

Assessment Framework for Next–Level Leadership Role Readiness in Retail Middle Management

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Received: 22 September 2021

Revised: 28 January 2022

Accepted 23 February 2022

Abstract

The objective of this study was to propose a next-level-leadership-role-readiness assessment framework for use in retail management. A qualitative-participatory approach was used for the research, with data collected using appreciative-inquiry-based interviews with middle managers in the retail industry (n = 20) and analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The findings identified eight core competencies: strategic implementation, time management, people development, professional proficiency, entrepreneurship, commitment, change management, and innovation. These core competencies were drawn from the content analysis inter-coding and reviewed by the experts to develop a drafted framework for next-level leadership role readiness assessment. The draft framework includes competencies, other factors to be measured, a recommended implementation approach, and an approach for integrating the leadership role readiness assessment into the career development path of managers within the organization. The study focused on retail middle manager level based in Thailand. The results provide practical insights into how organizations can assess leadership readiness in a consistent and standardized way, offering a significant benefit. Further opportunities for research include implementing and testing the drafted framework and extending it to other organizational levels.

Keywords: leadership development, leadership competency, leadership readiness, leadership assessment

Introduction

Leadership development is an essential part of the long-term performance and sustainability of the organization. In the leadership development process, the organization identifies potential organizational leaders and provides them with formal and informal opportunities for learning, development, and growth through leadership experience (Flinn, 2018). Research has shown that investment in leadership development gives the firm more competitive advantage in improving organizational performance than firms that do not use it (Weiss & Molinaro, 2010). Leadership development has also been associated with improved talent attraction and retention, the organizational culture of agility and performance, and better financial performance (Carter, 2015). At the same time, leadership development is a long-term initiative, which can take years to recognize results (Flinn, 2018). Furthermore, leadership development does not have a predefined end goal but is a continual process of