How store managers can empower their teams to engage in constructive deviance: Theory development through a multiple case study

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Ethics statement

None of the data or conceptual advancements presented in this paper were previously presented in another journal. References to our own work will not reveal our identity. Both authors have agreed to the submission of the manuscript in its current form, none of the authors have any interests that might be interpreted as influencing the research. The research and data collection procedures were approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee at Queensland University of Technology (approval no 1300000627).

Statement of originality

None of the work presented in this manuscript has been published or submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere. An earlier draft of the paper has been presented at the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, HICSS 2017, Hilton Waikoloa Village, Hawaii, USA, January 4-7, 2017.

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Abstract

In this paper, we explore how leaders enable constructive deviance in teams they manage. We report on a qualitative field study of two hierarchical layers of store management in 17 supermarket store teams. We focus on the emergence of constructive deviance – better ways of creating value by departing from common ways of working – and how store leaders can enable this behavior. Our inductive analysis from the multiple case data suggests that store management can enable constructive deviance by combining empowering leadership behaviors with adequate levels of contingent reward and monitoring behaviors. These findings allow us to develop new hypotheses about the linkages between constructive deviance, psychological empowerment, and leadership. We detail implications for store management and we describe several future research opportunities on the concept of constructive deviance, its enablement through empowering leadership, and the relationship between organizational norms and constructive deviance.

Keywords: constructive deviance; store management; qualitative research; case study; psychological empowerment; empowering leadership

Introduction

> *A remote Australian fishing port. Hundreds of miles to the nearest large city. Every four to six weeks, fishing crews raid the local supermarket, purchasing the entire stock of meat, sugar, flour and toilet paper, leaving next to no products available for other customers until new stock arrives. The store manager and his team have no way of anticipating. Although they know that the bulk buys will occur, the software systems that help them maintain stock levels and organize replenishments work on the basis of national and/or seasonal averages without considering local and short-term contingencies or input. For weeks, shelves of preferred products pile up and overflow into the aisles, until the point of the raid where they sell all at once and reset the cycle.*
>
> *Somewhere, in another part of the country, another store management team has found a solution. A solution that is not endorsed by the head office, not implemented in the firm's software, and violates the regular routines, but this tends not to matter given that the head office will not likely find out about it… (to be continued)*

For retailers to remain competitive, it is imperative they maintain high standards of service quality and good relations between customers and retail employees [46, 61]. To achieve these aims, retail organizations employ systematic and reliable routines that guide and restrict employees in their work in the pursuit of predictable and consistent value creation [21, 36, 64]. Normally, these routines work well because through business processes, technology, regulations and other norm it provides systematized, repeatable routines through policy schemas and norms that guide individuals in their work. However, when markets or local contexts change, or when organization-wide technologies, tools, schemes or routines are ill-equipped to deal with local conditions, the routines seize to provide an optimal way to create value. As described in the story above, such changes can in turn prompt the employees in stores to make changes to their ways of working. These 'new ways of doing things' are often referred to as deviance [7, 34, 55, 79]:

means of accomplishing work that are alternative to an existing routine. These phenomena have so mostly been studied under labels such as exceptions [84], drift [52], violations [86] or loss of control [8]. Yet, irrespective of the chosen label, the behaviors have always been denoted as negative: exceptions must be brought back into the regular routine, drift must be halted, violations prevented, loss of control avoided [50, 79].

This unidimensional treatment of deviance in the literature is problematic because it is unnecessarily restrictive and at odds with knowledge from referent disciplines. For example, in sociology and organizational science *constructive deviance* has been studied as behavior that deviates from the norms of a reference group – and is successful because of it [44, 54, 55, 83, 87]. Consider how our story continues:

> *(continued from above) Facing similar challenges, another store management team had found a way to temporarily increase ordered volumes with minimal impact on averages. Because the layout of stores sometimes has to change, employees are allowed to change parameters in their replenishment software system, which reflect the shelf space allocated to a certain product, and the minimum volume of that product required to make the shelf look presentable. When anticipating a temporary increase in demand for certain products, the team temporarily changes these parameters to indicate that the shelf space and 'minimum presentable level' in their stores have dramatically increased. Next, when they scan the available stock using RF guns, the technology concludes that the available stock is well below that minimum level and low given the available shelf space, leading it to dramatically increase the automatically ordered volume. As soon as demand is expected to normalize again, the parameters are adjusted back to their initial level and business continues as usual—without empty shelves or overstock.*

Our story illustrates that, sometimes, employees who *do not* abide by the routines and 'cheat' their implemented rules and workings can improve local performance. Constructive deviants

locally find an optimal balance between maintaining stable work routines and changing them when conditions change [30, 79]. Such deviance is often triggered by similar conditions that give rise to workarounds [1]: new or local information comes to the attention of front-line employees and either does not make its way up to the decision-makers, elicits a response of the routine that is too slow, cumbersome or otherwise inadequate (as in our example). Constructive deviance locally solves this discrepancy and provides endogenous innovation potential through "learning from the best" [26, 63].

A common assumption of most constructive deviance studies is that constructive deviance emerges spontaneously, with elements of the environment, the person or the interaction between both making this emergence more or less likely. However, some argue that constructive deviance can also actively be stimulated by leaders. Pascale and Sternin [63], for example, propose that leaders should "fan the flames" of people that already constructively deviate. Other scholars suggests that there are certain leadership styles that managers could employ to actively stimulate constructively deviant behavior; for example, transformational leadership [77, 83], information sharing and transparency, articulating inspiring visions and stimulating employee latitude [45], and instilling a sense of psychological empowerment in employees [72].

Whether or not these proposals have merit, remains unclear. While an increasing number of accounts testify to the potential of constructive deviance for organizational learning and change [63, 70] empirical studies that explore the determinants and effects of constructive deviance remain scarce [55, 83]. The research that does exist largely explored individual-level factors that contribute to constructive deviance [e.g., 26, 37, 76], without examining how leaders in organizational settings may stipulate good behavior whilst safeguarding against bad behaviors. However, for organizations the perspective of managerial stimulation is very relevant [23, 35], as

company control over deviance can be exercised through leadership roles that guide and/or control employee behavior.

Whether or not constructive deviance can indeed be empowered by leaders, however, remains to be shown empirically. We take this next step: we study constructive deviance under the regime of different leadership behaviors. Our research aim is to find out which leadership behaviors do indeed stimulate the emergence of constructive deviance, and how. Our research question is:

Can leaders facilitate the emergence of constructive deviance in their teams?

Because of the exploratory nature of this question and the wealth of possibly important leadership behaviors, we conducted a qualitative, inductive field study of supermarket stores at a large Australian retailer. In this paper, we report on the findings from this study. We first provide a brief overview of previous research on constructive deviance and its determinants, focusing our attention on leadership. Next, we describe the design and execution of our study and then propose an explanatory multi-level model of constructive deviance, which suggests that constructive deviance can be stimulated by a well-balanced mix of transactional and empowering leadership. We close by discussing implications from our work to the study of constructive deviance and leadership in retail.

Background

Constructive deviance as behavioral departures with beneficial consequences

Workplace deviance [7] describes voluntary behavior that deviates from organizational norms. Organizational norms are informal or formal rules that regulate and regularize behavior [20].

They can be formally described in policies, rules, roles, or procedures, but often are not explicitly documented or openly discussed.

Traditionally, departures from expected behaviors have been labeled as "bad". Deviance has been seen as a threat to the organizational functioning [7, 66]; yet, a growing body of research on various forms of "non-normal" conduct such as whistleblowing [77], voice [94], and extra-role behavior [56] shows that deviance can also be beneficial to an organization and its members. Deviance can, for example, provide a powerful basis for organizational learning and change [63] and for finding innovative ways for solving challenges [26]. Deviant behavior is defined as "constructive" or "positive" when (workplace) behavior violates organizational norms with the intent of improving the well-being of an organization, its members or both [26, 83, 88].

Constructive deviance shares definitional similarities with other organizational behaviors including its counterpoint – destructive or dysfunctional deviance – and "positive" behaviors such as creative performance, pro-social and proactive behaviors, or the exercise of voice and whistleblowing. To explain constructive deviance, we differentiate the concept alongside the three central assumptions in the definition above [26, 83, 88]:

1. *Behavioral deviation*—departures from formal or informal norms. Norms are rules that regulate and regularize behavior [20]. They might be social rules, tacit and implicitly shared between the agents that are embedded in a work routine; 'the way we do things around here'. More often than not, however, they are captured in formal rules and instructions embedded in processes, procedures, software and IT artifacts that provide an expected, reliable, repeatable and systematic routine for value creation.

2. *Constructive outcomes* – the enactment of behavior that achieves benefits to the reference group. This is an important distinction to negative deviance or irrelevant deviance: only deviant behavior that *actually* leads to beneficial outcomes, i.e., that provides an improved way of value creation, is constructively deviant behavior [54]. The notion of beneficial outcomes can accommodate a wide array of outputs (e.g., employee well-being, constructive environmental effects, financial performance, community engagement and so forth).
3. *Conformance to hypernorms*—behavioral deviations that do not harm groups outside the reference group or society as a whole [76, 88]. This distinguishes constructive deviance from other deviant behaviors such as cheating or stealing that provide a benefit to some member (typically the individual) whilst harming others.

In this view, we note that constructive deviance shares some characteristics with at least three types of related behaviors:

- other forms of *noncompliant behaviors,* such as productive non- or counter-conformity [31], pro-social rule breaking [57] or violation of dysfunctional directives [27],
- other forms of *extra-role behaviors,* such as organizational citizenship behavior [60], role innovation [89], or proactive behaviors [62], and
- other forms of *honorable behaviors*, such as helping and voice [85], whistleblowing [59], issue selling [17] or personal initiative [24].

The key differentiation between constructive deviance and these related concepts lies not in the manifestation of any one of the three fundamental characteristics of constructive deviance discussed above, but rather in the simultaneous manifestation of all three: only behavior that is at

the same time (1) deviant, (2) producing beneficial outcomes, and (3) conformant with hypernorms describes constructive deviance [26, 54, 55].

Constructive deviance, psychological empowerment, and leadership

Many have theorized about what stimulates the emergence of constructive deviance in organizations. To organize our review of this literature, we use a framework that Cordery and Parker [14] introduced to summarize the research on the psychological impact of work design. Situational antecedents include task, relational and contextual characteristics. Psychological states or processes are changeable individual characteristics such as one's motivation or engagement. Personal antecedents are more stable factors related to personality and personal attitudes that are often found to mediate the effect of the situation on psychological states and behavior. Table 1 shows our interpretation of the literature on constructive deviance on basis of this framework. In Table 1, * signifies that empirical support was found for the suggested effect; antecedents printed in **bold** refer to dimensions of psychological empowerment; and antecedents printed in *italic* refer to leadership behaviors or situational antecedents that have been linked to psychological empowerment [69, 73].

The main theme we highlight bold in Table 1 are the many referrals made in the literature to employee latitude, intrinsic motivation and psychological empowerment [72]. **Psychological empowerment** is a motivational concept that is of central importance in mediating the effects of the work context on employee behavior and attitudes [69, 73]. It refers to a set of psychological states that are necessary for individuals to feel in control over their work, characterized by perceiving work as meaningful, believing in one's own competence with regards to the work, and having a sense of self-determination (i.e., intrinsic motivation) and control over work outcomes

[72]. Because of that sense of meaning and self-determination, it has been hypothesized that empowered people will want to do their jobs as good as possible, and will deviate from rules or norms if that will allow them to execute their work in the best possible way [55, 83].

Psychological empowerment, in turn, has been associated with a range of leadership styles and behaviors [69, 73]; we highlight these *italic* in Table 1. For example, an influential study on constructive deviance [83] proposed that employee empowerment leads to constructive deviance, and that empowerment can be stimulated by transformational leadership behaviors [6, 33]: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. These behaviors purportedly demonstrate to employees that honesty poses no risk, which creates psychological safety and strength that allows employees to engage in constructive deviance.

Other leadership behaviors that have been related to psychological empowerment of individuals are **empowering leadership behaviors** [4, 15, 22, 68, 69, 93]. This line of research has shown that the 'fortification' of the individual [83, p. 1234], which provides employees with a sense of psychological empowerment, can be achieved through leadership behaviors such as participative decision making, showing concern/interacting with the team, leading by example, informing, and coaching [4]. These leadership behaviors aim to stimulate empowerment more clearly than transactional leadership behaviors [22] and focus on sharing leadership [91] rather than creating dependence by followers. When people are invited to provide input in decision-making, their perceived impact on work outcomes and sense of self-determination and motivation will increase [11, 69]. Furthermore, when participative decision-making is combined with leadership behaviors that teach and show how to achieve goals and execute tasks, i.e. coaching and leading by example "how to get the job done", employees will be able to build competence and self-determination.

Finally, when employees are frequently informed about company goals and decisions and how their work contributes to these organizational goals; it will make them understand why their job is important [93] and thus perceive their jobs to be more meaningful

In summary, what these findings indicate is a need to explore how exactly leadership behaviors relate to the emergence of constructive deviance, because all signs suggest this relationship is far from trivial: first, some leadership behaviors may actually *reduce* the emergence of constructive deviance. One good example are behaviors subsumed under transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is generally perceived as a tool to influence compliance; it is characterized by an exchange of leader rewards for productive employee behavior, and sanctions for undesirable behavior [10]. This is important, also, in the context of constructive deviance: because constructive deviance encapsulates behavioral departures from norms, but not all behavioral departures are constructive, it requires the need to maintain control and mitigate risks related to potentially negative forms of deviance. Negative forms of deviance have been found to negatively affect coworkers [67], raise security concerns due to fraud, unauthorized disclosure, theft and other abuses [86], lower financial performance of organizations [13], or even negatively implicate society at large [3], so it is important to keep them in check.

Second, the rigidity that comes with effectuating transactional leadership has many advantages—it should not be abandoned. Well-designed and managed routines provide cognitive efficiency and entail self-reflective and other-reflective learning behavior [51]. They both enable and constrain, provide security and stability [28]. Thus, it is important for organizations to maintain a healthy balance between endogenous change on the one hand and routinization and control through well-formalized and executed routines on the other hand. Leaders embody and fortify this aspect: they are responsible for making sure that the designed routines are enacted and

followed; they need to maintaining a grip on critical rules and norms [92]. At the same time, leaders also fortify and role model the execution of routines through leading by example [2]. Thus, they are key to the paradoxical interplay between flexibility and control that is key to an innovative culture [38], they play a central role in allowing or preventing routine executions that differ from the prescribed processes, and they are key influencers of whether or not any routine variations are assimilated [21, 63, 83].

In sum, leaders may not only *empower* constructive deviance by providing a work context characterized by employee latitude, autonomy and employees' sense of psychological empowerment [72]. They also enage in behaviors that may *reduce* the emergence of constructive deviance: they often focus on stimulating compliance amongst employees and reprimand any deviations from the rules and norms, which is counter indicative to the idea of constructive deviance about not doing what is typically considered 'right' in order to achieve the best result. In this sense, these behaviors describe leadership as a systemic tool to influence compliance, characterized by an exchange of leader rewards for productive employee behavior, and sanctions for undesirable behavior [10]. These arguments go to show that leadership has a central yet dialectic role in explaining constructive deviance at work. We unpack this dialectic empirically.

Table 1. Selection of documented determinants of constructive deviance

Antecedents		Reference	Methods used to derive result
Situational antecedents	*access to information*, access to resources*	[26]	Quantitative (survey)
	employee latitude	[71]	Conceptual
	transformational leadership, supervisor support and openness, non-controlling supervision, leader-member exchange, organizational culture and climate, *organizational support*, *procedural justice*, group culture and norms, *co-worker support*	[83]	Literature review
	collective leadership, *information sharing and transparency*, *focus on integrity and trust*, *articulating an aspiring vision*, cultural change, *stimulating meaning*	[45]	Qualitative
	network centrality*, experience of the board of directors*	[87]	Quantitative
Psychological states or processes	**psychological empowerment***	[55, 75, 83]	Conceptual and qualitative
	intrinsic motivation, meaning, personal efficacy	[76]	Conceptual
	intrinsic motivation, felt obligation, attachment to group, positive job attitudes	[83]	Literature review
	passionate commitment to social or moral purpose	[71]	Conceptual
	organizational trust, perceived organizational support**	[44]	Quantitative (survey)
Personal antecedents	workaholism*	[27]	Quantitative (survey)
	machiavellianism*, role breath self-efficacy*	[26]	Quantitative (survey)
	holistic approach to resource use, better risk management	[71]	Conceptual
	courage, other-focus	[76]	Conceptual
	self-worth, efficacy of action, extraversion, proactive personality, innovative cognitive style	[83]	Literature review
	facilitative communication*, active communication*, technical information-giving* , tailored information-giving*, solicited information-giving*, giving elaborate information*, giving unsolicited information*, asking questions*, use of communication aids, motivation, self-efficacy, role expectations, knowledge and skill	[40]	Qualitative
	being forgiving, being grateful, being energizing, being savoring, being over-performing	[37]	Conceptual
	service orientation	[55]	Qualitative

Method

Setting

Because knowledge about the determinants of constructive deviance is largely absent [83] and our review of the potential influence of different leadership regimes on constructive deviance suggests the relationship to be dialectic if not oscillating, our strategy was to follow an inductive theory-building research approach [18, 19, 49], drawing on qualitative data from multiple cases [58]. Our goal was to explore whether and how store leaders could enable constructive deviance in their teams whilst safeguarding against non-compliant behaviors. Answering our research question therefore demanded deep immersion in the research context to closely follow actual performances of store teams and their leaders [90].

To obtain such data, we studied multiple cases through a large qualitative field study of supermarket stores at a large international retail organization headquartered in Australia. The organization is one of the 25 largest retailers globally and employs over 180,000 staff, amongst others in a network of—at the time—952 grocery stores. Our chosen units of analysis were these stores. Stores vary in size, but typically include a range of trading departments such as seafood, deli, long life and bakery. Each of these departments is led by one member of the store management team, which in turn is headed by the store manager. The focus of our study was on this management team and their leader, and the routines employed to operate their stores.

Supermarket stores are an excellent setting to study constructive deviance. Supermarkets of the same retail chain operate according to the same routines: all supermarkets produce the same products and services to the same type of customers. The in-store work processes are highly standardized across stores, formalized through regulations and policies, and supported by

standardized technology, including, for example, point of sale systems, barcode scanners, ordering and reporting software. Information provided to employees in one store matches that of another because information flows are hierarchical (from headquarters to regions to stores). Employees across the stores do not vary much either: each store has the same roles in the same departments.

Whilst the work environments are designed identical for each store, at the same time, supermarkets also constitute somewhat independent, self-regulatory entities, exposed to varying extraneous variables (e.g., store size, location, local customer base and competition) and exhibiting varying performance. This combination of high standardization with high variation in context and outcomes makes for a setting where constructive deviance is both likely to emerge and likely to have a noticeable impact on performance.

Within this setting, we operationalized constructive deviance as the difference between the ostensive and the performative aspect of supermarket routines [21], i.e., as the difference between the supermarket stores' *enacted* routines compared how the routines were *meant to be carried out* across all stores of the organization, and which contributed in some constructive way to organizational performance without negatively affecting the community or society as a whole (i.e. conforms to hypernorms) [54]. The latter meant that, for example, violations of food security regulations were not considered constructive deviance regardless of, say, any possibly financial benefits to the organization.

Design

We used a multiple comparative embedded case study with a conversion mixed methods design [80] (Figure 1): we gathered qualitative data through observations, interviews, imagery and field

notes from case visits but analyzed the data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This entailed converting some of the qualitative data into quantitative data. This was important because we needed to relate qualitative data on the 'behavioral departure' aspect of constructive deviance to quantitative performance data on the 'beneficial outcome' aspect. We explain key research design choices in what follows.

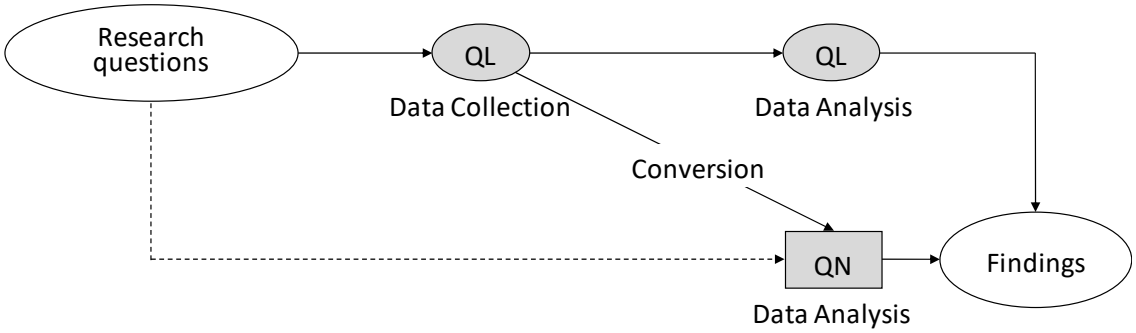

Figure 1. Detailed study design; using the notation of [80] (QL = qualitative, QN = quantitative)

Case Selection

We purposively sampled stores in which we estimated the chance of observing constructive deviance to be highest: stores that perform exceptionally well in comparison to the reference group (other units of the same type) for no obvious external reason (e.g., location). We then selected stores that served as counter-examples, i.e., stores with similar characteristics that performed at average, expected levels.

We defined performance based on measures used by the case organization to evaluate the performance of their stores: longitudinal data comprising 25 performance metrics categorized into five dimensions: customers (e.g. Net-Promotor Score, basket size), operations (e.g. shrinkage), investors (e.g. sales, wages to sales), people (e.g. turnover, engagement), and

community and environment (e.g. fundraising, safety). This balanced set of measures included input measures (e.g. wages) as well as output measures (e.g. sales).

We first explored how external factors (e.g., surface space, location, customer base) influence performance. We excluded stores that had been opened or refurbished within the previous five years (n = 349 out of 952) to focus on established, 'normal' stores. We also controlled the performance data for retail surface space and both local and seasonal product variations. We aggregated the monthly scores to a single score for the financial year 2013 and used percentiles rather than raw scores. On the basis of these measures, we selected a sampling frame of 72 out of 603 stores, which consisted of 30 stores that scored at or above the 98th percentile (pc.98) on one of the five performance dimensions and between pc.25 and pc.75 on all other dimensions (n = 6 for each of the five dimensions), 30 stores that scored below pc.02 on one of the five performance dimensions and between pc.25 and pc.75 on all other dimensions (n = 6 for each dimension), six stores that scored highest on all five dimensions combined, and six stores that scored lowest on all five dimensions.

This approach allowed us to link behavioral differences between stores to specific differences in performance across the five dimensions. Figure 2 illustrates different combinations of metrics that—when taking into account the five performance dimensions—sum up to 12 possible performance profiles. From this sampling frame, we selected 17 for in-depth case study, based on contextual comparability (e.g. demographics of local customer population, location), equal geographical spread across Australian states, accessibility (e.g., stores located in the Australian outback were excluded for logistical reasons), and their variance in the performance profiles.

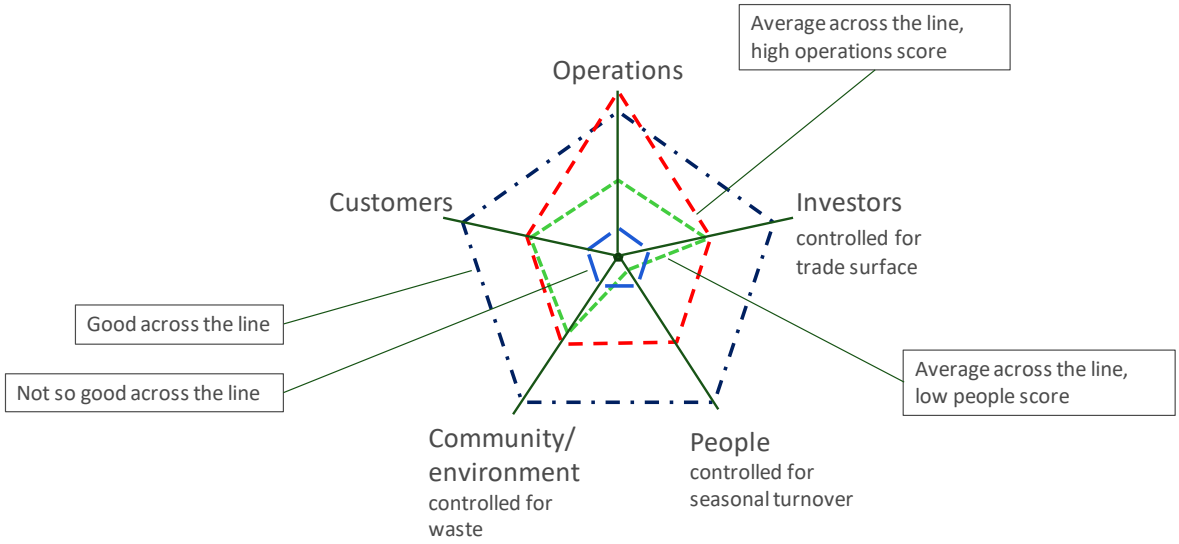

Figure 2. Sampling approach based on store performance metrics used by the case organization.

Data Collection

We designed our data collection as double blind case studies of both 'non-normal' and 'normal' stores: at the time of performing each case study, we were not aware of the performance profile of the case, and study participants were not aware of the focus on deviant behavior or the importance of the store performance.

Data collection had two foci: (1) the identification of occurrences of constructive deviance and (2) potentially enabling antecedent factors that could explain the emergence and assimilation of constructive deviance and/or the observed performance differences. To achieve (1), it was important to first understand rules and norms; these constituted the prime focus of initial observations and interviews. Then, whenever an instance of deviance from these rules and norms was observed or reported, we enquired in greater detail about related rules, processes, supervisory directions and the 'usual way of doing things', and probed whether other teams acted in the same way (high levels of rotation between stores meant that many team members had a

basis for making these comparisons). These questions were asked in the store where the deviant behavior was observed, in all following cases, in one-on-one discussions with relevant support staff and management in the head office (e.g., retail managers, retail specialists, HR managers, supply chain managers) and during a validation workshop with eight retail-related managers from the head office towards the end of the study.

To achieve (2), we focused on leadership behaviors that may have facilitated the emergence of these deviant behaviors, their continuation, or their adoption into formal routines at the store. Observations were executed as naively as possible; however, to differentiate forms of leadership behavior (e.g. transactional, transformational, empowering), we used a hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviors [92] as a sensitizing device. The taxonomy includes 15 behaviors grouped into four categories: task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented and external leadership behaviors.

Each case study was executed jointly by two researchers and conducted according to the same procedure. First, we entered the store anonymously as ‘customers’ to grasp the general atmosphere (for about 10 minutes). We were at that point blind to the performance profile of the store. Next, we introduced ourselves to the staff and explained the purpose of the visit and ethical concerns. Store employees and management were also kept blind to the performance profile and the importance of the performance dimensions; our cover story referred to an interest in operational and behavioral differences between stores and the influence of the manager on those differences. Next, we observed on-the-job behaviors, listened to conversations, attended meetings, asked questions about a variety of topics and interviewed store management (referred to as ‘leaders’ from here onwards), and available department managers and lower-level staff members (referred to as ‘team members’ or ‘teams’) for approximately two hours. We then

withdrew and predicted the data profile based on the interviews and observations. After checking the correctness of our estimates against the available performance data, and making sense of our observations based on data collected, we went back into the store to further increase our understanding through additional observations and interviews, and to document some of the observed differences in lay-out of meeting rooms and communication blackboards (up to three more hours). All interviews and observations were captured in detailed research notes by both researchers, which were aggregated and completed on the same day of each case study.

Data Analysis

The collected data consisted of over 300 pages of notes and over 70 pictures of in-store communication posters, store layouts and other elements. We analyzed the collected data in two ways. One, we searched the data for indications of behaviors that deviated from the organizational norms and achieved constructive outcomes in terms of value creation. Two, we examined our data for indications of plausible enablers of this behavior and possible linkages to the way supermarket store manager lead their staff.

We proceeded in two main steps. First, we coded analyzed all data qualitatively: codes were inductively derived from the data [48] according to relevant guidelines on open coding [81]. The goal of this grounded coding was two-fold. First, it served as a systematic way to gather stories, group these stories into trends, understand relations between observed variables and trends, separate out extraneous from independent factors, and in general to understand behavior in its context. An important part of this analysis also constituted the solidification of our understanding of norms by comparing procedures as executed by different teams to all the data gathered on the related ‘typical’ processes, rules and norms. Second, it served to create a coding tree that formed

the basis for the quantitative analysis of the data. The coding tree consisted of 117 constructed open codes [78] that each described detailed behaviors *in context* (e.g., providing on-the-job training, managing by numbers, having autonomy in recruitment, store surroundings), which, through constant comparison, were grouped into 13 categories (e.g., leadership behavior, wage management, community & customer environment, and practical empowerment). Appendix 1 shows the coding tree.

Second, we examined all data quantitatively for intensity axial coding [9]: all data was re-assessed in light of the coding tree and converted into quantitative data by allocating a score between 1 and 5 to each code for each of the cases. This score represented the intensity with which a certain code had presented in a particular case setting data within the data available to us (observations, interviews, notes, imagery and documentation). For example on the code "leading by example", we would score a case as "1", if the leader was not observed to be leading by example during our visits and if the team members explicitly reported to never observe this behavior in their leader either. We scored a case as "5" only allocated when we ourselves observed strong levels of the behavior. If no evidence was available in the data, no score was allocated. This situation occurred, for example, when during our observations of the department meetings no noticeable form of a particular leadership was on display (e.g., we did not witness the store manager enforcing certain behaviors through the promise of a certain reward), and when our interviews and other documentations did not present evidence substantive enough to judge the case as high or low, either. In these situations, we opted not to score the particular case because we felt this was a more valid representation than imputing a likely score for that case. The data conversion matrix is given in Appendix 2.

To analyze this data we then combined the matrix in Appendix 2 with the store-level performance data we received from the case organization. We correlated the scores for all codes (excluding the ones where less than five scores were available) with the performance data. Only the 10% codes with the highest correlation to each of the performance dimensions and the 10% codes with the lowest correlation to each of the performance dimensions were retained. Because our store selection was based on these performance dimensions and because constructive deviance was also observed much more frequently in highly performing stores, this filtering allowed us to extract only those behaviors and contextual elements that likely had strong effects on the emergence of constructive deviance—and good performance overall.

This combined qualitative-quantitative analysis had two advantages: first, to mitigate several potential biases during data gathering and coding, such as confirmation bias in favor of implicit personal theories, attribution bias of performance differences to behaviors or behaviors to leadership, halo effects caused by the atmosphere in case contexts or initial impressions; and second, to arrive at an integrative and validated interpretation of codes.

To evaluate our data analysis, we performed two validity checks: first, we ran a workshop with eight managers responsible for store operations, plus head office representatives for HR and national store management. The purpose of this workshop was to corroborate and refine our understanding of norms and what constitutes deviations thereof, test the content validity of our open codes, evaluate whether the categories accurately grouped the codes, and assess the validity of our interpretation of the relations between different codes. Second, we cross-referenced the quantitatively filtered codes with their rich, contextualized descriptions in our qualitative data to evaluate whether the statistical correlations “made sense” in context.

Findings

Constructive deviance in the supermarket stores

Across the stores we studied, we identified twelve behaviors that fit our definition of constructive deviance. Table 2 summarizes these behaviors in terms of (1) the relevant "norm" that describes the 'expected' or 'designed' behavior, (2) the behavioral departure that determines the 'deviance', and (3) the relevant 'beneficial outcome' they created for the store settings in which they occurred.

As the findings in Table 2 illustrate, most constructive deviance constituted departures from *informal* norms; few constituted the breaking of formalized, implemented rules. This makes the deviant behaviors subtler, but not less powerful. To illustrate, consider three examples from Table 2. The first example concerns behavior no. 6: 'constructive deviants' would make sure that the funding they were allowed to spend on wages and other expenses, and the targets they were required to achieve, would accurately reflect local and current conditions. The norm for 'budget allocation' was that teams in supermarkets would accept allocated spending budgets and targets without complaints, even when deemed inappropriate or unfeasible; as interviewees put it: "suck it up", "budget's budget". Some of the constructive deviant leaders, however, would make sure the budgets and targets were adjusted when required by engaging in negotiation with higher level leaders. For instance, a new competitive supermarket had just opened up near one of our case supermarkets, leading the store to perform under target, which in turn affected available wage budgets. This meant that staff had to work harder to get their work done, while being rewarded less (because they did not meet their targets). Instead of "sucking it up", they informed the higher hierarchy and engaged in negotiations to have their targets and budgets adjusted.

Table 2. Manifestations of constructive deviance in the supermarket stores.

Occurrence of constructive deviance	Relevant norm	Behavioral departure	Beneficial outcomes
1. Calling in help from the national support office for promotional items that were allocated to the store and did not fit the layout, local customer profile or local season.	The dominant norm was to put the items on display as required, to discount them, and to record them as 'shrinkage' (i.e., waste or stolen goods) if they did not sell.	Constructive deviants would neither display promotional items nor record them as shrinkage.	Contacting the head office meant that negative impacts (e.g., waste or shrinkage, opportunity cost of shelf space) were reduced and head office maintained reliable information on performance.
2. *Not* providing immediate discounts for these same problematic promotional items.	The dominant norm was providing immediate discounts.	Constructive deviants would call in for help or redistribute to neighboring stores.	Immediate discounts mean immediately reduced opportunity for revenue; finding alternative strategies often minimized loss
3. Organizing extra fundraising activities on top of the ones that are mandatory.	The dominant norm was to only organize the formally expected fundraising activities to "just make their target."	Constructive deviants would organize fundraising and other charitable activities as they saw fit.	Increased community engagement and staff coherence; increased revenue for worthy causes.
4. Turning mandatory or other fundraising activities into fun events.	The dominant norm was to execute mandated extra-ordinary events as told without extra effort – at the required level of engagement.	Constructive deviants would dress up, play appropriate music, or add a few extras (e.g., make-up artists, balloons).	Increased community engagement and staff coherence; increased revenue from events.
5. Pursuing budget goals on the longer term rather than on a day-to-day basis.	The dominant norm was to meet the budget every week and every month.	Constructive deviants would realize that some weeks are better than others, or that some require more staff (i.e., higher-than-budgeted costs) and they pursued budget alignment in the long run, allowing for short-term budget violations.	More balanced resource allocations and longer term planning, leading to reduced depletion of human resources and better performance in the long run.
6. Negotiating about the budget with the area manager.	The dominant norm was not to argue about the budget ("budget's budget"). If budgetary goals appeared untenable or the environment changed (e.g., new store opening nearby), most leaders would 'bite the bullet' and continue striving towards set budgets.	Constructive deviants would attempt to renegotiate their budgets with higher hierarchy to re-align with external or internal changes.	More accurate resource allocations and targets, leading to reduced depletion of human resources and better performance in the long run.

Occurrence of constructive deviance	Relevant norm	Behavioral departure	Beneficial outcomes
7. Performing very frequent scans of items that are out of stock.	The dominant norm was to do gap scans at a less-than-daily frequency; with many stores maintaining weekly routines (e.g., gap scans on Wednesdays). This creates delays in restocking shelves.	Constructive deviants would perform daily scans.	Better control of stock on hand, reduced waste and shrinkage, better information that enters the relevant information system.
8. Consistently scanning incoming stock.	The dominant norm was to perform incoming stock scans only when time and staffing levels allowed for it, which in most stores lead to irregular scans of incoming stock.	Constructive deviants would scan all stock entering the store (i.e., scan it every day).	Better control of stock on hand, reduced waste and shrinkage, better information that enters the relevant information system.
9. Performing very frequent counts of the items that are still in stock (by scanning them).	The dominant norm was not to count the stock on hand daily; instead to focus on out-of-stock items.	Constructive deviants would keep track of stock levels and thereby allow for more proactive replenishment.	Better control of stock on hand, reduced waste and shrinkage, better information that enters the relevant information system.
10. Performing very frequent counts of items that are in stock but not on the shelf (by scanning them).	The dominant norm was to maintain visual scans of stock in the back rooms, but not to systematically scan that stock into the systems.	Constructive deviants would perform very frequent scans and record the data in the systems.	Better control of stock on hand, reduced waste and shrinkage, better information that enters the relevant information system.
11. Frequently checking compliance with food safety and cleanliness in fresh food departments.	The dominant norm was to perform these checks exactly as per regulations.	Constructive deviants would make health and safety a critical point of attention that they would consciously follow up multiple times a day.	Less accidents and (food) safety violations, leading to higher levels of employee and customer well-being.
12. Frequently allowing customers to trial products and/or giving them gift vouchers.	The dominant norm was to offer product trials and hand out low-value gift vouchers very infrequently.	Constructive deviants would trial products and hand out vouchers on a regular, frequent basis.	Increased customer satisfaction, leading to better performance.

This first example illustrates constructive deviance in **the way information was used** in day-to-day routines. The regular provision of information regarding processes and activities reflected an inaccurate understanding of local circumstances, thereby leading to a mismatch of required versus available resourcing. The constructive behavioral departure concerned the updating of the information in the store's computer system such that the local circumstances were more appropriately reflected, thereby restoring a balance that allowed local value creation to resume in a more optimal way (i.e., without depleting human resources).

Our second example concerns behavior no. 4. It describes constructive deviance in **the way participants were involved** in the day-to-day routines: In some stores, teams would turn mandatory fundraising activities into fun events ("fun raising events"). The norm was merely executing prescribed activities with the minimum required level of engagement (e.g., selling raffle tickets or fundraising-related items, or alerting customers of contribution opportunities at the point-of-sale). In contrast, observed constructively deviant behaviors consisted of the whole team dressing up in a commonly agreed theme, setting up face paint stations to turn kids' faces into animals, handing out balloons, actively going out into the community to raise funds, making pastries or cooking other foods regularly to raise more funds, and so forth.

In this example, the behavioral departure may seem innocuous, but the effects were substantial. Noticeable value-add outcomes included customers and children being visibly delighted on the day, staying longer, displaying higher levels of store and event return visits, and building stronger cohesion between store and local community. Also, the cohesion of the team and its relevant financial performance (amount of funding raised) improved.

Our third example concerns behavior no. 7. It illustrates constructive deviance in **the way technology was used** in day-to-day routines. The dominant norm was to maintain awareness of stock in the back rooms 'by keeping an eye on it' and scanning it with RF scanner guns about once or a few times a week at most. The result of this was that the algorithms that calculate orders based on data entered into the system was not as accurate as possible, leading to both more overstock and stock on hand, which is a cost to the business in itself and leads to more waste further down the chain. Consistently scanning this stock on hand whenever it changed improved the accuracy of information captured in the replenishment systems, and thus the accuracy of employees' understanding, and reduced costs and waste. The "constructively deviant", i.e., abnormally frequent use of RF scanner guns was more optimal because it provided constructive flow-on effects on the information within the computer system and thereby the understanding it generated for employees.: some teams would perform more frequent (i.e., at least daily) scans of items that are in stock but not on the shelf, and thus keep tighter control on available stock and orders and keep information captured by the system more accurate and up to date.

The role of leadership in enabling constructive deviance

Our second focus was on the *emergence* and *assimilation* of constructive deviance. Based on our literature review, our expectation was that store leaders would play a focal role in enabling constructive deviance and learning from it. As described above, we coded observations about leadership behaviors inductively, then scored each case for each code and correlated these scores with performance dimensions. This allowed us to filter out those codes that related strongly to

'constructive outcomes' (69 out of 134 in total). We then analyzed the data qualitatively to understand which of the codes related strongest to constructive deviance behaviors and to gain deeper insights into *how* leaders stimulated constructive deviance, and incorporated learnings from constructive deviance into the work system. Several findings emerged:

Leaders embody store routines both as designed and enacted. Our first finding was that indeed leaders performed a key participant role in the stores: they acted as the social embodiment of the day-to-day routines, both as designed and as actualized, but differed in terms of how they aligned the ostensive and performative aspect of the routines in their embodiment. To illustrate consider two revelatory cases of observed leadership in our field study, one with very low levels of empowerment, and one with very high levels. In one example of an averagely performing store with low levels of constructive deviance and empowerment, a team member reported how their leader would sit in their office on the floor above the supermarket floor, and watch CCTV footage of the store. If they would see something that required action, they would call one of the shop floor phones to provide directions; for example: *"the SM will call from upstairs and go '[my name], there's baskets there!'; I'd say 'well it's busy!'. Well then I'd take it away"*. Other team members explained how they were *"a paperwork man"* and they were *"up in their office a lot"*. The leader here clearly did not lead by example or interact much with the team, did not involve staff in decision making and kept informing and coaching of his team to a minimum. By contrast, the leader's role seemed more focused on maintaining the grip on the ostensive specification of routines, controlling and monitoring compliance to the norms as manifested "on paper" and "on screen", without immersing in the emergent dynamics that characterize the enactment of the routines as performed. Through this particular embodiment of the routines

through the leader, the entire set of store operations felt very rigid and centered on executing prescribed processes rather than optimizing value creation.

In a counterexample of an exceptionally well-performing store, the leader focused on creating independent and skilled team members and teaching them their thought process. They encouraged the team to *"always have a go—you won't make it worse"* and treated them with respect: *"if you treat them with respect, they do very well"*. They also showed concern and cared about the well-being of his team; they made sure not to stretch them too much: *"there comes a point where we ask too much […] where it starts turning the other way, becomes negative"*. In this store, the teams would trial new things and have little 'games' where they tested whether new ideas or initiatives provided the expected return (i.e., involvement). They would make changes where established processes would not constitute the best way to create value. This example illustrates a context where the team and its leader introduced changes in the routines together at run time and based on anyone's initiative, while controlling that any introduced changes led to beneficial outcomes. So the focus of embodiment was more on the emergent dynamics rather than the ostensive specification and compliance of the routines.

The role of psychological empowerment through leaders. We observed that more strongly empowered leaders and teams deviated more frequently from ostensive rules and norms in their routines in order to achieve their goals and optimize value creation during their performances: as one leader put it: *"do it and ask for forgiveness, rather than not do it at all"*. Leaders as well as their teams appeared to be more likely to introduce changes into their day-to-day routines by engaging in constructive deviance when they felt in control over their work and intrinsically driven to perform as well as they could: One of the leaders stated: *"I run this store like it's my own"*, indicating a strong sense of fortification of the role and the day-to-day operations "as their

own" in their role. Both this statement and the above observations point to the notions of self-determination [25, 76], feeling in charge, and having an active orientation towards work, all of which characterize the presence of psychological empowerment and its relevance to the establishment of an innovation-ready work culture [33].

Role modeling of behavioral departures. We observed several stores where leaders themselves were constructive deviants, i.e., they departure from prescribed processes and routines and in so doing managed performant operating stores. These leaders' own deviant behavior 'contaminated' their team members to themselves engage more frequently in constructive deviant behavior. These constructively deviant leaders felt empowered to deviate as they saw fit, and they cascaded this empowerment down the line [74]. We noticed how empowered leaders engaged more frequently in five particular behaviors that characterize empowering leadership [4]:

- they involved team members in decision making: *"I don't make many decisions in [my store]", "many of the staff know more about the business than I do"*
- they showed concern and frequently interacted with the team: *"all people come in with good intentions", "treat people how you want to be treated"*
- they led by example by working with them on the shop floor: *"if I can't do it, how can I tell my staff to do it", ""they know that you know what you are doing when you work with them; the more you do that, the less they can run over you"*
- they extensively stimulated information sharing and informed the team of the what and why of company decisions: *"my role is to understand the strategy of the company and to make sure that my team understands all that"*
- the coached the team in their work and leadership: *"it's about teaching the thought process to people", "give someone a fish and they'll eat, teach them how to fish and they'll eat forever"*

These leadership behaviors together instilled a sense of psychological empowerment and self-determination in the team: they adopted a more active work orientation, felt in charge and responsible for their own work, and strived to have an impact and create value—rather than just doing their jobs. The more active and autonomous work orientation of the teams also influenced their behavior to be more autonomous and focused on getting the job done, *"do[ing] what is right, not what is easy"*, and solving the problem rather than following the rules. As such, they were more likely to constructively deviate from stipulated routines and build their own routines during enactment, so to speak, when and if deemed necessary.

The assimilation of constructive deviance. The drive to do the right thing and the empowering leadership behaviors also facilitated the solidification of constructive deviant behaviors into the ostensive aspect of the routines from which they deviated—the transfer from improvement in routines back into the definition of said routines. Empowering leaders, by being open to constructive deviance and engaging team members in decision-making, would allow local norms to be shifted towards the better overall routine practices discovered through constructive deviance. For example, in the stores where the team would call in help from the national support office when promotions appeared out of place (constructive deviant behavior no. 1 in Table 2) and offered solutions were successful, the general norm around problem solving gradually shifted towards 'calling in help from relevant support teams at the head office. As such, what initiated as a spurious instance of constructive deviance from a routine process was slowly assimilated into being the new normal routine.

Balancing empowering with transactional leadership. Finally, we found that successful and empowering leaders often placed an equally strong emphasis on compliance to procedural norms in certain critical aspects of the routines they managed: *"you must do the routines every day, no*

ifs, buts or wonts". This was particularly the case for routines related to food safety, customer safety and stock replenishment. In these routines, successful leaders enacted the norms very strictly by monitoring the behavior of their team and contingently rewarding or punishing (non-) compliant behavior; thus performing behaviors at the heart of what is typically called transactional leadership [32, 65]. Whereas the relation between these behaviors and empowering behaviors is not documented in the literature, they appeared to interact in their effects on followers: The combination of strong transactional leadership behaviors, which provide structure and predictability, and —where possible—high levels of empowerment appeared to instill a sense of control and motivation in team members. In fact, when leaders empowered their team without stimulating compliance to crucial rules by means of contingent rewards, punishment and monitoring, employees seemed to lose their sense of control over their job because too little direction and too little structure was provided. Non-contingent rewards, or punishments, on the other hand, quickly eroded motivation and empowerment. One conversation that we witnessed, for example, clearly negatively affected the team member and any onlookers: [leader]*"what are you having a break for now?!";* [team member] *"I'm just drinking water, that's not a break";* [leader] *"well buy yourself a bottle of water and take it with you, I don't pay you for walking here to drink water; if I pay all 185 to walk here, what would happen to my wage budget?!"*.

Overall, it appears that the leadership behaviors that were most conducive to creating a self-optimizing local store consisted of a balanced combination of empowering, transparency- and change-oriented leadership behaviors, and monitoring and reward behaviors that increase predictability and control in critical routines.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

We explored how supermarket store managers enable the emergence of constructive deviance in the teams they lead. Through a comparative analysis of 17 in-depth cases of supermarket stores that were exceptionally versus averagely performing, we derived a range of findings that point at multiple factors influencing constructive deviances at two organizational levels (store and shopping department).

Our multiple case analysis suggests that leaders can stimulate the emergence of constructive deviance by (1) being themselves deviant and (2) combining empowering and consistent transactional leadership behaviors in appropriate ways. We found also (3) that when leaders feel empowered themselves, they are more likely to constructively deviate and—in doing so—they stimulate constructive deviance in their teams.

These findings empirically corroborate previous conceptual arguments that highlighted the role of empowerment in the emergence of constructive deviance [26, 55, 77, 83], but in our setting we found that an optimal balance between two distinct leadership styles stimulated empowerment and constructive deviance; more specifically, two leadership styles that are traditionally assumed to relate differently to compliance: transactional leadership primarily serves to stimulate compliance, while empowering leadership stimulates autonomy. Despite this apparent contradiction, we found that the interaction between both styles best explained the emergence of constructive deviance we observed. Leaders that were very consistent in their rewards and reprimands and that kept a tight control over routines, yet at the same time invited employees to actively participate in design making and in optimizing work design appeared to

stimulate the highest degree of constructive deviance whilst enacting day-to-day routines. This finding suggests that, either, the transactional leadership behaviors are focused on compliance to certain *critical* rules or norms, yet allow empowerment elsewhere, or—as suggested by Grant and Parker [29]–the transactional leadership behaviors free up the necessary mental energy to behave in more innovative ways.

An Integrated Model of How Leaders Enable Constructive Deviance

Figure 3 presents the emergent model of the theoretical concepts we inductively derived from our case analysis to explain how constructive deviance relates to psychological empowerment and leadership behaviors. To maintain the link between theoretical concepts discussed in the literature, such as constructive deviance [55, 83], empowering leadership [22], transactional leadership [32], and psychological empowerment [72, 74], and our multiple case analysis, we inserted on the right hand side exemplary quotes from the store members we interviewed that illuminate the main propositions of the model. In what follows, we will discuss these propositions in light of existing theory and previous research in more detail.

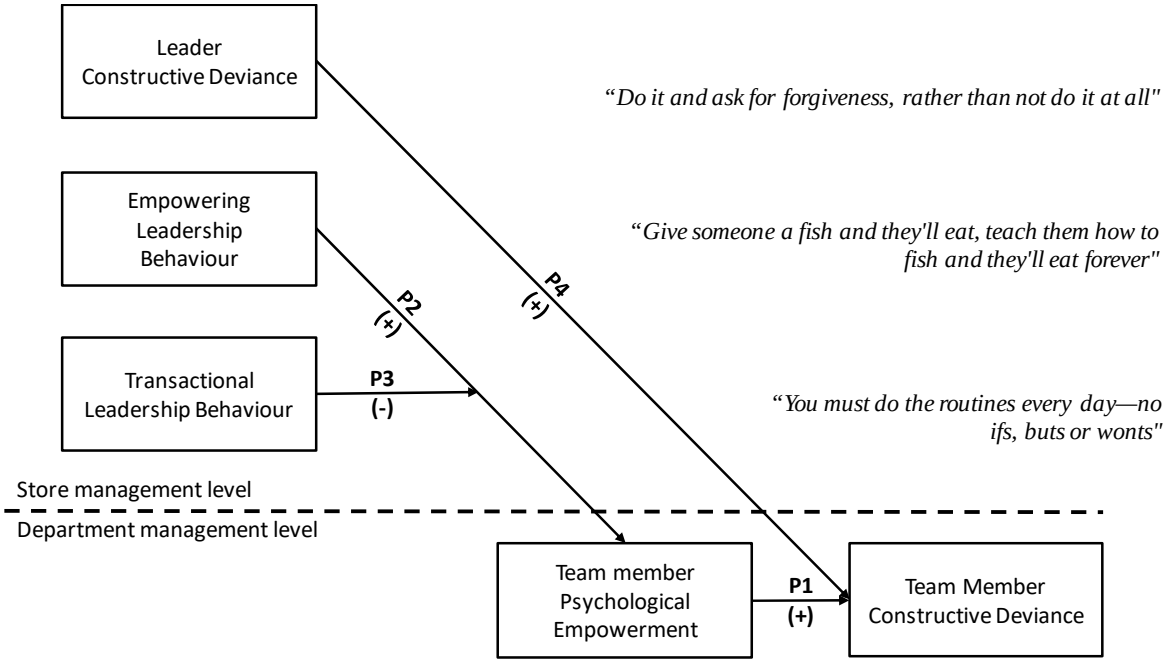

Figure 3. Emergent Model of Leadership as an Enabler of Constructive Deviance

Psychological empowerment and constructive deviance. Like creativity, constructive deviance requires an employee to make decisions and take action without direct supervision or leader intervention [93]. It requires employees to be motivated to *do their best*, feel confident in their abilities, and are provided with opportunity to be in charge of their own work, i.e., free to use their abilities to *do their own thing*. Psychological empowerment—a motivational construct that has been found to mediate many effects of the work context on employee behavior and attitudes [47, 69, 73] —grasps this sense of self-determination, competence and control. It refers to a set of four psychological states that are necessary for individuals to feel in control over their work [72, 73]: *Meaning* refers to the fit between the purpose of the work and one's personal values and beliefs, i.e. whether the employee perceives the work as meaningful. *Competence* is an individual's belief in her or his own competence with regard to the role. *Self-determination*, refers to the perceived degree of choice and autonomy in the actions that an employee carries out

as part of the work role; the extent to which the employee is intrinsically driven. *Impact*, finally, refers to an employee's perceived degree of control over work outcomes. Previous studies have repeatedly suggested that some or all of these four psychological states are key determinants of constructive deviance [e.g., 3, 55, 75, 76, 77, 83]. Our multiple case analysis corroborates these arguments empirically.

We thus theorize a strong linkage between psychological empowerment and constructive deviance. Our suggested rationale is that empowered employees want to do their jobs as good as possible, and in so doing are more likely to deviate from rules or norms if that allows them to execute their work in the best possible way. This is because if an individual perceives his or her job as meaningful and is self-driven (two elements of psychological empowerment), that person will strive to do the job as good as possible and be willing to 'risk greatness' [75] (i.e., they are more likely to engage in *constructive* behavior). If on top of that the person feels competent and in control (the two other elements of psychological empowerment), that person will also be more likely to use that control to carry out the job as they see fit—even when norms dictate a way of working that does not align with their view (i.e., they are more likely to engage in *deviating* behavior). The person will believe that the potential for success outweighs the risk of failure, and the potential to have a real impact gives people the reason to take the risk in the first place [75, 76]. In summary, an employee that feels competent, motivated by her or his work and self-determined (i.e., psychologically empowered) will choose the *best* path to achieve a result, rather than the *normative* path. Therefore, we propose that team members' psychological empowerment will have a positive effect on team members' engagement in constructive deviance.

Proposition 1: Team member psychological empowerment will foster team member constructive deviance.

Leadership Behavior and Team Member Constructive Deviance. To understand how constructive deviance emerges through psychological empowerment at the individual level, we need to understand how both are downwardly impacted by how leaders influence exercise on their teams [11, 12, 42].

Based on our empirical findings, we argue that leadership behavior can influence the emergence of team member constructive deviance in three primary ways: by (a) providing empowerment, (b) instilling compliance to norms, and (c) role modeling deviant behavior.

The first way in which leaders can influence the emergence of constructive deviance is by increasing the level of psychological empowerment in followers. Empowering leadership behaviors [4, 15, 22, 68, 69, 93] builds fortification [83], i.e., provides employees with a sense of psychological empowerment through leadership behaviors such as participative decision making, showing concern/interacting with the team, leading by example, informing, and coaching [4].

When people are invited to provide input in decision-making, their perceived impact on work outcomes and sense of self-determination and motivation will increase [11, 69]. Furthermore, when participative decision-making is combined with leadership behaviors that teach and show how to achieve goals and execute tasks, i.e. coaching and leading by example "how to get the job done", employees will be able to build competence and self-determination. Finally, when employees are frequently informed about company goals and decisions and how their work contributes to these organizational goals; it will make them understand why their job is important [93] and thus perceive their jobs to be more meaningful. By addressing all the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact), we thus

expected that empowering leadership behaviors will have a positive effect on psychological empowerment and in turn constructive deviance.

Proposition 2: Empowering leadership behavior will increase team member psychological empowerment and thereby constructive deviance.

The second way in which leaders can influence constructive deviance is of direct instead of mediated nature and orthogonal to the first: Whilst exercising leadership behaviors such as those associated with empowering leadership will provide motivation, ability and opportunity to team members to deviate, the exercise of other leadership behaviors will *reduce* the emergence of constructive deviance. This is crucial since empowerment is important, but it cannot be absolute. Leaders must provide autonomy and empower people while at the same time maintaining a grip on critical rules and norms [16, 92]. Every leader has to monitor team members' behavior to assess whether people are carrying out their assigned tasks adequately and according to plan [92], and take corrective action in case of non-compliance to certain rules and norms [32]. Monitoring and enforcing compliance are behaviors that are subsumed under what has been labelled transactional leadership [5, 10]. Transactional leadership is an umbrella term that groups behaviors characterized by an exchange of leader rewards for productive employee behavior, and sanctions for undesirable behavior. This exchange results in a clear contract between leader and follower: followers do as leaders say, and get rewarded (or avoid punishment) in return [43].

This argument, coupled with the arguments above, suggests that leadership behaviors provide an orthogonal dialectic for the emergence of constructive deviance: While behaviors associated with empowering leadership focus on providing employees with motivation, ability and opportunity to "do as they see fit" and "get the job done", behaviors associated with transactional leadership

focus the attention towards “doing the (nominally) right thing” by stipulating behavioral norms, monitoring compliance to these norms and enforcing behavioral compliance through reward and punishment [5, 10, 32]. Thereby, the motivation and the opportunity to deviate (constructively) decrease: the stipulation of norms limits the opportunity to execute work freely while the sanction-reward mechanism does not motivate employees to seek departures; instead, it encourages following the norm.

In consequence, next to stimulating constructive deviance through empowerment in a mediated way, leaders can also *directly* but *negatively* influence deviant behavior of their teams when they exercise their power to provide sanctions for inappropriate behavior and rewards for appropriate behavior [53].

Proposition 3: Transactional leadership behavior will reduce psychological empowerment and constructive deviance.

Finally, the theoretical model that emerges from our multiple case analysis suggests that the third way in which leaders can influence the occurrence of constructive deviance at the team member level is through role modeling. Employees generally tend to model behaviors of supervisors to ensure it is in line with the expectations [53]. This “following mode” also occurs when the role models break out of salient or expected norms themselves [2] . This suggests that the extent to which team leaders engage in constructively deviant behavior themselves will positively affect the extent to which their team members engage in constructively deviant behavior. When leaders model behavioral departures from norms and achieve improved performance outcomes, employees will (1) experience increased motivation to deviate from the established norms of the broader organization when they find them restrictive and (2) generate ability to deviate because

new, more optimal and effective ways of problem-solving are exercised, demonstrated and socialized by their leaders. Role modeling deviant behavior by leaders therefore constitutes a form of social learning that shares and reinforces both constructive and deviant practices at work. Therefore, we expect:

Proposition 4: Leader constructive deviance will foster team member constructive deviance.

Future Research Opportunities

Several limitations bound our study. First, we needed to define our operationalization of performance. We chose a multi-dimensional view of performance akin to the balanced scorecard. However, constructive deviance could also be defined in terms of other metrics, such as the employee satisfaction or process innovation. Such choices might lead to different findings and in turn a different model.

Second, our fieldwork is limited to one retail organization. However, we built our research design such that we included between-case variations (high performance, average performance, low performance) that we examined double blind.

Third, our work has been inductive and interpretive, and the typical limitations pertaining to statistical generalization of the model we propose apply [41, 58]. However, our emergent theoretical provides formalized theoretical concepts [82] and we developed operationalized and testable propositions that invite and guide future empirical work.

Despite these limitations, we hope that our work can spark more research into constructive deviance and how leadership behaviors relate to the tension of encouraging constructively

deviant behaviors at work [55] whilst mitigating negative deviance [79]. Many elements of our theorizing and study design implicate meaningful continuations and extensions of our work. We discuss three of these:

1. The first future research opportunity lies in the application of the concept of constructive deviance to the study of retail and consumer services. In organizational domains, occurrences of constructive deviance are often socially complex, contextual, and multilevel phenomena [54]. The goal of studying positive deviance in organizations is to gain a deep understanding of these complex phenomena and to explain its determinants and consequences. Our study exemplifies a method for finding constructive deviance and for discovering *why* constructive deviance emerges in team. Organizations can apply this method to find organizational improvements and innovations that have already been invented by organizational members, which has many advantages in terms of cost, complexity, and implementation of change based on these improvements [63, 71]. Further research on constructive deviance in retail settings can also help organizations design programs to work on identified determinants to further stimulate the emergence of constructive deviance.
2. Another research opportunity stems from our focus on empowerment and its relationship to constructive deviance. Our findings suggest that empowering leadership behaviors do not necessarily affect different members of teams in similar ways. More work is needed to flesh out whether this is because leaders act differently when dealing with different team members, or whether other aspects related to the individual have an influence on the convergence of leadership behaviors into a psychological state of empowerment that in turn may entice employees to constructively deviate.

3. We also believe more research is required into how constructive deviance is defined and bounded by norms [e.g., 20, 39]. Both the literature and our study have arguably paid little attention to conceptualizing and measuring salience of norms, different levels of norms, and how norms perceptions relate to whether deviant behaviors manifest as constructive. For example, the findings of our study raise the need to validate whether empowered employees perceive their own deviant behavior to be non-deviant, particularly when their leaders also engage in deviant behavior. We speculate that in the team-level occurrence of deviant behavior, a reference shift occurs whereby local team norms—rather than organizational norms—become salient as they are exercised by a leader and become the guide for behavior and for judging deviance.

Conclusion

Our study is one of the first to systematically investigate the effects of leadership on constructive deviance in retail departments. We reported on a conversion inductive field study to explore how leadership by supermarket store managers enables the emergence of constructive deviance in their retail departments. Based on our analysis of data gathered in 17 supermarket stores of a large Australian retailer, we constructed a new theoretical cross-level model that suggests that the emergence of constructive deviance can be stimulated by store leaders through empowering team members while at the same time stimulating compliance to critical organizational processes. In sum, our results suggest that employees that receive a lot of direct guidance on the tasks and activities to be executed, and that at the same time are (a) empowered to participate in decision-making and (b) provided with autonomy and means to develop and grow, will be less

likely to revert to behaviors that deviate from formal rules and directions to successfully do their job, but not necessarily from informal ones.

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Appendix A – Procedural Details

Appendix 1: Coding Tree

Constructed Open Code	Category	Sub-Category
Providing on-the-job training and coaching	Leadership behavior	Training job content
Helping people get ahead in the organization		Coaching career path
Coaching people that want to get ahead in terms of people management and leadership		Coaching leadership behavior
Being visible to all staff and doing the right things when visible (e.g. striving for excellence in presentation, customer interaction etc.)		Leading by example
Seeking personal contact with all employees (in store)		Staff interaction
Providing guidance on how to do things vs. guiding what to do		How to vs. what to
directing actions of subordinates to a high level of detail		Micro managing
providing direction by actively sharing and discussing results with employees		Managing by numbers
providing direction by articulating a vision of where department managers need to focus their efforts		Managing by vision
Communicating a consistent and clear vision towards staff members		Articulating vision
Interacting with other stores, taking initiative towards area/state management and headquarters (e.g. intranet, organizing area activities)		External networking
openness in discussions, joint decision making		Involvement
Letting staff make their own decisions		Providing autonomy
Blaming staff for mistakes		Blaming
allowing people to make mistakes without negative repercussions		allowing mistakes
Searching and attempting to solve the root cause of a problem		focus on solution vs problem
Extent to which staff are punished for mistakes		Punishment
motivating employees by focusing on positive results and communicating a positive vision		Positivity
motivating employees by threatening with consequences if required behavior is not engaged in		Enforcement by threat
motivating employees by referring to rewards that may or may not be earned (e.g. bonus, best of the area/country)		Enforcement by promise of reward
providing non-institutionalized rewards for good behavior (e.g. chocolates, pat on the shoulder)		Contingent reward behavior

having non-centrally imposed reward systems in place (e.g. weekly stars)		Institutionalized reward behavior
stimulating staff by referring to their relative performance to other staff members		Stimulating competition - internal
stimulating staff by referring to their relative performance vs other stores		Stimulating competition - external
Noteworthy positive or negative behaviors/expressions that relate to staff, e.g. praise in public, discipline in private; "are you having a break?!"	Communication	Exceptional behavior - internal
Not beating around the bush, no sugarcoating, saying it how it is		Style: to the point
Using communication to build and maintain relations vs to transfer facts		Relational vs factual
places value in discussing relations, leadership styles, interpersonal behavior of employees		Content: people matters
bottom up vs top down		
telling what to do vs. getting people to think what they should do		pull vs push/extracting vs directing
informal vs formal		
consistency of message		
consistency between communication and action		
breaking down communication into actionable points		
department managers get information about their department and anything that concerns them, vs about all that is going on	Departmental management meeting	scope of content
communicates with a select group of people or with more/everyone		scope of audience
sharp and to the point		
general atmosphere		
level of interaction		
relational aspect		
department managers are made responsible and accountable for …	Practical empowerment	rosters
department managers are made responsible and accountable for …		promotional planning
department managers are made responsible and accountable for …		replenishment
department managers are made responsible and accountable for …		budgets
department managers are made responsible and accountable for …		recruitment

department managers are made responsible and accountable for …		problem solving
store manager wanting to know the planning vs wanting to control the planning		informed vs in control
Store manager and assistant store manager are a strong and balanced team with aligned views and a high level of mutual support	Store management collaboration	teamwork
Store manager and assistant store manager have a clear distribution of tasks		work division
Store manager and assistant store manager complement each other well in terms of skill and/or experience		complementarity
noteworthy positive or negative behaviors/expressions that relate to customers and other stores e.g. hiring/educating stealing youth,	Community & Customer Environment	Exceptional behavior - external
spontaneously interacts with customers		Customer interaction
Acting upon customer complaints or customer ideas and requests, following up cases actively (e.g. sending through to headquarter calling customers to update, etc.)		Customer relationship management
developing and executing ways to interact with customers in innovative ways (e.g. cooking, taste sampling)		Active in-store marketing (above and beyond)
extent to which they engage in community service, e.g. BBQs		Community service
developing own initiatives, going out to potential beneficiaries		Active fundraising
placing effort into required/suggested fundraising activities		Passive fundraising
stimulating and facilitating employees to engage in social activities together		Community building - internal
actively facilitating the emergence of a community feeling between staff and customers or customers amongst each other		Community building - external
Changing system data (e.g., shelve width) to account for expected/experienced out of stocks or overstocks	Replenishment	Manipulating reporting systems
finding ways to deal with overstock/understock that do not target the root cause		Active optimizing - single loop
finding ways to deal with overstock/understock that do target the root cause		Active optimizing - double loop
do they seek strategies for dealing with over-allocations		strategy for allocations
competitiveness towards other company stores	Personal leader characteristics	External competitiveness - head quarters
competitiveness towards other non-company stores		External competitiveness - Other

wanting to get ahead in the company (related to career phase)		Personal ambition
Perceived career phase		
Job satisfaction		
peer- or observer rated modesty		Modesty
peer- or observer rated pride		Pride
aims for self gain vs aims to develop and support others		Focus on self vs others
expressed or observed trust placed in employees		Trust towards subordinates
expressed or observed trust placed in the store manager by employees		Trust placed in store manager by followers
competence of the store manager as perceived by staff		Staff-perceived competence
competence of the store manager as perceived by observers		Perceived competence by research team
competence of the staff as perceived by store manager		Perceived staff competence by store manager
self-confidence of the SM as perceived by observers		Self-confidence
eager to learn, wants to develop own skills		self-development
focus on advancing subordinates in the company		empowerment
stays calm even under pressure		composure
Attitude towards the job		Attitude towards the job
Attitude towards head organization		Attitude towards head organization
trust that the head office does a good job at predicting sales, setting targets, creating systems etc.		Trust in Head Office
is perceived as or focuses on being visionary in the "white spaces" and or in the execution of the job		Visionary
is perceived as expert in the commercial side of retail		Marketer/retailer
is perceived as or attempts to be a real people man		People man
has a clear focus on the positive and carries this down		Positivism
believes everyone has a talent and you have to develop that and get the best out of people		Sees good in people
Extent to which the department managers are made responsible for managing wages and hours	Wage management	outsourcing to department managers
Extent to which the focus is on getting/staying below budget		drive to make budget
Extent to which the focus is on getting the work done without placing too much pressure on employees		getting things done humanly
Extent to which the SM is satisfied with the budget		satisfaction with wage budget
compensating above with below budget weeks, planning ahead for these compensations, looking forward		long term focus and compensation behavior
number of employees	Staff composition	
casual %		

salary %		
EBA %		
general experience		
recruitment responsibility		
perceived turnover		
staff socialize outside of work and form a tight community		social community
relationship to corporate headquarter	External company relations	
relationship to area manager		
relationship to central HR department		
store manager does not allow external parties to influence their store management		"boss within four walls"
collaboration with other stores		
attitude towards intranet platform	Technology	
attitude towards store mobile devices		
talks to whom, atmosphere, feeling	Context and layout	general
cluster/standalone/mall		store location
suburb/country		surroundings
opening hours		
carpark		
general feel		
shelves are faced when they can		
aisles are cluttered		
atmosphere in staff quarters (fruit, fun, layout)		
customer loyalty		

Appendix 2: Code Conversion Matrix

Constructed Code Sub-category	**Scoring of cases**																
	Case1	Case2	Case3	Case4	Case5	Case6	Case7	Case8	Case9	Case10	Case11	Case12	Case13	Case14	Case15	Case16	Case17
Code Category Leadership Behavior																	
Training job content	5	4			3	4		4	5	4	2	2	5			3	4
Coaching career path	4	4		5	3			4				2	5				
Coaching leadership behavior	5	4		5	2			4		5	2	2	4				4
Leading by example	5	5	4	5	3	4		5		5	1	2	5	5			5
Staff interaction	4	5	5	5	4	4		5	4	5	2	2	4	5			5
How to vs. what to	3	5		5	4	5		1			2						5
Micro managing	3	3		3	2	5		1	4	3			2				1
Managing by numbers	5	5		5	4			4		4							4
Managing by vision	5	5		5				5		5							5
Articulating vision	5	5		5				5		5					4		4
External networking company	5	5						5									5
Involvement	4	5		5	4	1		5		5			5	4	4	5	5
Providing autonomy	3	4		4	5	1	2	4		4			4	5	4	4	5
Blaming	1	1	2	1		4		1		1			1	1	1		1
allowing mistakes	5	5	2	5		1		5					4	5	4	4	5
focus on solution vs problem	5	5		5		2		5		5	3		5	4	4	5	4
Punishment	1	1		1		3		1		1				1	1		
Positivity	4	5	4	5	3	1		5	3	5			5	5	4		4

Enforcement by threat	1	1	3	1	4	5		1		1			1				1
Enforcement by promise of reward	1	1	4	1		4		1		1			2		1		2
Contingent reward behavior		5	3	5				4	4	5			4				
Institutionalized reward behavior			5			4			2	2							
Stimulating competition - internal			5				1										
Stimulating competition - external			5	4			1	4									
Justice --- check!	2	2	1	4													
Time spent on shop floor (vs in office)	4	4	5	4		5		4	4		1	2	4	4		4	4
Code Category Communication																	
Frequency of dept. manager meetings	3	5	4	4	3	5		3		1	1	3	4	4		4	3
Frequency of one on one - formal		1	3	3	3			1			3		2				3
Frequency of one on one - informal		5	4	5	5					5	5		5			5	5
One on one: office vs on the job		2	1		3			2	2	2	1	3	2	2			3
Style: to the point	5	4		4	5	5	4	4	5	4		4					5
Relational vs factual	2	2		3	4	4		3	2	3			2				4
Goal: Motivational		5		4	2	2		5	3	4			4				
Goal: Instructive		4		3	4	4			4	3	5						
Goal: informative		4		4	4	3			3	3							
Content: people matters	4	4		4	3	1		4	3		4		4				

bottom up vs top down		4	3		4	4	5		2	4	3	5					2	3
pull vs push/extracting vs directing		1	1	2	2	4	5		1	4	2	4					1	5
informal vs formal		2	1	3	2	4	2		1	2	2			2				1
consistency of message		5									5	4						4
consistency between communication and action		5									4	2						5
actionable		5	5	4			4											3
scope of content		2	3	2	4		2											
scope of audience		4	5	5	4		4		5	5	5				5			4
Code Category Departmental management meeting																		
sharp and to the point	N/A		4		2		5		4		N/A	N/A			3	4		N/A
general atmosphere			5		3		1		5		N/A	N/A	4	5	3	5		N/A
level of interaction			4		2		2		5		N/A	N/A		4	4	4		N/A
relational aspect			5				1				N/A	N/A	4	4	3	4		N/A
Code Category Practical empowerment																		
rosters		4	4	5	4	5	4				4	3			4	4		4
promotional planning		4	4	5	4	5	4				4	3			4	4		4
replenishment		4	4	5		5	4				4				4	4		4
budgets		4	5	5	4						4							
recruitment			4												5			
problem solving		4	4	5	4		1	4				2			4	4		4
informed vs in control		3		1	3	2	5				4	2			2	2		2
Code Category Store management collaboration																		

experience of store manager	5	4	3	5	4	5		5			4	4			3	2	5		4
experience of asst. store man.	1	4	3			3	2						5			5	5	4	
Asst. store man. being trained by store man.	5	2	2			3	1						1			1	1		4
teamwork	4	4	1	4		4	2						2		5	3	4	3	4
work division	2	5	1	4	1	4	5						3		4	5		4	3
gender store man.	2	2	1	2		1	2				2	2	2		1	2	2	2	1
gender asst. store man.	2	2	2	1		2	1					2	1			2	1	1	
complementarity	1	4	1	4	4	5	1						4		5	2	4	4	
driving force	1	3		3		1	3				1		2		1	3	2		1
staff point of contact	1					2	2						2		1		2	3	
Code Category Community & Customer Environment																			
Customer interaction	4	4	5	5	4			5	2		5	2	5		4	5		5	5
Customer relationship management	5		4	5				4				4	5			5			5
Active in-store marketing (above and beyond)	5			5				5			4	2				4			4
Community service			5	5	2			4				3			5	5		5	4
Active fundraising			5	5	3						2	2			3	5		3	2
Passive fundraising	5		5	5	3			5			4	4			3	5		5	4
Community building - internal	4		5	5								2	5		4	4		4	3
Community building - external	5		5	5	3			5				2	5		4	4		4	4
Code Category Replenishment																			
Manipulating reporting system								5				1							1

Active optimizing - single loop							4		4	2								4
Active optimizing - double loop strategy for allocations							2		5	2								5
								4										5
Code Category Personal leader characteristics																		
External competitiveness - company		4	5				4		3	4								
External competitiveness - Other		4	5				4			3								
Personal ambition	2	4		3	1	1	3	2	3	2		3	3					
Perceived career phase	4	3	2	4	3	4	4	4	3	2	4		2	4		3		
Job satisfaction	5	5		5		1		3	4	2			3					
Modesty	4	4	4	5		3		5	4				5	4		3		
Pride	4	4		3		2		3	4				3	2		4		
Focus on self vs others	5	4	3	5			5		4	2		4		4		5		
Trust towards subordinates	4	5	5	4	3	1		2	5	2		4		4		4		
Trust placed in store man. by followers	5	5		5		4			5							4		
Staff-perceived competence	5	5		5	4	5			5	2	4	4				5		
Perceived competence by us	5	5	2	5	4	5		3	4	1	5	4	4			5		
Perceived staff competence by store man.	4	5	5	5	2	1		3	5	3		4				5		
Self-confidence	5	5		5	4	5			4	4	4					5		
self-development	4	4			2	2				2		4	5					
focus on advancing subordinates	5	5	4	4	4	1	5				4	4						

composure	5	5	2	5		1		5		5	3							4
Attitude towards the job	5	5	4	5		1		5	3		2							4
Attitude towards company	5	5	4	5		1			3			2						4
Trust in head office						2			2			2						4
Visionary	4	4				3	4		1	4				2				4
Marketer/retailer	5	5				3			4	4		5	4					4
People man	5	5		5	2	1	2	5	2	4	1	4	5	5				4
Positivism	5	5	5	5		1		5	3	4		4	4	4				
Sees good in people	5	5		5	2	1		5	3	4	2	4	4					
Code Category Wage management																		
outsourcing to dept. managers			5	4	5			3	N/A	4			4	5	4	4		4
drive to make budget			5	5	3	5		4	3	4					5			5
getting things done humanly	5	5	5	5		1		4	3	5	5		5	4	2			3
satisfaction with wage budget			2	2	3	1	1	1		1		1		1	1			1
long term focus and compensation behavior	5	4		5						5								5
Code Category Staff composition																		
number of employees		370	100	150	152	185	180	109	25	123	104	101	89	110			100	155
casual %			13	17	20		6	25	8	24	6	14	N/A	2			0	52
salary %			13	8	20			16	8	14	24	7		10				10
EBA %			72	75	60				84	60	71	80						38
general experience		4	5		2	1		5	3	4					4			5
recruitment responsibility		1												1				4
perceived turnover		4	1	4	2	5	5	1		2			2					2

social community		2	5	4	4		1	4	2		5	5	5	4	5	5	3
Code Category External company relations																	
corporate						1					4		1	1			5
area manager		4	5	4	3					5			4	4			5
area HR		1		1		1		4					2	2			
"boss within four walls"		5		4						4							5
collaboration other stores		4	4	4	4						4		4				5
Code Category Technology																	
attitude towards intranet platform	3		5				5			3	1			5			
attitude towards store mobile devices	5		5				5				1		5	2			
Code Category Context and layout																	
shelves are faced when they can		2						2	2								
aisles are cluttered		3							3	4			4	3	1		2
atmosphere in staff quarters (fruit, fun, layout)		4			4			5	1		2			5			4
customer loyalty	4	1	5	4	5						5	5	5	3		5	5
Scorecard Dimension	*Scorecard Performance* (Percentile)																
Customers	0.74	0.42	0.46	0.46	0.52	0.40	0.39	0.72	0.25	0.63	0.22	0.75	0.60	0.64	0.57	0.74	0.71
Operations	0.78	0.62	0.40	0.52	0.22	0.76	0.84	0.73	0.12	0.84	0.70	0.31	0.42	0.46	0.25	0.41	0.79
Investors	0.80	0.57	0.17	0.42	0.14	0.84	0.73	0.75	0.16	0.91	0.56	0.48	0.45	0.46	0.26	0.43	0.81
People	0.61	0.58	0.64	0.53	0.72	0.31	0.46	0.65	0.21	0.52	0.74	0.49	0.75	0.31	0.44	0.48	0.69
Community and environment	0.29	0.62	0.75	0.51	0.63	0.56	0.43	0.69	0.60	0.56	0.40	0.38	0.34	0.82	0.73	0.56	0.63