Doctor of Business Administration

Dissertation

How Do Executives in the Colombian Coal Mining Industry Deal with Effective Leadership Practice?

14th August 2009

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledged in the presentation of this dissertation the following:

1. First, recognition must go to my wife Dawn who has totally supported my efforts in completing this dissertation. She saw first hand the amount of mental energy and time commitment that such a research project demands.

2. The support, assistance and guidance of Dr Bruce Millett (my supervisor), his advice and unparalleled patience have been greatly appreciated.

3. All those professionals in Colombia who generously gave their time and effort by participating in the interviews, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

4. All the previous researchers who have worked in the interesting and fascinating field of Effective Leadership Practice.
CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

8th August 2009

Signature of Candidate
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ENDORSEMENT

Signature of Supervisor/s
Date
ABSTRACT

Conducting business in another country can be difficult and even more so when there are differences of culture, law, politics and ethics. Knowledge of these issues is essential for effective management. The focus of this study is on effective leadership practice in the environment of the Colombian coal mining industry.

This research project seeks to develop an explanatory model of effective leadership practice by executives in coal mining companies in Colombia and, thus, sets out to identify the key issues of the Colombian business environment and explore the strategies adopted by executives in effectively managing this business environment. The model developed for this research project attempts to highlight the issues of executive leadership practice, influencing factors, indicators of effectiveness, contextual dynamics and strategic leadership in the context of current modern leadership practices.

Accordingly, the research problem addressed in this study is: How do executives in the Colombian coal mining industry relate to effective leadership practice? Six research issues were developed in the respective sections of the relevant literature. This research is important because it will add to the body of literature and provide a briefing to those companies and their executives who are either already in Colombia or considering entering the country. The study can also be justified on the basis that the mining industry is now a major industry and the number of foreign companies entering this market is increasing. Additionally, there also appears to be a limited amount of literature regarding specifically how key indicators are perceived to determine effective leadership practice in this Colombian business environment. It is not possible to assume that effective leadership practice in one culture can be readily transferred to another culture (Pillai, Scandura & Williams. 1999).

A research paradigm based on critical scientific realism was selected as appropriate for this study because the research involves action-related case analysis of real and complex situations. The basis for this decision is covered in chapter 3. While this study focuses on foreign coal mining companies, there are other foreign companies such as metalliferous mining and oil companies operating in Colombia and the issues
affecting the coal mining companies are also representative of those affecting other foreign companies.

Overall, the findings found that effective leadership practice as a concept was understood and described by the executives interviewed and they identified eight main attributes which they believed described effective leadership practice and these responses were in line with the definition presented in chapter 2 of this study. Additionally, the responses to the survey indicate that in Colombia leader legitimacy and acceptance is often contingent on non-utilitarian qualities of the leader. Given the importance of the involvement/engagement of executives in the process of effective leadership practice in order to ensure successful outcomes, additional research—specifically in the area of the influence of strategic agendas on effective leadership practice—needs to be conducted looking at the requirements for success and the vision for the future in the context of the environment in which these coal companies and their executives operate in Colombia.
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