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Benevolence leadership style and employees' Productivity

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to investigate and explain the long term effects of benevolent leadership on employee productivity. There is lack of knowledge on how the benevolent leadership effects employee productivity and should be explained to organizational leaders how they can practice it with great effect. Authors have used system dynamics approach to explain the effects of benevolent leadership on employee behavior that and lead to improvement in employee productivity. The benevolence expressed by the managers improves employee loyalty, improve employee commitment and helps to establish psychological bond. It enhances trust and strengthens the leader member relationships. The proposed system illustrates how leaders can influence employee and make them more productive overtime. The value of the paper lies in understanding the effects of benevolent leadership and the way it stimulates willingness to work in workforce.

Key Words: -
Benevolence, Employee Productivity, Loyalty, Employee Relations, Psychological Bond, Support and Protection

Introduction

As we embark on the twenty-first century, organization's leadership face the challenge of sweeping changes globally. Frequent economic catastrophes and fierce competition is forcing the organization to rationalize the resources through layoffs, process reengineering, mergers and acquisition Aziz (2016). Sustaining talent pool and improving productivity has thus become a concern of all organizations. The dynamic corporate culture has increased the economic pressure and stress. Mangers need to explore new leadership practices with more diplomatic and social skills at workplace because traditional leadership styles will not be effective in 21st century (Rost, 1993). This may create an uncertain workplace environment, employee may lack trust on leadership (Parameshwar, 2005). Employees become psychologically unattached with their work (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Adaption of technology, mergers and acquisitions enhance the uncertainty and dent the employee productivity.

This paper focusses on one of the leadership strategy known as "*Benevolent Leadership*".
Benevolent leadership is one of the most desirable management styles (Chan & Mak, 2012). Previous studies by have not focused on the interactive effects of benevolence with employee behavior. There is lack of knowledge on how and why benevolence affects subordinate behavior. This paper explains the employee behavior as a response to benevolence expressed by the managers. It is an attempt to explain the causal relationship between leadership and employee productivity by highlighting key variables. It offers a holistic view of how benevolent leadership affects employee manager relations and productivity within an organization. Benevolent leadership enable leaders to change employee behavior in their favor and makes them more productive. Benevolence strengthens trust, willingness to work, and commitment that may help the managers to lead diverse teams in complex business environments. This paper may help those organizations who wish to have loyal and committed workforce that performs well and contributes towards the organizational growth. This paper will focus on addressing the long-term effects of benevolent leadership on employee productivity.

Literature review

In difficult situations, employees look towards their managers and seek assistance. Paternalistic leadership (PL) may help the organizations to survive the catastrophe and manage diversity. PL has three components Authority, Morality & Benevolence (Farh & Cheng, 2000). Benevolent leadership is most desired paternal leadership style by the modern contemporary organizations (Niu et al., 2009; Chu et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2011; Chan & Mak, 2012). This leadership style helps to establish trust between employees and management. Managers may gain more commitment and loyalty out of the employees. Benevolence portrayed by the manager is a reflection

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of that father- son like relation which employee as trustee wants to be in and have a manager one who cares for employees with motive apart from profit (Mayer et al., 1995). Once the psychological bond is developed and is beyond the economic contract it yields healthy social exchanges without the fear of punishment, which ultimately leads to improved employee productivity (Chen, 2011). This predictor of the long-term employee commitment towards the organization and managers. It significantly reduces intentions to quit job and effect the employee performance level (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Blau & Boal, 1989; Bozeman & Perrewé, 2001; Shahnawaz & Jafri, 2009; Culpepper, 2011).

Benevolent leaders take a special interest in employee's professional life and in their personal life away from the workplace. Benevolent leaders pay special attention to the employee ideas and encourage employees to share new ideas. According to (Chan & Mak; 2012) employee's performance improves due frequent exchange of ideas between employee and manager. Benevolent leadership has association with creativity and identity role (Wang & Cheng, 2010). Increased efforts to perform the task affects the employee creativity and leads to generation of valuable ideas that are very important for organizational development. In addition, it increases organizational performance, and improves organizational citizenship behavior (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2012).

Benevolent leadership is persuasive as it accelerates employee productivity because it motivates the employee to perform for their manager. Benevolent leadership style has encouraging effects on employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organization citizenship behavior (OCB) and improved job performance (Farh et al., 2008). Such managerial action motivates the employees to behave obediently and show loyalty towards manager (Farh & Cheng, 2000). This acts as a catalyst and increases employee commitment to perform the task (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006). This increases employee efforts to reciprocate the care, support and protection provided by the manager (Aycan, 2000; Martinez, 2003).

Benevolent leadership style influences the employee organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is psychological association of employee with organization that decreases the chances of employee turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organizational commitment is a threefold phenomenon and constitutes of normative commitment, affective commitment, and continuance commitment are the three dimensions of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Benevolent behavior of the manger influence employee's organization commitment in these three directions.

Normative commitment emerges when an employee feels obliged to stay with the firm for the sake of co-workers and management. The benevolence portrayed by the manger discourages the employees to leave the organization (Tan, 2015). Logical answer to this that employee may feel that he/she will not receive another benevolent and trustworthy working organization and management like it elsewhere. Similarly, if the employee experience unfair treatment, counter productive work behavior and disloyalty are the outcome (Ayers, 2001).

Counterproductive behavior is the last thing organizations want at workplace. Benevolent leaders mitigate this by providing care and establishing trust. Leaders benevolent behavior Intelligent managers gain the trust and respect from their employees because it enhances the comfort level, job involvement, job performance, and reduces counterproductive behavior at work (Atkinson, 2007; Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Organizational commitment is critical for organizations survival benevolent leadership seems to be a way to gain long-term commitment.

Affective Commitment emerges when the workers want to pursue their career with the organization because of personal competence and comfort they receive from the occupation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The increase in affective commitment may increase the efforts towards the assigned task and ultimately improve the overall employee performance. Managers play a key role in gaining affective commitment from the employees. They instill an emotional relationship with employee referred as "psychological state that bonds the employee to organization" Allan & Meyer (1990). This may motivate employees to continue work with the same manager organization. Affective organizational commitment is the outcome of mutual trust between the employee and manager (Poon et al., 2006). Mutual trust plays a key role in the establishment of professional relations in social environment (Ferris et al., 2009; Gill et al., 2005). Trust also improves the intent of team members to help each other (Poon, 2006). Managing team members from diverse backgrounds is not elementary stuff. Cross-functional teams are full of diversity, managers manage employees with different job descriptions, and they maintain a balance in employee emotions.

Continuance commitment arises when an employee has no better substitute, and has to stay at the current position (Geh, 2010; Khan & Rashid, 2012). In developing countries, employees may face this situation frequently thought out the career. There is scarcity of new jobs, organizations and managers by showing benevolence towards employees can retain the employees. It improves the organization's survival chances by developing trust, engaging

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and developing employees intellectual capacity that are useful for the organization for long period of time Victor Lipman (2015).

OCB is defined as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" Khan & Rashid, 2012. Benevolent leadership is very effective for setting the workplace environment. Establishing a positive working environment is one of the major tasks for line manager. Benevolent leaders play a pivotal role in developing an ethical and comfortable work place as it may affect on employee behavior positively. Desrosiers & Thomson's, 2011 posited that benevolent mangers show kind-heartedness and positive intentions towards their subordinates. They take actions for the betterment of their employees and organization.

Benevolent manager abstains from abusing employees; shows care towards employee needs and interests, and take actions to protect those employee needs (Whitener et al., 1998). Benevolent managers depict consideration for employee needs and interests, protecting the employee and avoid exploiting employee weakness (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Benevolence is a leadership skill improves the ability to lead and enables line managers to give positive guidelines to employees. Benevolent leaders provides benefits, engage in positive activities, and generate positive results for the common good of the employees. They focus on the shared benefits and positive outcomes for all subordinates in their team (Daly and Cobb, 1989; Bryson, and Crosby, 1992). Benevolent leaders make whole-hearted efforts to facilitate employees at work. "The personalized concern given by benevolent leaders includes offering opportunities to correct mistakes, avoiding the public embarrassment of employees, providing coaching and mentoring, taking employees as family members" (Wang & Cheng, 2010). Moreover, it may help the organization to survive the challenges of competitive business world

In addition to all mentioned above Creativity and innovation are major contributors towards organizational success and effectiveness (Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Benevolent managers support and cooperate with employees to enhance their creativity (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Tierney et al., 1999; Tierney & Farmer, 2002; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Benevolent leadership style facilitates creativity by providing suitable environment (Tierney et al., 1999).

According to Amabile, 1988 benevolent leaders express inclination and support for creative work benevolent leadership indicates that a manager approves the employee role as of exemplary and valuable employee of his team, they gain more resources and recognition for their work (Farh et al,, 2000 & 2008). This creates a comfortable, creative and stress free environment, as a result of which employee becomes self-aware Kriger & Seng, 2005. Opportunity to grow within an organization motivate them Parameshwar, 2005 On the contrary, low-level benevolent leadership reduces the resource allocation for creative activities, thus leaving employees with limited number of options to design strategies and execute the plan (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spector, 1986; Amabile et al., 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996).

Benevolent management style effects the employee performance. Benevolent mangers provide job autonomy to their subordinates. Benevolent managers influence employee productivity by providing job autonomy. Job autonomy means giving an employee the right to make own decision (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spector, 1986). Autonomous jobs encourage the employee creativity and increases employee determination level as compared to controlled jobs (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Spreitzer, 1995). Job support such as autonomy encourages employees in risk taking, problem solving and critical thinking (Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). This may have a positive impact on employee job performance. Benevolent managers support employees by empowering and enabling them employees to execute tasks using innovative ideas. This may enhance the employee performance. The benevolence displayed by managers enhances employee obligation to his/her job description and makes them more responsible towards their job (Farh & Cheng, 2000).

Victor Lipman (2015) shared his experience and mentioned that "one inescapable truth struck me: Vast numbers of employees are disengaged. By "disengaged", I mean not emotionally committed to the organizations they work for, and therefore in all likelihood not highly motivated and fully productive." This is because lack of affect based trust among the employees. The annual cost in productivity lost is $450 Billion according to Gallup and is a towering figure.

Methodology: Systems Thinking Approach

Modern organizational structures are complex. Sustainability is complex, multidimensional and dynamic (Nguyen, 2012). Ever changing work requirements and increasingly growing complexities within the organizations need a different approach to address the dynamic problems. In order to understand the multifaceted employee behavior within the organization including employee productivity a different approach is required. Traditional reductionist approach has shown its inability to solve the problems & challenges faced by managers (Nguyen, 2012). In order to

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sustain the productivity and development (Bell & Morse, 2005) referred old traditional methods as ineffective and failure to address the topic under discussion.

In order to address the complex issue we have adapted a system thinking approach. A systems model and related archetypes are analyzed in qualitative manner for the in-depth understanding about the potential effects of benevolent leadership style on employee behavior (Nguyen, 2012). This modelling technique helps to establish causative and correlative relationships (Sokolowski, & Banks, 2010). System thinking provides a holistic view, feedback loops highlight the important behaviors and helps to understand the interrelationship". Even though initially being intended for the analysis of business enterprises, currently system approach is applicable to a variety of systems that change over time Sterman, 2000. It draws patterns with the help of which we can understand and track a particular behavior. It also enables the managers to make the employee behavior more predictive.

Systems thinking has grown to be more renowned in recent times, since it provides a 'new way of thinking' for understanding and handling complex problems, whether they exist within a native context, or exist globally (Bosch et al., 2007; Cabrera et al., 2008). The system approach has proved its validity and has been applied in various fields like environmental conflict administration (Elias, 2008), community development (Midgley and Ochoa-Arias, 2004). It is applied in other disciplines like business (Bashiri and Tabrizi, 2010), decision making (Maani and Maharraj, 2004), human resource management (Quatro et al., 2007), innovation (Galanakis, 2006), social theory and management (Mingers, 2006), food security and population policy (Keegan and Nguyen, 2011).

This study uses a systems approach (Midgley, 2003; Maani and Cavana, 2007). In modern era organizational managers have to deal with dynamic and diverse complexities within an organization. That might be social, industrial, economical or maybe political. Leadership these days has to deal with complexities and make tough decisions. Systems thinking is a methodology that comprises of different set of tools that helps to deal with complex and unclear scenarios. It provides solution to these complex issues with the help of mental maps (Maani and Cavana, 2007). Systems thinking emphases not only on viewing the system as whole but also focuses on its key elements and their relations with different elements (Nguyen, 2013).

Systems approach offers a policy framework for handling dynamic changes and complexities by improving the understanding the effects of policy by dynamic feedback rooted in complex system. This may enhance the understanding of complex employee issues. This allows HR managers to predict the long-term effects of their actions, also it brings the unanticipated behaviors to surface that occur because of managerial actions or strategies (Nguyen, 2013). Systems thinking provide a context to all the stakeholders for a deep discussion and build consensus (Maani and Cavana, 2007). System thinking also has the capacity to 'enable integration across dimensions of sustainability' (Smith, 2011). Nevertheless, this paper applies systems approach and its tools to analyze the leadership policy and its effects on employee behavior.

Advantages:

One of the prime advantages of systems thinking approach is that it over comes the limitations of other traditional methodologies to address complex issues (Nguyen, 2013). Bell & Morse, 2005 referred old traditional methods as ineffective and failure to address complex issues like sustained productivity and employee development. Ever changing dynamic complexities of modern business world needs a new approach to address multidisciplinary and multidimensional problems. Systems thinking approach may help the organizational leaders to understand the impact of benevolent leadership as a policy and the way it effects employee organizational behavior. Moreover, a system thinking approach may enable the line managers gain in-depth knowledge regarding how benevolent leadership affects with employee productivity. This will help the managers to influence employee behavior and improve productivity.

It also helps to reach the root cause of the problem, because without reaching the root cause the problem may surface again. Another advantage of system thinking approach is that it provides a holistic approach and creates visuals for the managers. It may enhance the clarity about the effects of managerial behavior by increasing understanding at three levels like events, patterns and underlying structure (Kirkwood, 1998). Dynamic leaders may use this for bringing long-term sustainability in organizational or team environment while they analyze organizations at three levels i.e. Structural level, as opposed to the event-level storytelling. This method equips the managers with tool to establish causative and correlative relationships (Sokolowski, & Banks, 2010). System thinking approach is applicable to a variety of systems that change over time Sterman, 2000. It establishes a pattern of events and the structures which makes employee behavior more predictable.

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A three-stage causal loop development approach is used in this paper. In first stage, independent loops are developed. In second impact of each action on the next employee behavior is addressed by assigning values. The model is developed based on relevant literature. In third stage, independent loops are connected with each other to form an integrated mental map See Figure 5. This may comprehend the understanding about the leadership impacts employee behavior. We have used Vensim to create causal loop diagrams and Stella Architect to run the simulation. As the last step what if analysis have been conducted with help of simulation to understand the long-term impact of benevolent leadership on employee productivity.

The proposed thinking model constitutes of events, patterns systematic structure that ultimately takes the form of a complex mental model. According to (Maani and Fan, 2008) almost all the policy actions and resultant behaviors appear in the form of event. Behavioral pattern are formed because of particular act of leadership. It connects multiple components of benevolent leadership and employee behavior. This method links multiple events as well, which create a history how a particular behavior occurs. This creates a systematic structure that reveals the underlying causal elements and improves the understanding of the core problem (Maani & Cavana, 2007). Systematic structure helps to understand the complex systems. When combined, events, patters and systematic structure form a mental map that describes how and why the particular components influences each other. This captures tenets and principles and that may be the actual cause of problem (Maani & Cavana, 2007).

CLD & Leverage Points

Mental map highlights leverage points. Leverage points are "right places in the system where, small, well focused actions may produce significant, enduring and improvements" (Senge, 2006 p.64). Leverage points are inevitable and exist in every organization. Figure 1. Shows that kindness expressed by managers develops an emotional bond between leadership and employees, thus leading to increased loyalty. Enhanced loyalty increases motivation to oblige the manager because they express kind behavior towards them. This positively impacts the willingness to work for leader which increases employee capability and enhances employee performance. Similarly figure 2. Depicts that support from the manger establishes trust, enhances social exchanges as a result of which employees are more engaged at work. On the other hand it reduces the stress which allows them to work freely and they gain more resources at work. Figure 3. Allows us to understand that how benevolent act of protection by the managers prevent the exploitation of employee weakness and upholds the justice within the organization. It impacts the organization citizenship in a way that it reduces immoral actions as well. Figure 4 shows the psychological bond as the leverage point that improves the employee relation and enhances the normative commitment leading to increase in employee efforts. Leverage points are not easily identifiable (Meadows, 1999). This is another advantage of systems approach over other traditional methods. The establishment of representative causal loop diagram makes the issues more prominent and suitable strategy can be devised to address the cause (Maani & Cavana, 2007). The identification of correct archetypes also assist in identifying low and high leverage points in a system (Senge, 2006).

SFM Results and Discussion:

This section includes the discussion on how benevolent leadership expressed by the supervisor effects employee behavior over time. Figure 7 depicts the combined effect for willing to work, employee effort, and resource allocation helps the employees to work freely and ultimately leads to boost in managerial support. Further it shows a linear pattern of growth over the period of time. Figure 8 shows that due to enhanced managerial support that helps to engage the employees and increases social exchanges. Social exchange with manager increase employee knowledge and enriches job which gradually improves employee performance over time. Figure 9 shows that due to high trending performance tasks are completed in better manner which yield better rewards for the employees from the management. It also shows that rewards will increase in a linear way and continue to increase during employee tenure within the organization. As a result of rewards employee job satisfaction is amplified and it boosts employee motivation to continue.

DISCUSSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

The strength of benevolent leaders is not only limited to formal level but it also expands beyond it. It helps mobilize people and improving social links within the organization. They transform the social bonding among the team members into organizations innovation capacity. According to Champoux (2000) and Mayfield and Mayfield (2002) leader's benevolent behaviors towards the subordinates make them emotionally attached to the institute and increases the willing to stay with same company. Benevolent leadership may help the modern day managers in reducing resistance towards the change. Benevolent leadership style helps to lead the change and control negativity among the employees. It instills positive energy in workforce and accelerates employee productiveness and reduce

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turnover that helps organizations to survive in tough conditions. Benevolent leaders influence the employee behavior in multiple ways and it important for the managers to understand it impact.

This research has presented a multiple mind maps based on the literature review. It explains the effects of benevolent leadership on employee productivity. It provides an explanation on different acts of benevolence influence the employee productivity at workplace. The presented mental maps are conceptualize two system dynamic models including three stage causal loop diagrams and stock and flow maps. System modelling has enabled us to visualize and understand process through which the benevolent leadership gets the enhanced output from the employees. The causal loop diagrams highlight the leverage points such as kindness, managerial support, protection and psychological bond. These leverage points may help the mangers to align the employee behavior as per the desire and employers can get the maximum output from the workforce.

In support of the phenomenon under study, the simulation results show how the employee performance improves and the way it effects the employee productivity over time. Stock and flow model predicts that by implementing benevolent HR practice managers can influence the employee behavior, engage them in day to day tasks leading to better social exchanges, this in results in better understanding of the role the supervisor may get better output from the subordinates at workplace.

This paper presents a visual and holistic view for employees as well and helps them to understand how they can gain high managerial approval that provides them with protection and freedom to work at workplace. It improves our understanding that better leader member relation saves employees from exploitation and indulging in immoral actions. It provides a practical ground from employees to understand and strategize the code of conduct at workplace to gain more recognition and rewards. It provides deep insights for the practitioners and academicians on the complex interactive effects of benevolent leadership on employee productive behavior. Lastly it an addition the existing body of the literature

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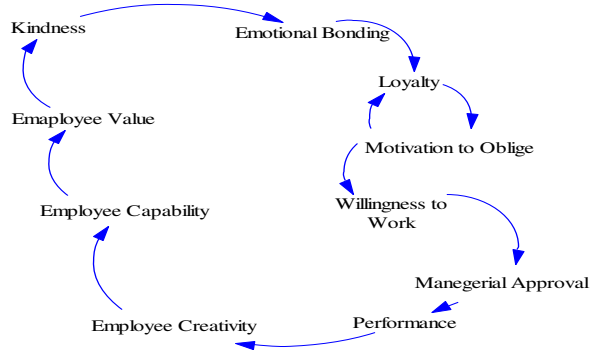
Appendices

Figure1 **Kindness**



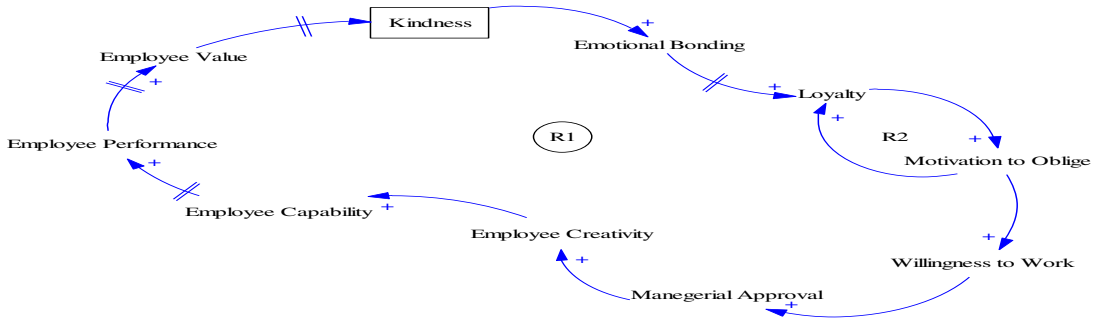
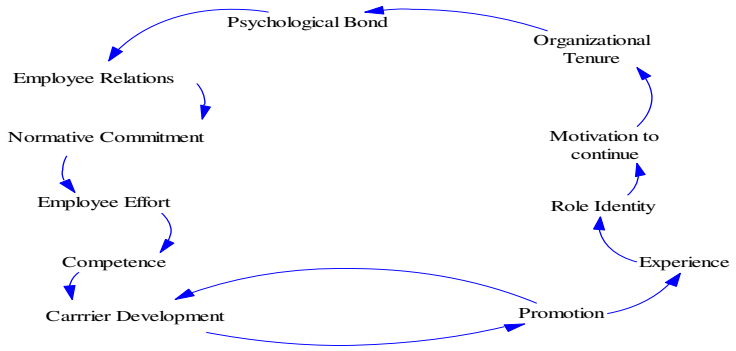


Figure 2 Psychological Bond:



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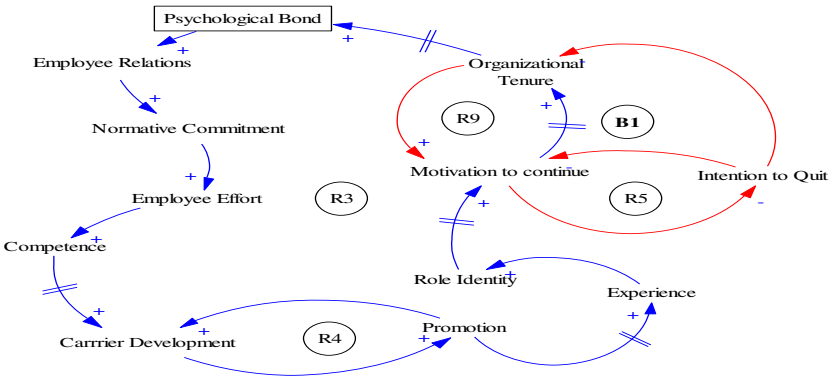

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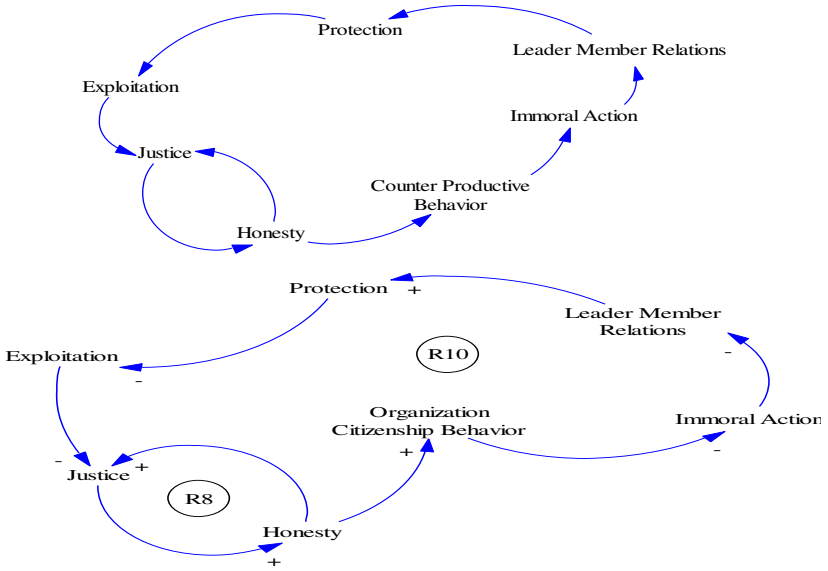

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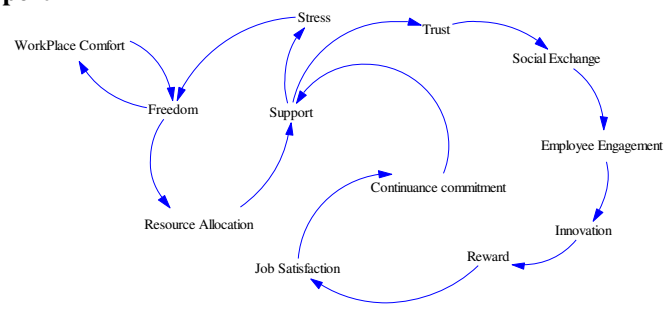

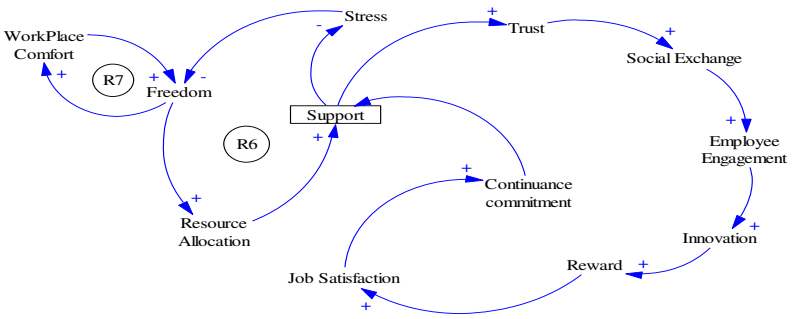

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Figure 5
Integrated CLD

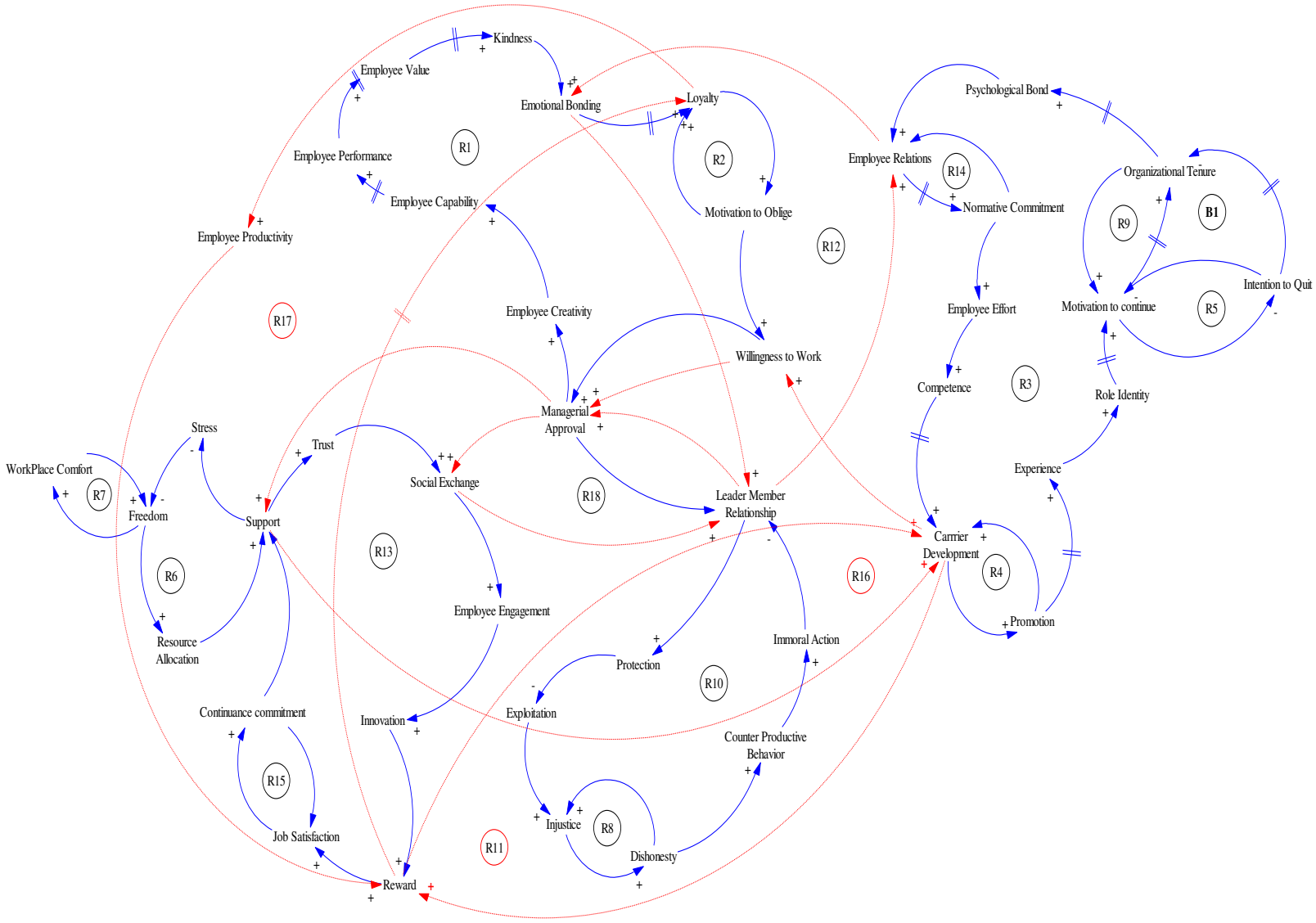

Figure 6 : Managerial Support: - Linear Growth

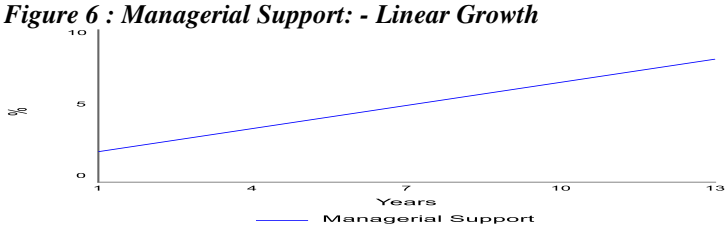

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Figure 7: Employee Performance: Linear

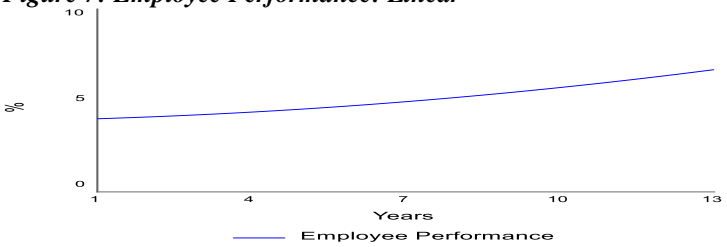


Figure 8 Rewards: Linear

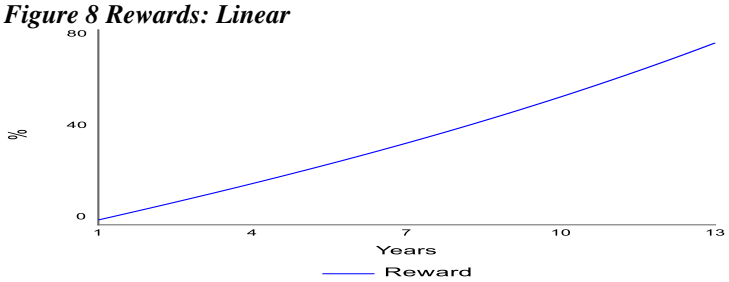
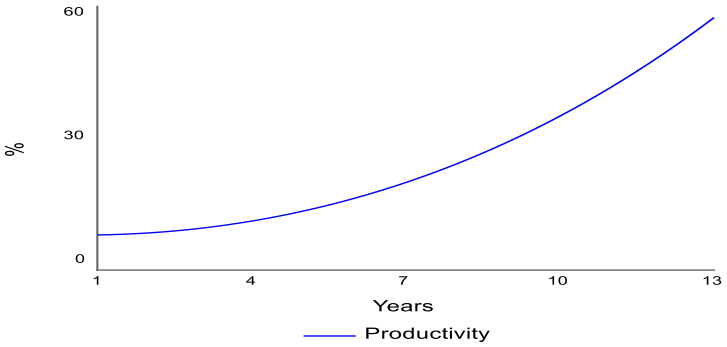


Figure 9 Employees' Productivity: Non Linear



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