

Leadership Tools: Visionary Leadership and Organisational Performance (LEVO)

Project background

Over a number of years, there has been an increasing focus on strengthening the quality of leadership in the public sector. This ambition fits well with the long series of research studies pointing towards leadership behaviour as being of crucial importance to e.g. employee motivation and the production of results in public-sector organisations.

In efforts to improve the quality of leadership, most organisations utilise different types of process- and dialogue guides to support leaders in the dialogues with their employees. These leadership tools are used e.g. in connection with development dialogues and performance dialogues. The objective of the tools is for the leader, through structured processes and dialogues with the employees, to be able to strengthen e.g. clarity of goals, competency development, collaborative relations, work motivation and ultimately contribute to better organisational performance. Research also points to face-to-face dialogue as a crucial form of communication in leadership, and therefore it makes sense that many organisations try to support leaders in this particular task.

However, there is a lack of knowledge about whether such tools actually affect leadership behaviour. Is it possible to promote a specific form of leadership behaviour by equipping leaders with a leadership tool?

A central question in this context has to do with the type of leadership tools. In recent decades, an increasing number of organisations have increased the digitisation of e.g. tools for dialogue between leaders and employees. Attempts have been made to exploit the advantages of digitisation to give leaders even better support in this area. But this is also an area which lacks research-based knowledge. We do not know whether digital leadership tools are more or less effective for this purpose than the more analogous leadership tools which still dominate in many organisations.

Purpose of the project

The purpose of the LEVO project is to examine whether leadership tools can promote specific types of desirable leadership behaviour. The project also examines whether, via the altered leadership behaviour, leadership tools have an impact on the satisfaction of the employees' basic psychological needs, their job motivation and the organisation's

performance. Finally, the project examines whether the effect of analogue and digital leadership tools differ.



The project's methodology: A field experiment

The LEVO project is carried out as a field experiment in the labour market service area in Denmark. A total of 34 municipalities are participating in the project and 225 managers from these municipalities will use leadership tools developed as part of the project. In addition to the use of the leadership tool, the participating leaders will also receive two days of leadership training focusing on the performance of visionary leadership with the help of the tool.

The leadership tool and leadership training have been developed on the basis of the literature on transformational leadership and the coaching literature. The purpose of the tool and the training is to support the leaders in the performance of visionary leadership through face-to-face dialogue with their employees.

The project is based on data collected via pre- and post-intervention questionnaires among both the participating managers and their approximately 4,500 employees. In addition, the project makes use of register-based data about the organisational performance of the participating Job Centre units.

Further information about the project

The project is headed by Industrial PhD fellow Jørgen Skovhus Haunstrup (jorgen@ps.au.dk). It is being carried out in a collaboration between The Crown Prince Frederik Centre for Public Leadership and Musskema.dk ApS and with a grant from the Innovation Fund Denmark. The principal supervisor is Professor Christian Bøtcher Jacobsen. Professor Lotte Bøgh Andersen is co-supervisor, and Director Joachim Langagergaard is company supervisor.