing-promoting leadership scale.

These interviews took place during March-April 2010.

4. PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was carried out in two Algarve hotels in May, 2010. The aim was to test the methodology by applying the ELPB scale in real-case scenarios, as well as undertaking interviews with employees and managers.

The scale applied contains 48 items and one element – *my boss*.

One hundred and thirty-two (132) questionnaires were given. They were specially customised for each hotel, taking their organisational structure into account. The ELPB scale was distributed across different departments; personally handed out by a Front Office Manager.

5. RESULTS

The pilot study permitted analysis of the staff's perception of a well-being-promoting boss. In order to deepen the concept of well-being promoting leadership applied to hotels, it was very important to know how to define leaders who effectively promote well-being and identify what sets them apart from the rest.

The scale was applied in two hotels, therefore resulting in two dimensions that allow for a differentiation of the staff's perception of leaders.

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