HUMANISTIC LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATION COMMITMENT AMONG P-HAILERS: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Abstract: *The study examined the lack of leadership governance by the digital platform in the gig economy, which contributes to poor welfare among p-hailers, primarily young adults in the outbound logistics sector of food delivery services. The new gig economy is regarded as one of the value-added industries; however, being a technology company, it neglects the traditional employment relationship. As such, the research concentrates on improving the p-hailers' welfare to have a practical organisational commitment. This conceptual study aims to construct a research model on the relationship between humanistic leadership and organisation commitment through a literature review and a conceptual framework on the two variables. The research model developed in this study explained the relationship between humanistic leadership and the organisation's commitment. The established hypotheses recommended a positive relationship between humanistic leadership and affective commitment and a negative relationship with the other two commitments, continuance and normative. A continuing effort is necessary to integrate humanistic leadership into the gig economy so it may adhere to sustainable development goals and continue to contribute to the digital economy and society. The study will assist related parties, especially the digital platform organisation, to adopt humanistic leadership to improve the current welfare issue and lead to better organisation commitment*

Keywords*: Humanistic Leadership, Organisation Commitment, Gig Economy, Welfare, Delivery Rider*

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Introduction

The gig economy is not a new type of economy; however, it is becoming the hype in the latest century where its application suits the new start-up or current digital platform organisation. The business model only recruits employees as freelancers or contract workers based on an assignment. This practice gives financial benefits to them. Rapid digitisation, ground-breaking advances in information and communication technology, and a rising inclination among individuals to work with autonomy, freedom, and flexibility in the functional approach substantially contributed to this trend (Webster, 2016). Food delivery riders or p-hailers in the Malaysian context are heavily involved in this gig industry's ecosystem. Having temporary employment status does not give them many privileges compared to their colleagues who work as permanent employees in a traditional business organisation.

Several sources expressed concern about the poor welfare of gig workers, particularly the p-hailers working in the new gig economy ecosystem. One of the most severe issues is the high number of fatal accidents caused by p-hailers, which amongst attributed to a lack of proper consideration of their welfare. The problem has gained national attention and has been brought before the parliament for ministers' consideration. Malaysia has one of the highest motorcycle accidents, primarily p-hailing or riders carrying packages or food. Bernama (2022) presented that three accidents are reported weekly due to p-hailers' working more than usual, pursuing trips and reservations. In this situation, the tendency for them to become weary and exhausted is high, and they are likely to breach the traffic law, often resulting in accidents.

Low pay, holding strikes, lack of insurance coverage, poor safety, lack of maintenance allowances, lack of late-night work allowances, and other issues are some of the welfare concerns raised by p-hailers and the general public. Some of the workers organised a 24-hour delivery blackout in August this year as a sign of protest against their unsatisfactory working conditions (Adib and kalbana, 2022). One of the reasons for this situation is the position of the workers who are regarded as contract workers or freelancers. Digital platforms are not in favour of treating them as employees because of the protection accorded by the Employment Act 1955 to those regarded as employees. The recent amendments in 2022 to the Employment Act 1955 provide light to the end of the tunnel for gig workers. The newly inserted provision section 101C of the Act creates a presumption of the employer-employee relationship in the absence of a written contract of service. The presumption arises if one of the conditions stated in the section exists. Maintaining cost-effectiveness is one of the factors, and digital platform companies often ignore leadership and human resource engagement in their business operation, which avoids additional obligations and causes less hassle when a company must expand globally or shut down. Digital startups have discovered that these methods fit their business models well. According to Giorgi et al. (2015), economic stress may lead employers to believe that employees' welfare and social support are not crucial to the company's survival and cause them to try to maintain their survival through budget cuts and layoffs.

Most of the p-hailers working in the gig economy are millennials, and they currently face serious welfare concerns without immediate action being taken to address them. The newly increased gig economy with poor leadership governance has received the least attention from researchers globally. The main focus of this research is to develop a research model on the relationship between humanistic leadership and organisation commitment through a relevant literature review. The model created within the literature in this research may develop the relationship between humanistic leadership and organisation commitment and can be applied

in future research with a similar variable and context. The following paragraph will discuss the critical aspects of the research, the literature review and conceptual framework.

Literature Review

Humanistic Leadership

Yang et al. (2020) definition of humanistic leadership describes it as mutually reinforcing and acting collaboratively instead of independently. An organisation that values its staff, cares about its mission and is committed to work, play, and social involvement is considered humane. Humanistic leadership strongly emphasises treating each person with respect as an individual, fostering their growth, and creating a sense of community that includes a variety of stakeholders (Mele, 2013). Pirson and Lawrence (2010) developed the concept of humanistic leadership by summarising three interconnected dimensions: human dignity, ethical reflection, and stakeholder engagement. Promoting long-term human well-being is the ultimate objective of humanistic leadership. Additionally, it seeks to increase managerial success by openly debating moral legitimacy to incorporate ethical considerations into managerial decisions. These findings support the need for more humanistic leadership philosophies to implement knowledge management successfully.

Romanowska et al. (2011) found that a humanistic leadership development programme that strongly emphasised psychosocial factors had favourable long-term effects on both leaders' and employees' psychosocial, biological, and behavioural outcomes. Humanistic leadership represents a strategy in which businesses put their workers' welfare and well-being before financial gain. It provides vital information on how humanistic leaders can prioritise the needs of their constituents over those of their shareholders (Keim and Shadnam, 2020). Unreliable and dishonest leaders will wreak havoc on employee relations if they lack a humane touch.

Top management frequently ignores the effects of high turnover, poor communication, conflict, office politics, poor team performance, and failure to meet customer expectations. They treat these problems as incidental and prioritise financial gain over all else. Management will begin looking for a solution when a business cannot be sustained, which is typically too late to prevent. Sorensen et al. (2022) claimed a correlation between high levels of leadership behaviour absence and a higher risk of leaving a job. Subgroup analyses showed a consistent link between the absence of leadership behaviours and leaving the workforce for men and women across all age groups. Employee retention is significantly influenced by leadership. According to Doh et al. (2011), responsible leadership consists of three components. A management plan for employee training, fair and impartial human resource practices, and an ethical and socially responsible stakeholder culture are essential. Ono and Ikegami (2020) hoped that the humanist leadership theory, which emphasises respecting people as whole humans and improving oneself while developing and caring for all stakeholders, is attracting growing academic interest despite being in its infancy.

Humanistic leadership theory serves as the conceptual basis for this study. The concept of humanistic leadership is still in its infancy (Pirson, 2019). As stated by (Bolman & Deal, 1995) thirty years ago, in the context of humanistic leadership theory, a humanistic leader must grant people the freedom they need to realise their full potential and find personal fulfilment. This theory should be promoted and adopted throughout all business and educational sectors. Bordas (2001) claimed that the next generation of leaders must understand that traditional leadership presumptions in higher education must be continually questioned.

Humanistic leadership theories are based on research in social psychology that emphasises democratic and individualistic values and motivations (Cowan, 2007). Academic interest in the theory of humanistic leadership, which emphasises respecting people as whole beings, assisting others in growing while also bettering oneself, and looking out for the interests of all stakeholders, is rising. The humanistic view from a business perspective has been utilised to address issues like the current financial crisis, growing social inequality, the spread of terrorism worldwide, and the effects of climate change (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010). The development develops by teaching people how to relate, interact, and build trustworthy relationships with others (Lamond, 2011).

The Component of Humanistic Leadership

The element of humanistic leadership discussed in this study is taken from Ono and Ikegami's (2020) qualitative research journal, which examines the work of Konosuke Matsushita's first idealist humanistic leader. The conceptual framework outlining the seven mechanism of humanistic leadership is shown in Figure 1 below.
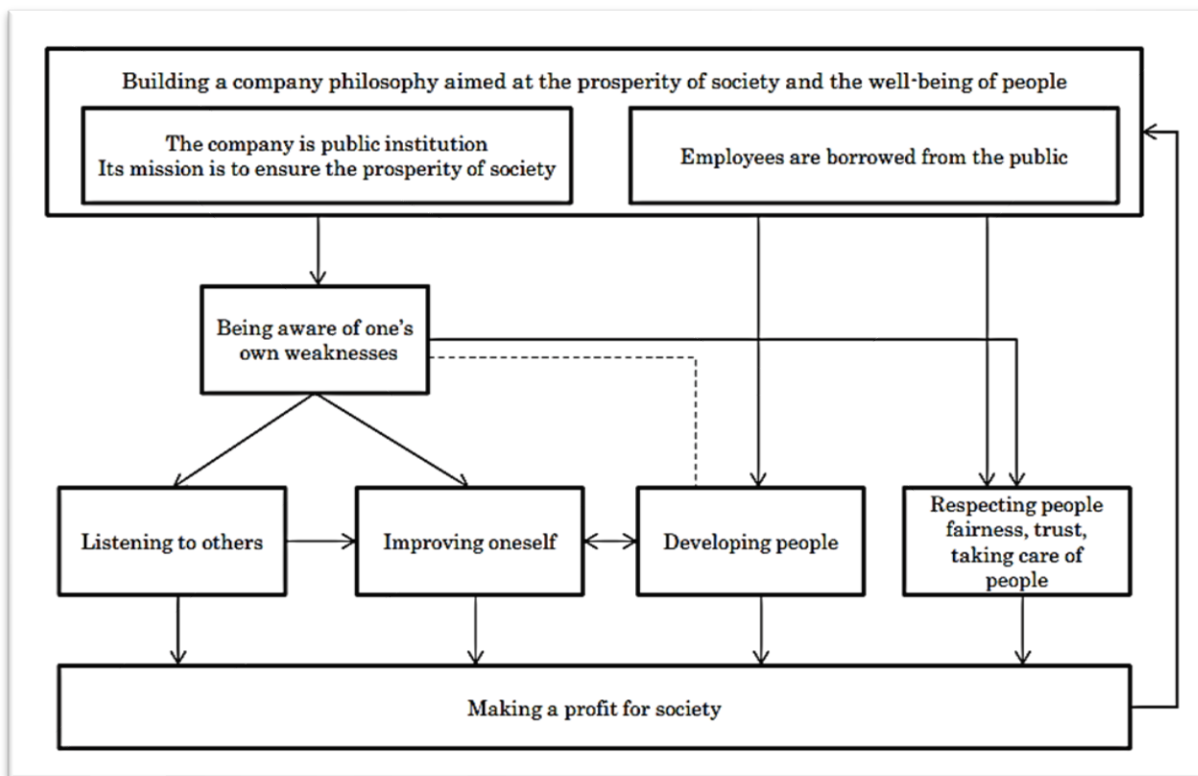

Figure 1: Matsushita Humanistic Leadership Conceptual Model
Source: Ono and Ikegami (2020)

1) **Building A Company Philosophy Aimed at the Prosperity of Society and the Well-Being of People**

   The first step is creating a business philosophy prioritising society's prosperity and employees' well-being. According to earlier researchers, the secret to effective leadership is inspiring others to share the leader's vision and cooperate to achieve a shared goal (Kotter, 1990; Leithwood, 2004; Buckingham, 2005). The established mission statement of a humanistic organisation running a business operation seeks to advance employee well-being while fostering community prosperity.

2) Being Aware of One's Own Weaknesses

Knowing one's limitations and being willing to take responsibility for one's mistakes are two essential traits of humanistic leadership. A humble leader is more likely to improve the current situation for the benefit of himself, his or her followers, and the organisations he leads once he or she can admit their error and swallow their ego. Employees perceive the humble leader's actions as reflecting the leader's true intentions, according to Rigolizzo et al. (2022), which increases their belief that they can and do learn from working in teams. Their study demonstrates that the significant positive direct and indirect effects of leader humility on individual informal learning are partially mediated by leader authenticity.

3) Listening to Others

In order to listen to others or gather wisdom, one must be humble and willing to hear what the stakeholders, including employees, clients, suppliers, and customers, have to say for self-improvement (Ono and Ikegami, 2020). Leaders should maintain humility, develop specific political skills, and enhance employee self-evaluation to motivate staff to act innovatively. These are the advantages of humble leadership, but it ignores any harmful consequences that might prevent a leader from leading effectively, like being perceived as weak and inferior. Customer feedback should not be disregarded, and the next shipment's part delivery quality should be enhanced. The company establishes quality goals, and each department's performance is evaluated monthly. In the monthly meeting, management can discuss how to resolve departmental issues with appropriate validation and preventative measures.

4) Improve Oneself

All employees must continually improve themselves. Employee weaknesses are recognised and managed in contemporary corporate organisations by having an efficient appraisal system that enables mistakes to be turned into learning opportunities. Research done in the banking sector by Fakhimi and Raisy (2013) confirmed that employee satisfaction with performance reviews is seen as a crucial indicator in enhancing the efficiency of this management function. This will lead to improvements in employee motivation, a decrease in their willingness to quit their jobs, an increase in their affective commitment to their jobs, and an improvement in work performance. The practice of performance evaluation is regarded as a crucial element for altering employees' attitudes and behaviours, such as affective commitment (Morrow, 2011).

Studies by Iqbal et al. (2015) also showed that performance evaluation and affective commitment are positively correlated. When implemented, this feedback can make an organisation shine and stand out from the competition Each employee will be required to participate in a face-to-face reflective meeting with their managers, which could help them work more effectively and meet the department's goals. For continuous improvement, weaknesses in the company's operations should be addressed.

5) Developing People

Earlier researchers remind us that developing people or employee development involves motivating staff to pursue higher education despite organisational demands (Jacobs and Washington, 2003). A deeper understanding of the conditions under which employee development programmes are present in organisations, mainly if it benefits both individual employees and organisations. Garnett et al. (2016) also examined significant

organisational change that necessitates senior-level internal work to increase the organisation's capacity for learning and strategically put that learning to use. In businesses that uphold humanistic principles, the learning and development division will be in charge of fulfilling the requirement.

To improve the concern lacking skills of all concerned employees, training managers will make sure that all department heads must annually complete the Training Need Analysis for all their concerned employees. Humanistic leaders will keep developing themselves through tacit and implicit knowledge to solve pressing corporate issues with better decisions occasionally. They encourage those around them to be creative and create the conditions necessary for department growth. An organisation with a strong succession plan may offer its employees chances to develop their potential and experience novel work challenges. When employees are given leadership responsibilities, Cloutier et al. (2015) found that both their relationship with superiors and their sense of loyalty to the business are strengthened. When there is a vacancy in the position, concerned internal employees can be replaced without waiting for suitable recruitment from outside the organisation, which will take some time.

6) **Respecting People**
While modern corporations disregard ethical responsibility, the leader interaction between digital platform organisations and p-hailers is nonexistent. For employees to feel motivated and like their contributions are valued, their superiors must show them appreciation. Burbano (2021) asserts that teaming up with coworkers to donate to charity makes them feel more connected to their employers. Poor engagement will result in unhealthy work ethics and employees who are more likely to make decisions and judgments on their own that occasionally transgress social norms. Engagement suffers from a lack of interaction, and information sharing can result in physical isolation, a loss of respect for the business, and an erosion of organisational identification (Bartel et al., 2012). There is much misconduct on the part of the p-hailers, particularly when breaking traffic laws due to work-related stress. P-hailers are left to work alone without a channel of interaction or communication with their platform manager. According to Burbano and Chiles (2022), sharing corporate values with gig workers will reduce misconduct. Values include social and environmental obligations as well as employee ethics.

The most recent study by Mousa et al. (2022) posited that proactive behaviour incorporated into individual and group job creation increases organisational engagement and career happiness among digital employees. Jelenic (2011) determined that satisfied employees can increase output, responsibility, capacity, and customer satisfaction. Managers should focus closely on effective team engagement if they want interactions within the team to be based on respect. Annual team-building events held by corporations should be commended because they foster employee respect and trust. Humanistic leaders may invest in these programmes with a training facilitator. To ensure that team conflict can be resolved after the proper technique has been trained and the team may understand the source of conflict, which can be avoided by emotional intelligence.

7) Making Profit for Society

Entails finding a balance between social justice and profit, given that the company's goal is to benefit society. Utilising society's resources while running a business without making a profit is unacceptable. If a business does not make a profit, it is not allowed to operate, and the community must be compensated (Ono and Ikegami,2020). Interpretation in a modern cooperation context is employees must be given a fair voluntary separation scheme (VSS) if a company needs to scale down its operations and not terminate them without any compensation. The low-margin, high-volume approach only increased one person's wealth at the expense of others due to price competition. Reasonable profits could lead to a prosperous society.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is one of the essential elements of company success. It acts as employees' emotional ties to their jobs (Zayas et al., 2015). Recent literature from Priyanka (2022) found that managers should support their staff by using strategies to improve employee job satisfaction and quality of life to increase organisational commitment. Wu and Chen (2018) postulated the benefit of it that hotels seek out employees with a solid organisational commitment to the business to maintain or gain new competitive advantages.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) defined commitment as the depth of a relationship between an employee and an organisation. Eslami and Gharakhani (2012) observed that the commitment format aims to explain consistency in attitudes, values, and behaviour.

It involves behavioural choices and implies opposition to potential alternate strategies. Since the early 2000s, much literature has focused on organisation commitment, defined as the level of employees' identification, involvement, and loyalty to the organisation and their commitment to helping it achieve its goals (Caught and Shadur, 2000). It is a mode of existence in which employees are constrained by the actions and beliefs that support their membership in the organisation (Miller and Lee, 2001).

Organisational commitment refers to an employee's emotional connection, identification, and involvement with the organisation. The main component of measuring organisational commitment is identifying how well a person's values and beliefs match those of the organisation (Swailes, 2002). Organisational commitment was emphasised by Miller (2003) as a requirement whereby an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals and wishes to continue being an employee. The willingness of employees to support organisational goals is a defining quality of organisational commitment (Okpara, 2004).
Employees will advance and learn with their current employers when they are confident. As a result, it alludes to an employee's readiness to stick with the team due to interest in and ties to the organisation's goals and values.

Ten years later, it still supports the findings of Raza and Nawaz (2011) that organisational commitment is the bond or attachment people form with their employers. Iqbal (2010) examined the association between age, job tenure, educational attainment, and organisational commitment while considering demographic factors. The analyses showed that while education level negatively correlates with organisational commitment, length of service is significantly correlated. Furthermore, there was no real connection between age and organisational commitment. These results are evaluated concerning conventional employment. The willingness of employees to support organisational goals is a defining quality of organisational

commitment (Okpara, 2004). Employees will advance and learn with their current employers when they are confident.

According to Meyer and Allen's Tri-Dimensional Model of Organizational Commitment, affective, continuance, and normative commitments are used to conceptualise organisational commitment (1997). Along with descriptions of the various organisational commitment development processes, the implications for employee behaviour are also included.

1) **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment indicates how emotionally attached an employee is to their company and views the company's problems as their own (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the business. They also stated as it describes a person's psychological and emotional ties to an organisation. It begins when employees have a favourable opinion of the policies and practices of their employers and grows stronger over time as they continue to see the value in it. Strongly committed employees are more likely to stay with their organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment also has been positively correlated with employees' intentions to remain in a variety of organisations (Meyer et al., 2002).

2) **Continuance Commitment**

The psychological connection between an employee and their employer is the foundation of continuance commitment, which expresses the employee's sense of loss should they leave the company. An employee must be aware of the consequences of the exit fees before committing to staying with the company. Continuance commitment is consistent with the side bet theory because it demonstrates that a person focuses on a purely cognitive cost/benefit analysis of maintaining a relationship and knows the costs of ending it (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuous commitment entails weighing the benefits of remaining against the expenses of leaving a company.

This component supports Becker's side-bet theory (Becker, 1960). Employees gradually make investments in a company; as "sunk costs," these costs tie employees to the business (Becker, 1960). Some examples of these investments are work, effort, job skills, particularly those that are transferable, social ties, benefits, pension plans, and salary. Wallace (1997) stated that it refers to anything significant an employee has invested, including time, effort, and money, that would be lost if the employee left the organisation at a cost to the employee.

It was defined in thirty years between Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) and Carson and Carson (2002) as employees forming relationships with their employers while at work. These wagers, also referred to as side bets or sunken costs, include the time spent working for the company, retirement plans, benefits, pay, social ties and non-transferable job skills. Leaving a company would be too expensive, and they want to protect their investments.

3) **Normative Commitment**

The characteristic of obligation and commitment which is to remain in the specific organisation and support a change initiative as responsibility is referred to as normative commitment (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010). It refers to that an employee committing to and remaining with an organization because of feelings of obligation. Normative

commitment is the final element that clarifies moral obligations, societal norms, and one's duty to the other party in a relationship. Normative commitment is correlated with internalised pressures to act in ways that support organisational goals and interests. It exhibits a sense of obligation to continue working. Employees with high normative commitment think they should stick with the organisations.

Masood et al. (2022) postulated that the internal attitude of employees, which compels them to remain in the workforce due to the demands of the organisation, serves as the foundation of normative commitment, and employees with the personality trait of openness to experience will have low normative commitment. Erdheim et al. (2006) discovered that agreeableness is positively correlated with normative belief. Employees with an openness-to-experience mindset do not value organisational perks, incentives, compensations, and rewards, things that are typically necessary to be valued. As a result, they have little loyalty to the current organisation and have low levels of attachment, which lower the level of normative commitment. A study conducted on 187 medical students and residents by Kumar & Bakhshi (2010) proved normative commitment and openness to experience are having a negative significant relationship.

Methodology

The research aims to construct a research model on the relationship between humanistic leadership and organisation commitment. In contrast to a theoretical paper, a conceptual paper's assertions should be more closely linked to testable hypotheses, providing a link between validation and usefulness (Weick, 1989). Developing the research model, a conceptual framework on the two variables, humanistic leadership and organisation commitment, is defined in the paragraphs below.

Discussion

Relationship between Humanistic Leadership and Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment

There is less research exists on the relationship between humanistic leadership and organisation commitment. Eleftheria and Antonios (2022) postulated that modern societies tend to lose sight of fundamental ethical principles and social skills in the name of prosperity, and an individualistic social outlook is common. Building a company mission around putting people's needs ahead of profit inspires humanistic leaders to treat staff with dignity, trust, and well-being, organisation's commitment can be achieved. Yadav et al. (2022) asserted that attaining organisational goals and sustaining businesses depend on positive employee relations.

Leadership significantly impacts organisational commitment (Dick, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Kim, 2012). It is submitted that respect for one another, which is fostered by humanistic leadership, may result in organisational commitment. In order to accomplish the research objective, the leading model was adapted from Hunsaker and Jeong's (2020) research, in which the independent variable, leadership, had a significant relationship with the dependent variable, organisation commitment. The study relates to engaging employees through spiritual leadership.

It contended that a company's and its leaders' ability to spark young employees' interest in and dedication to their jobs and organisations comes from their ability to satisfy their higher-order humanistic needs. This result is similar to the objective of this research, which states that

improving the p-hailers' commitment requires applying a humanistic leadership approach. Consequently, it is conceivable to assume that:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between humanistic leadership and affective commitment.

H2: There is a significant negative relationship between humanistic leadership and continuance Commitment.

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between humanistic leadership and normative Commitment.

Conclusion

Less research has been done on humanistic leadership governing the welfare of p-hailers in Malaysia and around the world in the context of the gig economy. This research is a few studies that examined how a lack of leadership engagement in the gig economy affects p-hailers' welfare support from their organisation. The research model will help all parties involved, particularly the digital platform organisation, adopt humanistic leadership practises to enhance the situation and foster practical organisational commitment. By incorporating it into the organisation, the welfare of the p-hailers may be improved, allowing leaders and employees to interact and communicate effectively to resolve work-related issues.

The organisation's commitment will also increase as humanistic leadership is effectively governed by the digital platform.

The value of humanistic leadership should not be undervalued because it has already been demonstrated to impact successful traditional organisations significantly. The researchers hope to contribute to this study by championing humanistic leadership as the best way to oversee the welfare of p-hailers in the emerging gig economy. The study can bridge the knowledge gap by examining the role of humanistic leadership in explaining p-hailers commitment. The knowledge gap between humanistic leadership and contemporary digital platform should be further researched. It is unclear which one is dominant in the actual situation because the relationships between humanistic leadership and organisational commitment have not yet been fully elucidated by running the actual respondence feedback. Once these are carried out, the organisation may achieve many things that may help the key stakeholders, the workers, and the community. It might also provide relevant parties with new information for future research and development to invest in artificial leadership.

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