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How leaders generate hope in their followers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to understand how leaders in organisations generate hope in their followers. High hope leaders who generate hope in their followers may be described as leaders who have a positive and engaging management style, and who positively influence the people around them by generating hope. There is significant evidence that a large part of a leader's role is to inspire hope in followers, and that high hope managers are more effective and successful than leaders who lack hope.

Leaders who inspire hope in followers were identified, and nine qualitative semi-structured depth interviews were conducted with the followers of these leaders. What emerged was a checklist of behaviours, actions and attitudes of high-hope leaders, which may in future serve as a guide for other leaders who seek to increase their positive influence on followers, and consequently, their positive impact on organisations and the economy.

Nine common behaviours which were key in generating hope in followers emerged from this research, these are:

1. Each of the leaders has a high level of personal competence and credibility – they are personally very smart and very successful
2. They trust their people implicitly, and don't micromanage followers
3. They empower their people
4. They are keen developers of people
5. Access to the leader is relatively easy – they are available to their people
6. They believe in and believe the best about their people

7. They are great communicators, and willingly share knowledge and information with their followers
8. They relentlessly drive high performance
9. They inspire their followers to work hard, and contribute large amounts of discretionary effort

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Alison Richardson

Date



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I am deeply grateful for...

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Research Title

How leaders generate hope in their followers

1.2. Introduction

The lens through which leadership is viewed is constantly shifting. The emerging theory (Higgs, 2002) school of thought about leadership focuses on two strands of leadership activity : the focus on what leaders actually do and the impact of leadership action on followers and their corresponding ability to perform in the workplace. This research paper has used this leadership lens as the foundation for the research project, and then overlaid it with the concept of hope in the workplace.

Hope is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a “feeling of expectation and desire for something to happen, or a person or thing that gives cause for hope”. Hope is the feeling that what is wanted can be had, or that events will turn out for the best.

Hopeful leaders are shown to be more effective and successful than leaders who lack hope. Leaders naturally have an impact on their followers; that impact may be positive, negative or neutral, where the influence is neither positive nor negative. According to Snyder (2002), higher hope is related to better outcomes in academics, athletics, physical health, psychological adjustment, and psychotherapy. The corresponding assumption is therefore that higher

hope is related to better performance of people, both inside and outside of the workplace.

In a deliberate attempt to sidestep the interminable debate about the differences between management and leadership, this research paper acknowledges that at its simplest form, management is fundamentally about operationalising strategy and getting the “to do” lists done, while leadership is largely about fundamental relationships with other people and tapping into the wellspring of human motivation. The nine manager / leaders who form the basis of this research report were found to juggle both roles comfortably – they are all Executives who influence strategic business direction, yet they manage the day to day operations of a team of senior managers and are directly involved in people management. For this purpose, the terms management and leadership are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

The growing positive psychology movement is creating a new way of thinking and behaving among organisational leaders, and is starting to shape positive organisational behaviour (Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa, 2004). They add that the development of hope appears to be necessary not only to break away from historical (political) influences, and to help leaders create a vision to help solve the current challenges which they face in South Africa, but also to move away from self doubt to self-renewal. There is growing significance of the role of hope in both nation-building and organisational performance.

According to Luthans, *et al* 2004, hope is a psychological capacity that can be developed and managed, and that it is related to leadership effectiveness and

employee performance; hope therefore plays an important role in the development of South Africa's organisational leaders to meet current and future challenges. Luthans, *et al* further cite research in US organisations which suggest that high-hope leaders have higher performing business units and more satisfied associates with lower levels of employee turnover. Adams, Snyder, Rand, King, Sigman and Pulvers (2002) reported that firms with higher hope human resources are more profitable, have higher employee retention rates, and have greater levels of employee satisfaction and commitment. Peterson and Luthans (2003) found that high-hope organisational leaders had significantly better work unit performance, subordinate retention and satisfaction outcomes than low-hope leaders.

There is significant evidence that hopeful leaders can positively impact organisational performance, and conversely, that leaders who lack hope, can impact organisational performance negatively. Within the context of this evidence about the positive impact of hope, this research project was aimed at uncovering what it is that leaders actually *do* in the workplace to generate hope among their followers.

1.3. Research Scope

The scope of this research was limited to leaders who were identified as being high hope leaders, and who generate hope in their followers. The followers of these high hope leaders were interviewed to determine what the high hope leaders were doing, and about the impact of the leaders' behaviour on their followers.

1.4. Research Problem

The research problem was aimed at understanding what high hope leaders do to generate hope in their followers in the workplace.

The key research questions which were answered are:

- What is it that leaders do to generate hope in their followers?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings and intentions?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perceptions of their performance on the job?

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what high hope leaders do consistently to generate hope in their followers, and to gain a broad understanding of how these actions impacted on employee performance and morale.

The outcome of the research is a checklist of behaviours, actions and attitudes of hopeful leaders, which may in future serve as a guide for other leaders who seek to increase their positive influence on followers and organisations, and consequently, their positive impact on the South African economy.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

Roadmap for the literature review

- the quality of leadership has a significant impact on followers and on organisational performance
- the modern workplace and the modern employee is demanding a different kind of leadership – a duality where the focus is on both the hard business results, but also on the people in the organisation
- effective leaders use both professional and personal leadership behaviours
- both aspects of leadership - being competent and adopting an engaging style – are required for effective organisational outcomes
- there is growing evidence that a key role for leaders is to be able to encourage the heart of followers
- What is hope? (definitions and comparisons)
- defining ‘high hope’ operationally – how is it measured?
- positivity and hope contribute towards positive organisational behaviour
- high-hope leaders have higher performing business units and more satisfied employees with lower levels of employee turnover
- the lack of hope can have negative consequences on the performance of organisations
- high hope managers impact their followers positively by adopting a theory Y view of employees
- transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership
- more than 90 percent of top performing leaders demonstrate strong emotional intelligence
- the followers perspective

The literature review covers literature focused on the role and impact of leaders, the link to hope in the workplace, and evidence about why hopeful leaders are important in driving positive behaviour and outcomes in Organisations. There are a number of elements focusing on a leadership style which is positive and hopeful, and which places people at the centre of the relationship between organisations and employees

2.1 The role of leadership

The quality of leadership has a significant impact on followers and on organisational performance.

Eales-White (2003) defines a leader as a person who rules or guides others, and a follower as a person who accepts the teachings of another. Erkutlu (2008) quotes the Yukl (1994) definition of leadership as a social influence process, which involves determining the group or organisation's objectives, encouraging behaviour in pursuit of these objectives, and influencing group maintenance and culture. This relationship between leaders and followers has been intensely studied for centuries, and continues to be the topic of much modern literature and a mountain of books on the shelves at popular bookshops. Freud (1927) maintained that groups of individuals need leaders to provide them with an identity and sense of purpose. Fiedler (1964) claimed that leadership needs to be understood from the follower perspective, probably because leadership is a group phenomenon, and there are no leaders without followers.

There is a school of thought in academic literature which claims that there is no relationship between leadership and organisational performance. Svensson and Wood (2006) cite Grusky (1963), Gamson (1964), Brown (1982) and Fazel and D'Itri (1999) who claim that changes in leadership have little or no impact on business performance. They also quote Lieberson and O'Connor (1972) and House and Baetz (1979) who claim that the association between leadership and organisational performance is weak, non-existent and even contradictory. Thinking on the role and impact of leadership has progressed in recent years, to a place where the leadership impact on followers is significant.

Despite this contrary view, there is sufficient evidence that there *is* indeed a strong relationship between leadership effectiveness and organisational performance. Fayol (1923 / 1937) stated that "the manner in which the subordinates do their work has incontestably a great effect upon the ultimate result, but the operation of management has much greater effect". According to Erkutlu (2008), managers use different leadership behaviours in the work setting, and that these behaviours have a direct impact on employee outcomes, and may result in higher employee satisfaction, commitment and productivity. Therefore, effective use of leadership behaviour will increase the effectiveness of both the leader and the organisation.

The traditional leadership role is focused on driving the 'hard aspects' of business performance, this includes increasing bottom line performance, creating shareholder value, and ensuring the long term viability of the business. We have moved past the point where it is ok to achieve bottom line results at the expense of the people, leaving bodies littering the hallways of the executive

suite. The accepted leadership role has evolved to a place where it is about both bottom line performance and about caring for the people in the organisation.

2.2 Leadership styles which generate hope in followers

The modern workplace and the modern employee is demanding a different kind of leadership – a duality where the focus is on both the hard business results, but also on the people in the organisation. Effective leaders use both professional and personal leadership behaviours. Both aspects of leadership - being competent and adopting an engaging style – are required for effective organisational outcomes.

If we accept that there is a direct link between leadership effectiveness and organisational performance, the question arises about what kind of leadership style is most effective. The most commonly used measure of leader effectiveness is the extent to which the leader's group or organisation performs its tasks successfully and attains its goals (Erkutlu 2008). Organisational effectiveness is defined by Erkutlu as the extent to which an organisation, by way of certain resources, fulfils its objectives without depleting its resources and without placing undue strain upon its members and/or society. The world has generally moved from the traditional command and control style of leadership, to a more engaging leadership style.

In their book "Primal Leadership : realizing the power of emotional intelligence", Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) state that the best, most effective leaders

act according to one (or more) of six distinct approaches to leadership, and skillfully switch between the various styles depending on the situation. All six of the approaches are part of an effective leadership repertoire, but success lies in knowing when and how to effectively apply the appropriate style.

The six leadership styles in the leadership repertoire are:

1. the **Visionary leadership style** : it moves people towards shared dreams, and positively impacts on organisational climate
2. the **Coaching leadership style** : it connects what individuals want at a personal level with the organisation's goals, and positively impacts on organisational climate
3. the **Affiliative leadership style** : creates harmony by connecting people to each other, and positively impacts on organisational climate. People want to feel connected to other people in the workplace
4. the **Democratic leadership style** : this style values people's input and gets commitment through participation, and positively impacts on organisational climate. People feel that they are part of the process, and that their input is valued
5. the **Pacesetting leadership style** : is used to get high quality results from a motivated and competent team and used to meet challenging and exciting goals; the impact on organisational climate can be highly negative if it is poorly executed
6. the **Commanding leadership style** : is used in a crisis to kick-start a turnaround or with problem employees, and soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency; the impact on organisational climate can be highly negative because this style is so often misused

The first four leadership styles (visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic styles) have the ability to positively impact and boost performance if used consistently and effectively by leaders. These leadership styles are closely aligned with the characteristics of a transformational leader. The pacesetter and commanding styles of leadership are known as the dissonant styles, and leaders are cautioned to use them sparingly, because of the possibility of negative outcomes. However, they are a critical component of the leadership repertoire, and if used skillfully, they can supplement the other 4 more engaging leadership styles. These six leadership styles can also be viewed as a balance between the soft and hard leadership styles and abilities of an effective leader.

There is significant evidence that transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership (Erkutlu cites the work of Bass and Avolio, 1999; Northouse, 2001; Waldman *et al.*, 2001)

2.2.1 Transformational leadership

Traditional leadership models have shifted from the leader as authoritarian decision-maker to the leader as a facilitator of change (McGuire and Hutchings, 2007). McGuire and Hutchings (2007) quote the work of Nadler and Tushman, 1990, which claims that transformational leaders have the ability to inspire followers to transcend their own interests and work towards the benefit of all. In the article, McGuire and Hutchings similarly quote the work of Bass (1990) which identifies four characteristics of the transformational leader; these are:

1. **Inspirational motivation** – where leaders inspire confidence in followers and empower them to face difficulties
2. **Intellectual stimulation** – norms and assumptions are challenged by the leader and followers, divergent thinking is encouraged and the development of innovative strategies occurs
3. **Individual consideration** – the developmental needs of followers are identified and addressed through coaching, mentoring and developmental opportunities
4. **Idealised influence** – encompasses the ethical and moral standing of leaders, and engenders trust and loyalty between leaders and followers

Effective leaders are emerging as those who effectively combine a strong, competent business focus with the softer side of leadership, which in this case, are the 4 characteristics of the transformational leader. These characteristics can be loosely aligned to the leadership repertoire as described by Goleman *et al* (2002).

2.2.2 Personal and professional leadership

Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet (2004) claim that organisational viability is partly dependent on leadership effectiveness, and that effective leaders combine both professional and personal leadership behaviours.

Professional leadership is the formal part of the leadership role, and is about direction, process and coordination, and includes actions such as creating a mission, defining processes for achieving goals, and aligning processes and goals.

Personal leadership is the people side of the business; it is about trust, caring, sharing and morals, and includes actions such as caring for people, building trust and acting morally. The authors cite recent scandals in Enron and WorldCom resulting from the negative impact of personal leadership behaviours; more recent examples are the Bernie Madoff and Barry Tannenbaum financial scandals, where personal leadership qualities have come into question.

The findings of this study suggest that personal leadership is an essential contributor to willing cooperation (by followers). It provides an opportunity for followers (and others) to evaluate the credibility of leaders, and impacts on whether or not they engage in willing cooperation in the workplace. People find it easier to get along with their organisation's leaders when they perceive their leaders to be engaging in effective practices that will enhance business outcomes as well as employee outcomes (Mastrangelo *et al.* 2004).

Growing evidence from the literature is making the connection between leadership behaviour and impact on followers clear; there is undeniably a link between the two aspects. This study also articulates the leadership role as a combination of both hard (the professional role) and soft (the personal leadership aspects) skills. There is again a close link to previous literature on the leadership repertoire and the characteristics of the transformational leader.

2.2.3 Engaging leadership

Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathan and Samele (2008) also focus on the people side of leadership, but acknowledge that both aspects of leadership - being competent and adopting an engaging style – are required for effective organisational outcomes. Their 2008 study investigates the link between quality of leadership and organisational performance, and their findings show a positive correlation between the two variables. They define an engaging leader as someone who encourages and enables the development of an organisation that is characterised by a culture based on deep integrity, openness and transparency, and the genuine valuing of others and their contributions. The characteristics of engaging leaders include :

- concern for the development and wellbeing of others
- behaviour is guided by ethical principles
- ability to resolve complex problems through being decisive
- there is a desire to co-create and co-own ways of working with others towards achieving a shared vision
- ability to unite different groups of stakeholders
- delegation of a kind that empowers and develops potential in people, coupled with the encouragement of questioning and of thinking which is both critical and strategic

Alimo-Metcalfe *et al* (2008) found that engaging leadership enables organisations not only to cope well with change, but also be proactive in shaping their future.

A key finding of the Alimo-Metcalfe *et al* (2008) research was that the quality of leadership is directly associated with staff attitudes at work and with the achievement of organisational goals. They conclude that creating a culture of engaging leadership is critical, since it not only predicts the performance of teams, it also predicts a range of positive outcomes, including high levels of motivation, job satisfaction, job and organisational commitment. The presence of engaging leadership is also a good predictor of wellbeing indicators which include high levels of fulfilment, self esteem, self confidence, and reduced levels of stress and emotional exhaustion in the workplace.

2.2.4 Theory X and theory Y

A final piece of the leadership lens focused on hopeful leaders is the 1960's work of Douglas McGregor around the management literature of theory X and theory Y. According to Gabris, Maclin and Ihrke (1998), McGregor's work was focused on demonstrating that organisational productivity may be increased by addressing the physical and psychological needs of workers. Theory Y is an optimistic approach, which assumes that a typical employee wants to work, enjoys meaningful responsibility, can accomplish goals, and generally only requires minimal supervision. The manager assumes the role of coach, resource-acquirer, trouble-shooter, change agent and coordinator. Relationships between employees and managers in this optimistic framework are based on high levels of trust and cooperation. In essence, high hope managers impact their followers positively by adopting a theory Y view of employees

The opposite of this optimistic approach is theory X, where managers assume that employees dislike work, they are lazy, they dislike responsibility, and they must be coerced to perform.

With a focus on high hope leadership, the theory Y approach obviously dominated in the interview results for this research assignment.

2.3 What do high hope leaders do?

There is growing evidence that a key role for leaders is to be able to encourage the heart of followers.

“Leadership is about people and about emotions” Prof. Dave Beatty (2008)
(Comments in Organisational Behaviour and Personal Leadership MBA lecture)

The traditional leadership role is about focusing on hard business results, with particular emphasis on driving the numbers - the balance sheets, the bottom line, market share, growing revenue and building shareholder value. The modern workplace and employee is demanding a different kind of leadership – a duality where the focus is on both the hard business results, but also on the people in the organisation. Van der Colff (2003) claims that the legitimacy of all leaders within an organisation is dependent on whether leaders are able to encourage the heart (of followers). Walker (2006) quotes the late John Gardner (1990) in his book, *On Leadership*, that “the first and last task of the leader is to keep hope alive”. Courage to continue the quest and hope in a positive future were central elements of Don Quixote’s legacy “to dream the impossible dream”. There are many leaders who focus (with great success) mainly on the hard or technical aspects of the leadership role through driving the numbers and bottom line results. It takes a more mindful, emotionally mature and skilled leader to effectively mix the hard and soft aspects of leadership, and apply this successfully in the workplace in a way that benefits the business and the people.

In their book “The leadership challenge”, Kouzes and Posner (1997) insist that encouragement is serious business, and the theme of hope as a key leadership role is highlighted and recurs throughout their work. The domain of the leader is the future, and the leader’s unique legacy is the creation of valued and successful organisations. Kouzes and Posner (1997) created a research base of sixty thousand leaders and followers and discovered recurring patterns of leadership success – ordinary people achieving extraordinary results.

Kouzes and Posner identified the five elements of effective leadership as judged by followers:

1. **effective leaders challenge the process** – constantly challenging why things are being done in a certain way, but open to having their own actions challenged
2. **they inspire a shared vision** – by knowing their constituents and speaking their language. Leadership is seen as a dialogue rather than a monologue, and the leader’s enthusiasm about the vision spreads to followers
3. **they enable others to act** – they believe in the potential of others and enable people to realise their full potential
4. **they model the way** by acting as a role model and demonstrating integrity with congruence of words and actions
5. **they encourage the heart of followers** to carry on when people are disenchanted, exhausted and frustrated.

Positive leadership provides people with a sense of direction that encourages them to do their best. Even with highly motivated, achievement-oriented

people, the type of leadership provided makes a definite difference in the performance, in the levels of stress experienced, and in long term health (Kouzes and Posner, 1997).

The work of Kouzes and Posner underscores the previous literature in this review about leadership needing to skillfully combine both hard and soft skills, but they now add a third dimension which relates to encouraging the heart of followers. Providing a sense of hope for followers is becoming increasingly important in the modern workplace.

2.4 What is hope and why is it important for Organisations?

Positivity and hope contribute towards positive organisational behaviour. High-hope leaders have higher performing business units and more satisfied employees with lower levels of employee turnover. The lack of hope can have negative consequences on the performance of organisations and on people.

Having a solid and growing cadre of hopeful leaders is very important for South Africa – from an individual, organisational and country perspective, because the impact of hopeful leadership has significantly greater benefits than laissez-faire or negative leadership behaviour. Hopeful managers are shown to be more effective than leaders who lack hope. Luthans, *et al* 2004, remind us of the positive impact of some of the great South African national leaders who have demonstrated hope as part of their leadership style, people such as Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the late Walter Sisulu.

Hope is traditionally defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a “feeling of expectation and desire for something to happen, or a person or thing that gives cause for hope”. Hope is the feeling that what is wanted can be had, or that events will turn out for the best.

Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa (2004) propose a positive approach to leadership based on the capacity of hope. Positivity and hope will result in positive (organisational) behaviour, which encompasses confidence, optimism and resilience. In these turbulent geopolitical and economic times, countries around the globe are negotiating the delicate balance between fear and despair on the one hand, and hope and opportunity on the other, and leaders are left to

struggle with the realities of today's environment (Luthans, *et al* 2004). The lack of hope can have negative consequences on the performance of companies, whereas as a tendency towards hope can facilitate a tolerance for negative outcomes, the ability to manage conflict and economic downturns (Luthans *et al*, 2004). People will more naturally thrive in a positive, hopeful environment as opposed to a negative, hopeless environment.

Luthans, *et al* (2004) further cite research in US organisations which suggest that high high-hope leaders have higher performing business units and more satisfied employees with lower levels of employee turnover. Adams *et al* (2002) reported that firms with higher hope human resources are more profitable, have higher retention rates, and have greater levels of employee satisfaction and commitment. Peterson and Luthans (2003) found that high-hope organisational leaders had significantly better work unit performance, subordinate retention and satisfaction outcomes than low-hope leaders.

The development of a caring and proficient organisational setting by the leader should enhance a hopeful work environment for all participants and enhance business success (McGarvey, 1995).

It is clear that hope is fast becoming an essential ingredient in leadership behaviour and company performance. High hope leaders undoubtedly have a positive influence over their environment, and organisations should therefore consciously seek out more and more high hope leaders as part of their leadership team.

2.5 Engagement as a catalyst for change

The Corporate Executive Board (2004) defines “engagement” as the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization. Engagement can be emotional or rational in nature. Engagement levels can range from highly disengaged to highly engaged; engagement ultimately drives performance. Engagement is also known as work engagement, and may be defined as the level of discretionary effort used when employees have choices about how they behave – engaged employees choose to contribute more effort to the goals of the organisation. Engaged employees are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work, they care about the company they work for, and are willing to invest their discretionary effort to the benefit of the company. Leadership quality has a direct impact on employee engagement or disengagement levels. High hope leaders generally build employee commitment and engagement levels, and employees are therefore less likely to actively seek alternative employment. Employee retention levels are generally higher in an environment where high-hope leaders are found.

2.6 Emotional Intelligence as a component of hope

Transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership. More than 90 percent of top performing leaders demonstrate strong emotional intelligence.

There are multiple intelligences which leaders need to be adept at – these include mental intelligence (IQ or being smart), social intelligence (SQ or being able to interact comfortably with others), cultural intelligence (CQ or valuing cultural differences), spiritual intelligence (SQ) and now even green intelligence (GQ)! However, the most common and enduring of the intelligences is emotional intelligence (EQ) - the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions, as well as the capacity to understand the emotions of others, and subsequently use this information for improved relationships with others (Cangemie, Burga, Lazarus, Miller and Fitzgerald, 2008). The most successful leaders are role models of emotional intelligence – those leaders who demonstrate a significant capacity for self analysis, self management, social awareness and relationship management (Cangemie, *et al*, 2008). It is further claimed that 60 percent of a leader's role effectiveness is directly linked to emotional intelligence abilities, and that more than 90 percent of top performing leaders demonstrate strong emotional intelligence.

According to Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002), emotionally intelligent leaders demonstrate the following four leadership competencies :

- **Self awareness** : this encapsulates emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence

- **Self management** : this aspect includes self control, transparency, adaptability, achievement orientation (they set very high personal standards), initiative and optimism
- **Social awareness** : this includes empathy, organisational awareness and a high service orientation
- **Relationship management** : this competency covers inspiration, influence, developing others, being a change catalyst, managing conflict well, and team work and collaboration

One of the final pieces a high-hope leader's character is the aspect of motivation. Motivation is about energy and therefore, leadership is about **managing energy**, first in one's self and then in others (Clawson 2008), which links particularly to the emotional intelligence of self management. Both high and low energy is infectious (Clawson 2008) and people therefore infect other people around them with their level of engagement or disengagement. Similarly, people with strong personalities influence those around them (Clawson 2008). This notion of how leaders influence other people is linked to the concept of hope in the workplace – low hope leaders influence followers just as much as high hope leaders do, but with different outcomes.

Finally, a **worldview** is the way that individuals see the world and other people, and comprise a cluster of personal values and a multitude of paradigms (Yeo 2006). Everyone has a world view (which is usually unconscious), which may be positive or negative or somewhere in-between. An individual's leadership

style will reveal their world view, which has a direct impact on their decision making and people management skills, and therefore their ability to inspire hope in their followers. We can conclude that high hope leaders have a positive worldview, and that this influences their thinking and their behaviour in a positive way.

2.7 The followers' perspective

The emphasis of this research paper is about the effect that leadership has on followers. For a brief moment, let us pause and take a look at the world from the followers' perspective, and understand the alignment with management actions.

Followers want more than just a job in an organisation. They want to be in a place that resonates with their personal values and goals, they want to be able to engage in meaningful work where they can make a difference, they want to be valued and respected, and they want to be able to progress in terms of career opportunities. Money is simply the ticket to the game - being paid fairly and equitably for the work performed; pay is not a major motivator or retention factor, as long as the employee is not underpaid.

According to the Saratoga Institute (as quoted by Leigh Branham, 2005), there are four fundamental human needs, and employees leave organisations when these needs are not met. The four needs are:

1. **The need for TRUST** : expecting the company and management to deliver on its promises, to be honest and open in all communications, to invest in staff, to treat them fairly, and to compensate staff fairly and on time
2. **The need to have HOPE** : staff need to have hope in the future and believe that they will be able to grow, develop their skills on the job and through training, and have the opportunity for advancement leading to higher earnings

3. **The need to feel a sense of WORTH** : followers need to feel confident that if they work hard, demonstrate commitment, and make meaningful contributions, they will be recognised and rewarded accordingly. Feeling worthy also means that they will be shown respect and regarded as a valuable asset (not as a cost) to the organisation
4. **The need to feel COMPETENT** : followers expect to be matched to a job which makes good use of their talents and is challenging, to receive the necessary training to perform the job capably, to see the end result of their work, and to obtain regular feedback on their performance.

In her book, 'The seven hidden reasons why employees leave', Leigh Branham lists the top ten most frequently mentioned reasons why employees leave organisations as follows:

1. **Poor management** : this includes uncaring, incompetent and unprofessional managers, managers who overwork employees, who fail to show respect, not listening to ideas, and who place employees in the wrong jobs
2. **Lack of career growth and advancement** : this includes favouritism and the failure to fill jobs from within the organisation
3. **Poor communication** : this includes a lack of openness with information, and miscommunication between departments
4. **Pay** : not being paid fair market value and not being paid in proportion to their contribution and hard work
5. **Lack of recognition** : the organisation's culture does not encourage or support recognition

6. **Poor senior leadership** : there is a lack of caring, failure to invest in employees, executives being remote from employees, and making too many changes in organisational direction and structure
7. **Lack of training** : includes poor quality of training to perform current job, poor management training and a lack of training for future advancement
8. **Excessive workload** : always being asked to do more with fewer resources, and sacrificing quality and client service in order to make the numbers
9. **Lack of tools and resources** : inadequate office supplies, outdated technology and lack of staff to relieve overwork
10. **Lack of teamwork** : lack of co-worker cooperation and commitment, poor coordination of work between department and locations

Branham also adds that there are seven hidden reasons why employees leave, reasons that managers can address and prevent; these are:

1. The job or workplace does not live up to expectations
2. There is a mismatch between the job and the person
3. Too little coaching and feedback
4. Too few growth and advancement opportunities
5. Feeling devalued and unrecognised
6. Stress from overwork and poor work-home balance
7. Loss of trust and confidence in the senior leaders

There is consistency about what followers want – leaders who care, and who are worth following. This was reinforced in the interviews with followers of high hope leaders.

2.8 Conclusion

It takes a more mindful, emotionally mature and skilled leader to effectively mix the hard and soft aspects of leadership, and apply this successfully in the workplace in a way that benefits the business and the people. This literature review pulls together a number of elements focusing on a leadership style which is positive and hopeful, and which places people at the centre of the relationship between organisations and employees. An outline of this thinking and the key elements is as follows:

- the quality of leadership has a significant impact on followers and on organisational performance
- the modern workplace and modern employee is demanding a different kind of leadership – a duality where the focus is on both the hard business results, but also on the people in the organisation
- effective leaders use both professional and personal leadership behaviours
- both aspects of leadership - being competent and adopting an engaging style – are required for effective organisational outcomes
- there is growing evidence that a key role for leaders is to be able to encourage the heart of followers
- positivity and hope will result in positive organisational behaviour
- high-hope leaders have higher performing business units and more satisfied employees with lower levels of employee turnover
- the lack of hope can have negative consequences on the performance of organisations
- high hope managers impact their followers positively by adopting a theory Y view of employees

- transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership
- more than 90 percent of top performing leaders demonstrate strong emotional intelligence

CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature shows that hopeful leaders can positively impact organisational performance, and conversely, that leaders who lack hope, can impact organisational performance negatively. Hope is a psychological capacity that can be developed and managed, and is related to leadership effectiveness and employee performance (Luthans, *et al* 2004).

Within this framework on the impact of hope, the following questions were used as the basis for the qualitative interviews:

- What is it that leaders do to generate hope in their followers?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings and intentions?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perceptions of their performance on the job?

The questions sought to determine the extent to which South African leaders are positively impacting followers right now in 2009, and in essence, validating the literature review in a South African context.

CHAPTER 4 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine what high hope leaders do to generate hope in their followers, and gain a broad understanding of how these actions impacted employee perceptions of their performance and morale.

This involved gathering data from both primary and secondary sources. The literature review was used to understand the concept of hope as it relates to leadership, the role of leaders in generating hope, and the leadership impact on followers. Some supplementary sources in the form of non-academic articles and books were also used as sources of information.

The research design was qualitative and of an exploratory nature (Zikmund, 2003). Qualitative research aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. The sample size was relatively small, allowing for depth interviews which yielded greater insights than quantitative research would have done. Qualitative research was deliberately selected in order to obtain a wealth of data from a few respondents.

The research was undertaken in two phases, with **the first phase** focused on identifying business leaders who generate hope in their followers. This was done by asking MBA colleagues to indicate whether their immediate manager generates hope in them; some of these colleagues who responded positively to this question, were interviewed.

In the second phase, semi-structured depth interviews were conducted with the followers of leaders who generate hope. Gillham (2005) argues that the semi-structured interview is the most effective way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility, balanced by structure, and the quality of the data obtained. Gillham further explains semi-structured interviews as :

- the same questions are asked of all interviewees
- interviewees are prompted by supplementary questions if they have not spontaneously answered the question effectively
- approximately equal interview times are allowed for each interviewee
- questions are open-ended
- probing questions are used according to whether the interviewer judges there is more to be disclosed at a particular point in the interview

As the study was exploratory in nature, the interviewer made use of probing and clarifying techniques to gain as much insight as possible. The nine interviews with followers of high hope leaders were done face to face.

4.2 Unit of Analysis

The individual (a follower of a high hope leader) was the unit of analysis in this research report. Non-probability sampling was used to select participants. Participants were identified as those people who indicated that their leaders generate hope in them; all of the participants were followers. No specific age group, gender, industry or job type was relevant to the unit of analysis.

The Oxford dictionary defines a follower as a person who follows, or a supporter, fan, or disciple (accessed 29/06/2009).

4.3 Population

The population from which the sample was drawn was the 2008/09 GIBS MBA group in Gauteng. Non-probability, judgmental sampling was used to select participants. The basis of selection was availability of participants, and geographic proximity.

The research design was qualitative and of an exploratory nature, using a sample size of nine interviewees.

The research was conducted in the form of semi-structured depth interviews with the followers of those leaders who inspire hope, probing primarily what they do to generate hope. Leaders who generate hope in their followers may be described as :

- leaders who have a positive management style, and who positively influence the people around them by generating hope

4.4 Sampling Method and Sample Size

“Judgment or purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which an experienced individual selects the sample based on his or her judgment about some appropriate characteristic required of the sample members. The researcher selects the sample to serve a specific purpose, even if this makes a sample less than fully representative” (Zikmund, 2003, p382).

A sample of thirteen people was compiled on this basis. Non-probability, convenience, judgmental sampling was used to select participants.

4.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument was in the form of depth interviews, using the semi-structured interview questionnaire below.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Name	
Gender	
Race	
Date of interview	
Consent letter signed?	
What is it that your manager does to generate hope in you?	
How important is this (working for a high hope leader) to you?	
How does this high hope behaviour make you feel?	
What does this high hope behaviour make you do?	
How does this impact your perception of your performance on the job?	

4.6 Data Collection

The participants were contacted electronically in July 2009 using the attached email (see appendix 2) to invite participation from those students whose immediate managers inspire hope in them. Of those students who expressed a willingness to be interviewed and who rated their leader's capacity to generate hope as a 4 ("I sometimes feel quite hopeful after interacting with my manager") or 5 ("I almost always find myself feeling more hopeful after interacting with my manager"), those who were available and geographically accessible were selected to be interviewed.

The participants were interviewed in person, using the questionnaire attached (see appendix 3) as a guide. Each interview lasted approximately sixty minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded (with prior permission from each participant), and the researcher also made extensive notes of the responses from participants during the interviews. Using the recordings, the majority of the interviews were typed up verbatim after the interviews were completed. The researcher was not aware that the digital taping device was faulty during two of the interviews, and there are thus not full verbatim transcripts for one of the interviews, and for a portion of another interview. However, the interviewer's own notes for these two interviews is attached in the data file.

4.7 Data Analysis

Once all the interviews were completed, the responses from the participants were analysed by tabulating the most frequent and / or common responses to the questions. Thematic analysis was also used to identify common themes which emerged, and these were sorted by similarity. The resulting themes were grouped into categories and these were then analysed (grid analysis). Direct quotes which emerged frequently from different participants were also used in the analysis of the results.

An independent third person was also used to review the interview notes, and highlight key themes indicating what managers do to generate hope in their followers. This additional analysis was taken into account during analysis of the results.

4.8 Limitations of the Research

The research was constrained largely by time limitations, by access to some of the participants, and by geographic location.

As with all depth interviews in a qualitative research study, analysis and interpretation of such data is highly subjective, and it is difficult to determine the “true” interpretation of the surface reactions and the subconscious motivations of the respondent (Zikmund, pg 130).

Despite the necessary precautions, response bias may also have occurred because of the interplay between interviewer and respondent (Zikmund, pg 182).



CHAPTER 5 : RESULTS

5.1 Description of sample

A total of 40 MBA students responded to the electronic survey. Of the 40 students, thirteen rated their leader’s capacity to generate hope as a 4 (“I sometimes feel quite hopeful after interacting with my manager”) or 5 (“I almost always find myself feeling more hopeful after interacting with my manager”). Those who were available and geographically accessible were selected to be interviewed.

Nine followers of high hope leaders were interviewed in face to face interviews, and each interview lasted approximately sixty minutes.

Rating scale (see below for descriptions)	Number of respondents who rated their manager’s capacity to create hope at this level	%
1	3	7,5%
2	9	22,5%
3	6	15%
4	6	15%
5	7	17,5%
Manager not rated	9	22,5%
Total	40 participants	

9 respondents were interviewed face to face		
Respondents (MBA students)	5 Male (55,6%)	4 Female (44,4%)
Managers of respondents	6 Male (66,7%)	3 Female (33,3%)



5.1.1 The rating scale

Please rate your immediate manager on the degree to which he/she generates hope in you:	
1	I come away from interactions with my manager feeling totally hopeless / without hope
2	I sometimes feel hopeful after interacting with my manager
3	I have not encountered any impact on my sense of hope after interacting with my manager
4	I sometimes feel quite hopeful after interacting with my manager
5	I almost always find myself feeling more hopeful after interacting with my manager

This is the rating scale used in the original email communication to MBA colleagues, inviting them to rate their immediate manager / leader. Only one of the respondents, and the researcher's Supervisor queried the accuracy of the scale. In question is point 2 on the scale. In hindsight, the description of point 2 could be changed to read "I seldom feel hopeful after interacting with my manager". However, the researcher has assumed that respondents have accurately interpreted the scale as it was originally presented.

5.2 Results

The research problem was aimed at understanding what high hope leaders do to generate hope in their followers in the workplace.

The key research questions which were answered are:

- What is it that leaders *do* to generate hope in their followers?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings and intentions?
- How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perceptions of their performance on the job?

5.2.1 What is it that leaders *do* to generate hope in their followers?

An analysis of the survey results indicates that the 9 Managers share 9 common behaviours which generate hope in their followers. The 9 behaviours are:

1. The leaders have high levels of personal competence and credibility, and are personally very smart and very successful
2. The leaders trust their people implicitly, and refrain from micromanaging followers
3. They empower their people
4. They are keen developers of people
5. Access to the leaders is relatively easy; they make themselves available to their people
6. Each leader believes in and believes the best about their people

7. They are great communicators, and willingly share knowledge and information with followers
8. The leaders relentlessly drive high performance
9. They inspire their subordinates to work hard, and contribute large amounts of discretionary effort

5.2.2 How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings and intentions?

Two questions from the interview are:

- “How does this high-hope behaviour make you feel?”
- “What does this high-hope behaviour make you do?”

The followers' feelings, actions and intentions were consistently positively impacted by the high-hope leaders actions. From a **feelings** perspective, some of the key phrases used consistently during the interviews include:

- I enjoy going to work
- I am inspired by him/her
- I feel valued
- I am hopeful

From an **action** perspective, some of the key phrases used consistently during the interviews include:

- I happy to work long hours to get the job done
- I put in a lot of extra effort
- S/he inspires me to do well
- I don't want to let him/her down
- I ask for help
- I aspire to be like him/her
- I take responsibility for my work
- I want to please him/her

From an **intention** perspective, the followers confirmed that they enjoy working for their immediate leader. However, there was no clear link to retention or intent to stay. Understandably, MBA students are naturally restless and ambitious, and when a great opportunity comes along, they will take it. None of the followers are currently actively looking for a new role, but this will undoubtedly change once they have completed their MBA studies. Only one of the followers mentioned that she would struggle to leave the team (and the high-hope leader), because of the extent to which she enjoys working with the leader.

This aspect of intention linked to high-hope leaders could be a topic for future research.

5.2.3 How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perceptions of their performance on the job?

Most of the followers admitted to being naturally high performers. They stressed that they set high standards for themselves, and generally perform at a high level, irrespective of the leader that they work with. However, each of the followers described the positive impact that the high-hope leader is having on their performance; they perform at a higher level than they naturally would. Without fail, the followers felt some guilt about the time taken to complete their MBA studies, and that they are not always able to put in extra time and effort in the workplace.

Some of the key phrases used during the interviews include:

- I'm operating outside of my comfort zone
- I perform at a much higher level / the highest level possible
- I wish that I could do more

5.2.4 The outliers and flawed heroes

Of interest are the leaders who generate hope in their followers, yet do not fit the typical mould of a charismatic or inspirational leader. Each of the followers indicated that their leader inspires hope in them, that they admire the leader and aspire to be like him/her, yet they also spoke about the weaknesses and personal flaws of the leaders. Despite these flaws, the followers are accepting of the flaws, and are still inspired by the leaders.

Some of the key leadership flaws include:

- Three of the nine leaders do not have fun at work or create a fun atmosphere; the other six leaders do
- One of the leaders really struggles to balance hard and soft power, and tends to avoid confrontation and the harder aspects of leadership, yet he inspires his followers
- The same leader fails to motivate and encourage people at work, while this is a strength for the other eight leaders
- All of the leaders except one, are ordinary, down to earth people with no status issues; if people met them in casual situations, they would not be aware that the person is an executive
- “There are times that I feel, he is very smart and I find him competitive as well and there is sometimes conflict ...”
- “He battles in that area (the hard aspects of leadership). I have heard people say that he possibly doesn’t handle confrontation very well, and that they wish he could take charge of a confrontational situation”
- “He is extremely thorough. He makes it his business to understand your portfolio and what is currently happening. Why I say that has a negative

connotation is because in a marketing environment, we sometimes need to make quick decisions, and sometimes he can become pedantic on some things (and slow the decision-making process down a lot)”

- “He is to some extent a bit naïve, he is not second guessing people and wondering if they have hidden agendas. He takes most things at face value (and people sometimes take this for granted)”
- “There are certain things I would expect of him that he doesn’t do”

The full results are discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 : DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter aims to answer the research questions posed in chapter 3, in light of the results presented in chapter 5.

6.1 What is it that leaders *do* to generate hope in their followers?

The leader's abilities and behaviours can be broadly categorised into 3 key concepts:

1. Personal competence :

The leaders have high levels of personal competence and credibility, and are personally very smart and very successful

2. Affirming followers :

- The leaders trust their people implicitly, and refrain from micromanaging followers
- They empower their people
- They are keen developers of people
- Access to the leaders is relatively easy; they make themselves available to their people
- Each leader believes in and believes the best about their people
- They are great communicators, and willingly share knowledge and information with followers

3. Driving high performance

- The leaders relentlessly drive high performance
- They inspire their subordinates to work hard, and contribute large amounts of discretionary effort

6.1.1 Personal competence :

6.1.1.1 The leaders have high levels of personal competence and credibility, and are personally very smart and very successful

Each of the nine leaders is at an Executive or partner level in the businesses in which they operate. They all have highly credible tertiary qualifications, with many also having completed an MBA.

All of the leaders have high levels of personal credibility in the workplace and or the industry in which they operate. The interviewees all respected their leader for the personal success that they have achieved. One of the interviewees commented “He has an MBA and a BSC in Mechanical Engineering so he is very highly qualified. He is very well read. He is capable of doing the work himself. He is knowledgeable about a lot of things in every aspect of the business, so he can advise you on a lot of things”.

Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathan and Samele (2008) focus on the people side of leadership, but acknowledge that effective organisational outcomes are dependent on the leader being highly competent *and* adopting an engaging style of leadership. Their 2008 study investigates the link between quality of leadership and organisational performance, and their findings show a positive correlation between the two variables. The quality of leadership begins with being highly competent to do the job, and in the case of the leaders under review in this study – they are also very successful individuals with high levels of credibility in the workplace, and often in the industry in which they operate.

Many of the followers indicated that in need, the leader could step into the trenches and do the work.

Conclusion

Both the literature and the interviews with the followers indicate that a key component of high hope leaders is high levels of personal competence and high credibility. The result is that the followers are able to respect and at times, even admire the leaders.

6.1.2 Affirming followers :

A second component of high hope leadership is the ability to affirm followers. This includes the following 7 elements:

6.1.2.1 High hope leaders trust their people implicitly, and refrain from micromanaging followers

Each of the leaders trust their followers implicitly to get on with their job and do what is necessary to complete tasks and deliverables successfully without being checked up on. The trust component of the relationship with the leader appeared to be one of the key factors which generate hope in the followers who were interviewed.

The level of trust in some cases was very high in that followers had the freedom to spend significant amounts of budget on international travel to assess new business opportunities. The freedom to operate inspires the followers to work hard and each of the interviewees is nervous of letting the leader down in

some way. Each of the followers are free to work where and when they choose, the leader does not clock-watch, but focuses rather on the delivery of results.

One of the followers commented “he gives me a lot of freedom. When I talk about freedom, I mean if I need to make a certain decision which can have huge implications, he will give me the freedom to make the decision without consulting him. He puts a lot of trust in me in making key decisions. He is the type of manager who is not on your back always”

This trust aspect of high hope leadership is strongly supported by the literature. One of Kouzes and Posner’s five elements of effective leadership is enabling others to act, and in this context, trust is a critical element of leadership behaviour. From the follower’s perspective, the Saratoga Institute (as quoted by Leigh Branham, 2005) lists four fundamental human needs, the first of which is the need for trust. Followers feel respected and valued when their leader places high levels of trust in them, and trust is therefore a critical component of a high hope leadership style. From a personal leadership perspective, Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet (2004) stress that one of the key roles for leaders is building trust and acting morally.

6.1.2.2 High hope leaders empower their people

The leaders in this study provide followers with all the tools needed to do the job – this includes physical tools such as technology, opening doors to provide access to Executives, and making available financial resources which are needed to operate effectively.

The leaders play a coaching and guiding role, and some provide input and ideas to their followers, but the followers then have the freedom to determine the way forward by making their own decisions. Many of the followers spoke about being allowed to make mistakes as part of the learning process; there was no fear of reprisal if mistakes were made.

Some of the followers' comments relating to being empowered are:

- "I feel I can try new things without the risk of negative reaction"
- "He definitely instils a lot of confidence in me not only in my work life but also in my outside life. He empowers you with so much knowledge that you basically get out there and you can talk about anything, business and how to deal with people"
- "I think it is his ability to empower people (that generates hope in me). He doesn't believe in doing everything himself and having very tight control. He gives us the freedom to explore and try things out. If we fail, we get reprimanded in a certain way and we do take the responsibility for our failures, and if we do succeed, we get the credit for it"
- "He gives you the space and the freedom and the tools to do what you want to do. If I want to buy software or go on overseas travel to go and meet with a company because I have seen something that they are doing that we could utilise back home and I want to meet with them, I can take forward the proposal to him, if he thinks yes, he supports it and gets it approved. I am not office bound."

Empowerment of followers is a consistent theme in the literature on leadership, and is another aspect of high hope leadership that generates hope in followers. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) talk about a democratic leadership style as part of the leadership repertoire, where followers' input and participation is sought. People feel that they are part of the process and that their input is valued, and this creates in them a sense of hope.

Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathan and Samele (2008) stress the desire to co-create and co-own ways of working as one of the characteristics of engaging leaders. Another characteristic is delegation by leaders which empowers and develops potential in people.

6.1.2.3. High hope leaders are keen developers of people

Each of the leaders have taken a keen interest in developing their people, and all are supportive of the followers' MBA studies. Some of the leaders seem to have a particularly skilled ability to identify potential in followers, and then develop that potential; as a result, ordinary people (such as secretaries) have been developed and promoted into managerial roles. The leaders in this research project willingly invest resources (time and money) into developing their people; despite the current economic challenges, they do not use resource constraints as an excuse to delay development.

Verbatim comments by the followers on development include:

- “He affords me a lot of opportunities to grow. He trusts and believes in me. He is extremely supportive of my development”

- “What also makes me feel hopeful is that he is just so open to my learning. When I get back on a Monday (after MBA lectures), he says “cool, when are you going to book time in my diary to go through what you have learned?” He is the CEO of a company!”
- “She is a sounding board. If I am not sure of a decision, I tell her what I am thinking and planning to do and she is quite generous with her input as well to guide me when I need it”
- “She tries to seek out potential in everybody; if she sees potential, she will push you to develop that potential”
- “I have just never had an experience where someone is so supportive of my development”

The literature stresses the development of followers as a key component of effective leadership capability. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) mention the coaching leadership style which is the art of one-on-one coaching which ties together personal aspirations of the follower with the broader organisation’s goals.

From a transformational leadership perspective, the work of Bass (1990) lists individual consideration as one of the four leadership characteristics. The developmental needs of the followers are identified and then addressed through coaching, mentoring and other developmental activities.

Alimo-Metcalfe *et al* (2008) claim that engaging leaders have a real concern for the development and wellbeing of followers

Conclusion : it was clear from each of the followers that the leader's personal interest in their development was a highly motivating factor, and that it made them feel special and valued in the workplace. This undoubtedly contributed to their sense of hope.

6.1.2.4. Access to the leaders is relatively easy; they make themselves available to their people

Despite the fact that each of the leaders are Executives with large personal workloads, they make themselves available to their followers. Some have regular structured meetings with the team, and then regular one-on-ones' with followers. Less formal meetings and communication also appear to be commonplace, with the leaders making large chunks of time available to talk through ideas with followers. Some of the followers commented "his door is always open to me to talk to him", and "if I went to him with anything he would be available, if not immediately, he would make himself available"

In the frenzied modern workplace, it is commonplace for leaders to be too busy with meetings and excessive paperwork, and not have time to focus on the day to day concerns and development of subordinates. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) list relationship management as a key competency for the emotionally intelligent leader; this includes inspiration, influence, developing others, being a change catalyst, managing conflict well, and team work and collaboration. Another competency is self management, where hopeful leaders *make* time available for followers.

6.1.2.5. Each high hope leader believes in and believes the best about their people

Each of the followers interviewed are certain that the leader believes in them, and has their best interests at heart. The leaders have taken a personal interest in the followers, and they encourage and champion them in the business and their development. In many cases, the leaders are guiding and supporting the career growth of the followers; having the leader as a champion behind them has created a significant sense of hope and self esteem in the followers.

Comments from some of the followers are:

- “He believes in me which also gives me hope in the organisation”
- “He trusts and believes in me”
- “She keeps her promises. You always feel like you are on the top of her mind”
- “He has faith in his people and he also keeps to his word”

This aspect of believing in people is closely linked to the concept of trust. Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet (2004) list caring for people as one of the key roles of effective personal leadership.

Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathan and Samele (2008) similarly list having a real concern for others as a characteristic of engaging leadership.

McGregor's 1960's theory X and Y thinking on opposite ends of the positive / negative scale, claims that managers who adopt theory Y behaviour believe in their people and treat them in an optimistic, trusting manner.

Rob Parsons (2002) says that people are prepared to go the extra mile for those who value them.

Conclusion: this aspect of high hope leadership has a significantly positive effect on the followers' perception about the organisation and about the leader.

6.1.2.6. High hope leaders are great communicators, and willingly share knowledge and information with followers

Each of the leaders in this research project makes time to communicate regularly with their followers, sometimes formally, but also frequently, informally. They willingly share knowledge and information with their followers, so that each of the followers felt comfortable that they know what is going on in their organisation and in their business unit.

The leaders also make a point of sharing personal experience and knowledge with followers, usually in the form of informal coaching. Many of the followers mentioned that the leader shares both personal and private information with them that under normal circumstances, they would not be privy to. This appeared to build a sense of trust, self esteem and loyalty in the followers. Some of the followers' comments are "he is my boss, and he tells me that he has been head-hunted and asks me what do I think", and "we have informal chats all the time".

In the literature, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) talk about a visionary leadership style as part of the leadership repertoire, where the leader shares the vision which moves followers towards shared dreams.

Kouzes and Posner (1997) talk about leaders acting as role models and demonstrating integrity with a congruence of words and actions. Positive leadership provides a sense of direction, and this happens through leaders willingly and openly sharing knowledge and information; this behaviour encourages followers, because they are confident that they have the necessary information to perform effectively and on which to base decisions.

Conclusion

The leadership ability to affirm followers is part of the high hope leader's repertoire, and positively impacts the perceptions and feelings of followers. Affirming followers includes the ability to trust and empower followers, effectively develop people both formally and informally, make time available to spend with followers, effectively sharing information and knowledge with followers, and then believing in and believing the best about the people who work for the leader. Each of these abilities may be classified as 'soft skills', yet here is proof that these soft skills are some of the critical tools used by leaders who generate hope in followers. Indirectly, these abilities may then be considered as the tools which drive higher business performance, because Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa (2004) cite research in US organisations which suggest that high high-hope leaders have higher performing business units. Adams *et al* (2002) further reported that firms with higher hope human resources are more profitable, and Peterson and Luthans (2003) found that

high-hope organisational leaders had significantly better work unit performance. According to Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Bradley, Mariathan and Samele (2008), the presence of engaging leadership is also a good predictor of wellbeing indicators which include high levels of fulfilment, self esteem, self confidence, and reduced levels of stress and emotional exhaustion in the workplace.

6.1.3. Driving high performance

6.1.3.1 High hope leaders relentlessly drive high performance

Despite their ability to manage the softer side of leadership, it is clear that each of the nine leaders have a strong focus on results and therefore relentlessly drive high performance in their business. Although mistakes are tolerated, there is a strong performance focus where followers are expected to deliver quality results on time. The leaders appear to effectively combine this harder side of leadership practice with the softer side of leadership so that followers respect and admire them, and also in a way which makes them personally successful. Too many leaders only get this 'hard' piece right, and fail to articulate the softer side of the leadership equation.

Verbatim quotes from some of the followers include:

- "Everyone enjoys working with him but they know his boundaries, and people will deliver"
- "You know exactly where you stand. If you have messed up, he will tell you and you fix it. He doesn't drive by a stick"

- “He is quite straight, if he felt I was misguided or on the wrong track, he would be very firm in telling me and I would get the message”
- “He sets high standards; if you get it wrong, he lets you know, but he is not histrionic or volatile. He will just say “come guys this is not on, we have to sort it out”

6.1.3.2 High hope leaders inspire their subordinates to work hard, and contribute large amounts of discretionary effort

Each of the followers acknowledged that they are naturally hard workers, and that they set high personal performance standards for themselves, so they naturally perform at a high level. However, they each acknowledge that working with a high hope leader inspires them to work even harder and deliver higher standards of performance, quite often outside of their comfort zone. Work is not time bound, and the followers work until the job is done, which entails working way past and outside of normal business hours, and often over weekends.

Verbatim quotes by the followers include:

- “He makes you want to do things for him; the fact that he always supports you makes you want to work hard for him”
- “I will give the company what it needs because my manager has got that out of me - I will work until I get my job done, I give it my all”
- “I work harder, I’m more eager to achieve what I think she expects from me”
- “(Feeling safe with my leader) helps me to expect more of myself, so it does increase my performance and I am also not afraid to ask for help when I need it”

- “I feel motivated, inspired, and passionate. I aspire to constantly do well, to do better, I tend to want to please her. You know that good quality work and meeting your targets is appreciated, not just expected”
- “You operate at a very high level with him, you are always performing outside of what you feel is your comfort zone. I constantly put a lot of effort into what I do, and though I have always operated like that, he really does recognise it and (he) makes you feel good about it”
- “I am inspired to work harder, longer hours and purely because I think there is definitely a sense that he values the input”
- “I really do perform well under good leadership. I need good leadership, that’s for sure!”

This is where the positive impact of the high hope leader is very clear. The followers have not been asked to work longer hours or to work harder; it is their choice to do it, to contribute discretionary effort. Although all the leaders in this research project relentlessly drive high performance, they have undoubtedly found ways to encourage the heart of their followers. According to Kouzes and Posner (1997), this means that effective leaders are able to encourage followers to carry on when they may be disenchanted and frustrated.

Conclusion

These leaders inspire people to act of their own free will, and to deliver exceptional performance. Through their own behaviours, by generating hope in their followers through their actions, they positively impact the overall organisational performance.

6.2 How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings and intentions?

Two questions from the interview are:

- “How does this high-hope behaviour make you feel?”
- “What does this high-hope behaviour make you do?”

The followers' feelings, actions and intentions were consistently positively impacted by the high-hope leader's actions. From a **feelings** perspective, some of the key phrases used consistently during the interviews include:

- I enjoy going to work
- I am inspired by him/her
- I feel valued
- I am hopeful

From an **action** perspective, some of the key phrases used consistently during the interviews include:

- I am happy to work long hours to get the job done
- I put in a lot of extra effort
- S/he inspires me to do well
- I don't want to let him/her down
- I ask for help
- I aspire to be like him/her
- I take responsibility for my work
- I want to please him/her

From an **intention** perspective, the followers confirmed that they enjoy working for their immediate leader. However, there was no clear link to retention or intent to stay. Understandably, MBA students are naturally restless and ambitious, and when a great opportunity comes along, they will take it. None of the followers are currently actively looking for a new role, but this will undoubtedly change once they have completed their MBA studies. Only one of the followers mentioned that she would struggle to leave the team (and the high-hope leader), because of the extent to which she enjoys working with the leader.

Conclusion

This aspect of intention linked to high-hope leaders could be a topic for future research.

6.3 How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perceptions of their performance on the job?

Most of the followers admitted to being naturally high performers. They stressed that they set high standards for themselves, and generally perform at a high level, irrespective of the leader that they work with. However, each of the followers described the positive impact that the high-hope leader is having on their performance; they perform at a higher level than they naturally would. Without fail, the followers felt some guilt about the time taken to complete their MBA studies, and that they are not always able to put in extra time and effort in the workplace.

Some of the key phrases used during the interviews include:

- I'm operating outside of my comfort zone
- I perform at a much higher level / the highest level possible
- I wish that I could do more

Conclusion

These high hope leaders are approaching their leadership role from a win/win perspective (Covey, 1992), where all parties feel good about the situation and are committed to action. There is a positive correlation between the impact of the high hope leader's behaviour and the performance of the follower. It can then be assumed that high hope leaders will similarly have a significant impact on improving or influencing the performance of average performers or under-performers in organisations, and therefore the business case for having more high hope leaders as part of the leadership cadre is extremely important for organisations.

6.4 Key additional observations by the interviewer:

- The leaders are generally just ordinary people doing extraordinary things in their leadership role, and their actions collectively ignite hope in their followers. These nine leaders are really connecting with their people. Rob Parsons (2002) believes that being in touch with your people and having a ‘common touch’ opens leaders up to finding talent in unexpected places, because the leaders are comfortable with being among the people. He further explains that having the ‘common touch’ means not taking yourself too seriously, and making a habit of treating people with dignity, whatever their status in the organisation. Comments by some of the followers on the common touch of these leaders are as follows:
 - “She’s just a normal person”
 - “If you met him in the street, you wouldn’t know that he is a senior Manager”
 - “He is a normal, down to earth person”
 - “She does not come across as the CEO, she gets her hands dirty, she is part of the solution”
 - “If she was a negative grouchy kind of person, I would also probably start to feel like that and pass that on. I don’t think you can underestimate the ripple effect of a leader’s approach or attitude”
 - “He is just an ordinary guy, if you look at the vehicle he drives, the clothes he wears, he is very modest, humble, quietly spoken, but very dynamic”

- “There are no airs and graces about him, he still remains respectful. I think the thing that appeals to me about how he works is he is a no nonsense person, he doesn’t get side tracked by politics”
- Most of the followers admitted that they are very critical and even at times cynical, yet these leaders are able to generate hope in them
- Each of the leaders are flawed, yet their followers do not expect them to be ‘perfect’ leaders; they are accepting of the leaders’ flaws, and tend to admire what they are doing right, rather than focusing on what they are doing wrong
- Most of the followers are modeling their own personal leadership style on that of the high hope leader that they work for and who generates hope in them; this is a tremendous compliment for the leader
- Most of the followers are keen to find reasons to engage with and impress the leader on a day-to-day basis; they were a bit sheepish about this in the interviews and took great pains to explain what they meant – this is again a wonderful compliment for the leaders

6.5 The outliers and flawed heroes

The positive impact of high hope leaders is unquestionable. Of equal interest are these same high hope leaders who generate hope in their followers, yet do not fit the typical mould of a charismatic or inspirational leader. Each of the followers indicated that their leader inspires hope in them, that they admire the leader and aspire to be like him/her, yet they also spoke about the weaknesses and personal flaws of the leaders. Despite these flaws, the followers are accepting of the flaws, and are still inspired by the leaders.

Some of the key leadership flaws include:

- Three of the nine leaders do not have fun at work nor do they create a fun atmosphere; the other six leaders do this well
- One of the leaders really struggles to balance hard and soft power, and tends to avoid confrontation and the harder aspects of leadership accountability
- The same leader fails to motivate and encourage people at work, while this is a strength for the other eight leaders
- All of the leaders except one, are ordinary, down to earth people with no status issues

Some comments by the followers include :

- “There are times that I feel, he is very smart and I find him competitive as well and there is sometimes conflict ...”
- “He battles in that area (the hard aspects of leadership). I have heard people say that he possibly doesn’t handle confrontation very well, and that they wish he could take charge of a confrontational situation”

- “He is extremely thorough. He makes it his business to understand your portfolio and what is currently happening. Why I say that this has a negative connotation is because in a marketing environment, we sometimes need to make quick decisions, and sometimes he can become pedantic on some things (and slow the decision-making process down a lot)”
- “He is to some extent a bit naïve, he is not second guessing people and wondering if they have hidden agendas. He takes most things at face value (and people sometimes take advantage of this or take this for granted)”
- “There are certain things I would expect of him that he doesn’t do”

6.5.1 Conclusion

In his book “Leadership Lessons from Emperor Shaka Zulu the great” (2002), Phinda Madi says that a key leadership skill is to build a fanatical team. He encourages leaders to be a praise-singer for the people, to serve and empower the team, to challenge the team, and to make people feel good about themselves. This lesson from Shaka Zulu is manifesting with the nine leaders in this research project, where through their own leadership actions, they are building a strong, supportive, maybe even fanatical team around them.

6.6 The type of hope generated by high hope leaders

The hope that was described by the followers during the interviews is relevant at an individual level and to some extent, at a company level. The followers feel hopeful about themselves (the leader believes in and trusts them, and has a deep interest in their development) and their current and future role in the organisation. The leader's behaviour inspires followers' confidence not only in the leader, but also in their own abilities and potential to develop. This encourages them to have hope in their own future with their current company, and in their future career. The overall impact is a positive and engaged employee, who performs at a much higher level than an employee who has low hope or no hope. This research has covered hope at an individual and company level, not at a country level.

The way that the interview guide was designed did not uncover or probe hope related more broadly to South Africa. This could be part of future research, as one of the recommendations in this paper for further research is around high hope leadership as a catalyst for positive change in South Africa.

6.7 Good leadership versus hopeful leadership

A final discussion point is around the difference between general good leadership and high hope leadership. Are the leaders in this research project just generally good leaders, or is there a real difference in their actions as high hope leaders? J.M. Burns wrote in 1978 'Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth' (Cooper, 2005). This still holds true today.

The leaders who form the basis of this research are undoubtedly good leaders. They are personally very successful, and have each been appointed to Executive roles in the business in which they operate. However, out of all the MBA respondents in this research, only these leaders were identified as people who inspire hope in their followers. An assumption is therefore that one cannot be a high hope leader without first being a good leader. The hope component is something extra which these leaders do for their people. Low hope leaders could be very competent and capable at their jobs from a technical or operational perspective, yet they lack the ability to generate hope in their followers.

A conclusion is that there is a difference between general good leadership and high hope leadership. High hope leaders have the ability to inspire the heart of their people, they know how to energise their people to excel, and perhaps they really care about their people, and this is evidenced in their day to day actions. It is almost certain that low hope leaders completely lack these abilities.

CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION

The original intention of this research was to determine what high hope leaders do to generate hope in their followers. The findings in the literature correspond with the outcome of the nine interviews with the followers of high hope leaders. There were no surprises in the literature, nor any surprises in the outcome of the interviews. While the modern contemporary focus of leadership is more on a combination of both hard and soft leadership skills, and there is growing interest in the concept of hope as a key leadership capability, this research has not really uncovered any new information.

Similarly, the research did not uncover any capabilities specific to a leadership profile for the South African context. There does not appear to be a particular Great South African leadership image, where the leader is able to counteract the loss of hope in the country. This is certainly a topic for further research.

The research revealed that high hope leaders are skillfully balancing both the hard and the soft leadership capabilities. They are focusing on managing the hard business results - the balance sheets, the bottom line, market share, growing revenue and building shareholder value. But they are also focusing on the people side of business, and they are doing this well. The nine interviews with the followers bear witness to what they are doing right; the leaders are credible and competent, they trust and empower their people, they deliberately develop their people, they make themselves available to their people, they believe in their people and they tell them what is going on, and all of this results in an inspired group of followers who work very hard and contribute large

amounts of discretionary effort. There is no rocket science in this formula for successful, hopeful leadership.

So why do we not have more high hope leaders in South Africa? Why did so few of my MBA colleagues indicate that they work for high hope managers. One MBA colleague even commented “I go to work every day and pray that my boss does not mess up!”.

If the literature is clear on what hopeful leaders should be doing, and if there are indeed a few South African leaders who are demonstrating hopeful leadership, the conclusion about why we do not have more high hope leaders in South Africa must be one of two things:

- **Knowledge and skills:** perhaps the leaders do not have the skills or knowledge to be hopeful leaders - they may not be aware of what high hope leaders do to generate hope in followers, and the corresponding benefits and positive business impact, or
- **Choice:** perhaps they choose not to be high hope leaders. They may be more comfortable with managing the hard aspects of business. It is a well know trend that more and more Chartered Accountants are leading Corporates in South Africa (and globally) today. Perhaps it is their choice to use a command and control style of leadership.

7.1 Opportunities for further research

This research is part of the extensive thinking about leadership effectiveness, and has added another lens to the South African literature on leadership. It is a small slice of research; there is significant opportunity for further research in the field of high hope leadership. The researcher's recommendations for further research topics are:

- A more wide-ranging study on high hope leadership across different South African industries and Government. The existing checklist for high hope leadership could be used as a tool for an in-depth quantitative study to find more high hope leaders, and review what it is that they are doing to generate hope in followers
- A second opportunity for further research is around the concept of high hope leadership as a catalyst for positive change in South Africa – could there be a particularly South African version of a high hope leader, which is unique to our country? How does hope inspire positive change at a country level? Perhaps a comparison could be done between low hope and high hope leaders, and the subsequent impact on followers' behaviour.
- The broad issue of intention to stay or the high hope leader as a key driver of employee retention is perhaps a third topic for future research

7.2 Conclusion

The 'soft skills' are undoubtedly becoming a critical component for success in the 'hard' fields of business. One of these soft skills is the ability to generate hope in followers at both a personal and an organisational level – to cheer them on, inspire them and keep them going when they are exhausted and demotivated.

Cooper (2005) stresses that managers will in future act more as coaches to their followers, and will be positioned alongside rather than above followers, working with them, acknowledging their concerns, ideas and aspirations. Leaders will be judged on employee turnover figures and on sales figures. It takes a more mindful, emotionally mature and skilled leader to effectively mix the hard and soft aspects of leadership, and apply this successfully in the workplace in a way that benefits the business and the people. South Africa desperately needs many more high hope leaders in places of influence, to help reshape and build this brave new world.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – consistency matrix

TITLE	How Managers generate hope in their followers
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RESEARCH QUESTIONS	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	METHOD OF ANALYSIS
1. What is it that leaders do to generate hope in their followers?	Van der Colff (2003) Walker (2006) Higgs (2003)	Semi-structured depth interviews Question 1 : What is it that your manager does to generate hope in you?	Analyse actions of each Leader, and assess similarities. Identify common responses listed by each interviewee
2. How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' feelings?	Peterson and Luthans (2003) McGuire and Hutchings (2007) Erkutlu (2008) Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa (2004)	Semi-structured depth interviews Question 4 : How does this high hope behaviour make you feel?	Identify common responses listed by each interviewee
3. How do high hope leaders' actions impact their followers' perception of their performance on the job?	Peterson and Luthans (2003) Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa (2004)	Semi-structured depth interviews Question 6 : How does this impact your perception of your performance on the job?	Analyse responses by each participant, and identify common beliefs, competencies, values and or personality traits

Appendix 2 – original email communication inviting participation

Dear colleague,

Hope in the workplace

I am a 2008/09 GIBS MBA student. The topic of my final research report is hope in the workplace. **Would you be prepared (if selected) to be interviewed for my research project on hope in the workplace?** Interviews will be limited to the Gauteng area. I anticipate that the interview would last no longer than 90 minutes. Those people who participate will receive a copy of the findings once the research is completed. The findings will focus on what high hope leaders do to generate hope in their followers.

Please advise if you are willing to participate in this research? If yes, please provide your telephone (landline and cell) contact numbers and physical address.

Even if you are not able to participate, I would appreciate your feedback on this question:

Please rate your immediate manager on the degree to which he/she generates hope in you:	
1	I come away from interactions with my manager feeling totally hopeless / without hope
2	I sometimes feel hopeful after interacting with my manager
3	I have not encountered any impact on my sense of hope after interacting with my manager
4	I sometimes feel quite hopeful after interacting with my manager
5	I almost always find myself feeling more hopeful after interacting with my manager

Thank you for your time.

Alison Richardson

Cell : 082 902 3935

Appendix 3 – interview questionnaire

The research instrument was in the form of depth interviews, using the semi-structured interview questionnaire below.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant Name	
Gender	
Race	
Date of interview	
Consent letter signed?	
What is it that your manager does to generate hope in you?	
How important is this (working for a high hope leader) to you?	
Why is this important to you?	
How does this high hope behaviour make you feel?	
What does this high hope behaviour make you do?	
How does this impact your perception of your performance on the job?	

Appendix 4 – Analysis of Interview Results

Hope in the Workplace / Analysis of interview results

20 October 2009

Manager 1	Manager 2	Manager 3	Manager 4	Manager 5	Manager 6	Manager 7	Manager 8	Manager 9
High level of personal competence and credibility (Is personally very smart and very successful)	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility	High level of personal competence and credibility
Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage	Trusts their people, don't micromanage
Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people	Empowers people
An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues	NO (confirmed)	An ordinary, down to earth person, no status issues
Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information	Good communicator, willingly shares knowledge and information
Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people	Keen developer of people
Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance	Drives high performance
Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	Motivates and encourages people	NO (confirmed)	Motivates and encourages people
Has fun at work	Has fun at work	Has fun at work	NO (confirmed)	NO (confirmed)	Has fun at work	Has fun at work	NO (confirmed)	Has fun at work
Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people	Available to his/her people
Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people	Believes in / believes the best about their people
Balances hard and soft power (skills and requirements) well	Balances hard and soft power well	Balances hard and soft power well	Balances hard and soft power well	Balances hard and soft power well	Balances hard and soft power well	Balances hard and soft power well	NO (confirmed)	Balances hard and soft power well
Inspires subordinates to work hard, contribute large amounts of discretionary effort	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard	Inspires subordinates to work hard

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