

LEADERSHIP TRAITS, STYLES AND APPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP THEORY

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Abstract--Leadership is something that inspires or motivates. It is having wisdom as to what must be done and what can be delegated to management. However leadership and management should work together in order to achieve good results. Leaders are made in the course of time. It is possible to make leaders. Leadership is a process in which a person can motivate and influence others to do intended work. A leader should have knowledge and skills in order to be in the position. Leadership makes innovation. Leadership traits play vital role in providing leadership. Leader is one who leads while the follower is one who follows. There are different leadership styles that can be followed by leaders. However, the best leadership style can make a leader great. There are many things to be learnt with respect to leadership. This is because the old style of leadership does not work now. It needs more careful thought and the method of influencing others should be based on ideal practices but not by force. Therefore it is essential to understand the different types of leadership or styles of leadership and acquire skills in order to be a better leader who can influence his followers without using force. Another focus of this paper is applying leadership theory. The remainder of this paper throws more light on leadership and reflection of the author on leadership.

Keywords – Leadership, leadership traits, leadership styles, applying leadership theory

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I. Introduction

Leadership is defined differently by different people. However, a common sense understanding is that it is the ability to lead a team in work place of any kind. There must be qualities a leader should be possessed with. What are the characteristics of a leader and what are the different types of leadership which leadership style is suited in different environments are the key aspects of this paper. Since the paper focuses on the leadership, it is very useful to readers to equip basic knowledge on leadership and move on top of it to make rapid strides to become a great leader. Leadership has to do something to boost productivity in health care industry) Public administration needs leadership for productivity Leadership can improve economy of a country or organization (North use, 2007). Educational productivity can be improved in schools with effective leadership (Bernard, 1990). Organizational success is possible with good leadership can help reduce expenses and improve productivity the ensuing sections provide necessary information on leadership and the dynamics involved in it.

II. LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the influence which enables a person to help others to achieve important tasks. People think differently about leaders. Some people might think that leader is one who guides or directs. Some people do think that leader is the one whole organizes a group of people and motivates them to achieve a worthy goal (Courter and Heywood, 2002). Yet some other people do believe that leader is someone whom people follow. However, this paper clarifies it with more insights into the subject in terms of leadership traits, leadership styles and other related aspects. Good leadership will involve people to work smarter and for higher productivity. In fact, leadership is not a position but it is a process which is intersection of three factors namely actions, response and situation (Courter and Heywood, 2002).

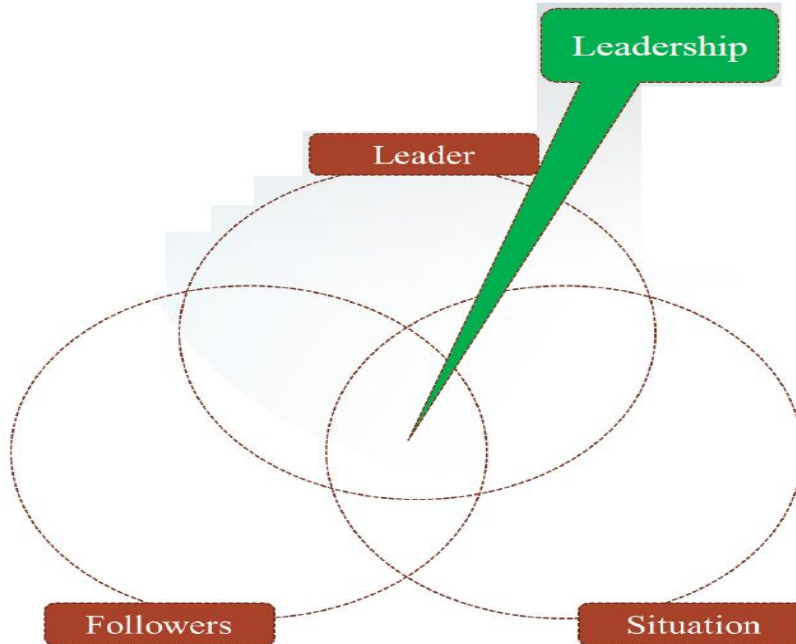


Figure 1 –Leadership lies at the intersection of these three (Courter and Heywood, 2002)

As shown in Figure 1, leadership is something that brings about positive thing from human beings and helps to influence a group of people to do which takes the group to achieve a common goal (Courter and Heywood, 2002). According to leadership is beneficial in all walks of life. It can influence student learning to make a difference. opines that leadership is required in research as well where it brings about research productivity in terms of solid results and inventions. Enterprise level systems with good leadership can increase productivity. Such leadership in enterprise systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Supply Chain Management (SCM) can improve labourproductivityopines that leadership can help in analyzing systems and make well informed decisions to improve them. argue that there is need for making leadership networks in order to leverage higher productivity.

III. LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Leader should have good characteristics or traits. Any endeavour needs leadership to achieve worthwhile success. There are many issues pertaining to leadership such as economy, people, power, success, failure, vision, motivation, money, stress, and many other things. However, in spite of many situations of contexts a good leader should possess the traits such as honesty,

intuition, creativity, positive attitude, commitment, confidence, sense of humour, communication, and ability to delegate and ability to inspire (Forbes, 2015).

Honesty

Honesty is the best policy for any individual and more so to a leader. For leader it is essential to raise the bar higher and higher every day. The honesty of a leader and its impact will also be on people who follow his leadership(Forbes, 2015).

Intuition

Leadership is something related to dynamism. There is not fixed roadmap that leader has to follow. However, there are situations where leader has to lead his team in the presence of unexpected happenings and pressure. Here is the importance of natural intuition of leader where he takes decisions dynamically and based on his lines of values and leadership traits. Day to day situations demand a leader to be intuitive and make decisions dynamically and show leadership in all situations(Forbes, 2015).

Creativity

Creativity is essential characteristics of leader. As the leader needs to generate certain results which were not there earlier, he needs to have such power of creativity. During critical situations, leader needs to guide teams to victory with creating thinking from outside the box and making possible decisions to this effect(Forbes, 2015).

Positive Attitude

A leader should have positive attitude as the attitude influences leader to make decisions. Leader needs to keep his energy levels up and ensure that his team also will have that positive energy. Productivity and playfulness are the key aspects that reflect the positive attitude of the team at work place(Forbes, 2015).

Commitment

A leader needs to have commitment towards work and results. He needs to lead by example so as to help other to follow suit. When leader involves in working with high commitment, the

followers also work with such commitment. Commitment needs to be made at all levels. It is not only at work but also all promises given to team or company or any other individual. Sometimes it is important to have commitment to fulfill promises. Gaining the respect of team is the key for productivity(Forbes, 2015).

Confidence

Leader needs to exhibit confidence even in bad times. This is true in every aspect of life including office, house, and country or anywhere in the world. It is the responsibility of the leader to improve team morale and keep up confidence level. The confidence of a leader will be reflected in the team as well since team takes cue from the leader(Forbes, 2015).

Sense of Humour

When bad situations arise, the leader needs to be cool and confident and guide the team without panicking. It is where sense of humor plays a vital role to ensure high morale of team which is linked to the productivity. Encouraging team to laugh at sometimes to enjoy challenges instead of crying with help leader achieve sense of humor in hard times as well. Some short breaks from work and engaging team in some sort of fun can improve the situation which eventually leads to productivity(Forbes, 2015).

Communication

A good leader needs to have the ability to communicate his ideas to his associates very clearly. Sometimes, he needs to communicate certain bad news. Then he needs to use the language of a leader. A leader has to communicate his vision to team so as to help them involve in the common goal of the organization. Healthy lines of communication are essential to work with team and improve productivity(Forbes, 2015).

Ability to Delegate

A leader needs to learn delegating work to his associates. Working everything is not good leadership. The team needs to be trusted, nourished in order to let the team improve productivity by delegating works. It is important to know how to delegate and finding right department or people to delegate the work. The quality of the work and quantity of work can be achieved through

delegation of work. Towards achieving this it is essential on part of a leader to identify the strengths of individuals and make well informed decisions. There needs to be description while delegating work to strike balance between productivity and time taken to delegate work(Forbes, 2015).

Ability to Inspire

A leader needs to assess the level of expertise of the team and the level of confidence with which team is working. Then leader needs to lead by example to inspire people. Vision of success and the vision of organization need to be shared with the team in order to achieve the common goal. Towards this end leader needs to inspire the team members to promote enthusiasm and work culture which is in line with the vision of the organization. Acknowledging the work that has been done by the team and giving appreciation for the work is very important to inspire team members(Forbes, 2015).

IV. LEADERSHIP STYLES

In the previous section leadership traits were discussed. This section throws light into different styles of leadership. In the work environment leaders follow different styles. The leadership style is required based on the culture and goals of an organization. Sometimes a company needs to follow more than one leadership style and it is purely based on the needs of the organization. The leadership styles identified include laissez-faire, autocratic, participative, transactional, and transformational (Jhonson, 2015).

Laissez-Faire

This is a leadership style where the leader lacks direct supervision on his team members in order to give feedback from time to time. This kind of leadership is fruitful when there are followers who are highly experienced and matured to take necessary decisions which are appropriate without worrying the presence of leader in the work place. However, it is not possible to expect such employees. In case of certain employees productivity is affected when this kind of leadership is exercised (Jhonson, 2015).

Autocratic

It is the kind of leadership where leader makes decisions alone without consulting his team members or followers. The managers who follow this kind of leadership make decisions with total authority and then impose those decisions on people. There are some countries like North Korea and Cuba where leaders follow autocratic style. For creating employees who need to involve in decision making this kind of leadership is not suitable. However, it is suitable when followers need such leader who can make decisions and ask his employees to follow it (Jhonson, 2015).

Participative

This kind of leadership is known as democratic leadership style. Here a leader takes team members into consideration while making decisions. After taking inputs from the team, the leader takes his own decisions. However, the inputs of team will be evaluated and a right decision is made by the leader. In this kind of leadership employees are allowed to make contributions in the process of decision making. This is very important for change management and implements any new strategies in an organization (Jhonson, 2015).

Transactional

This is the leadership style in which a leader considers everything as a transaction and provide reward or punishment to the team based on the results. Here manager and team set goals and achieve them with mutually accepted leadership. Employees are given rewards when significant goals are achieved(Jhonson, 2015).

Transformational

This kind of leadership needs high level of communication from the management side to achieve goals. Leaders are supposed to motivate employees for efficiency and productivity. Leaders need to have big picture in mind and focus on that to accomplish goals (Jhonson,2015).

V. APPLYING LEADERSHIP THEORY

Leadership is a way in which one can trade minds with people and let them to do what he wants them to do in order to take organizations forward by achieving goals effectively (IAAP, 2009).

Keeping the importance of the leadership in real world, many leadership theories came into existence. They include great man theory, participative leadership, behavioral theory, trait theory, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, contingency theory, and situational leadership. Trait theory or great man theory assumes that leaders have inherited traits. Behavioral theories assume that leaders can be made. Participative leadership believes in collaborative decision making. Situational leadership assumes that leadership is influenced by situational factors. Contingency leadership is influenced by contingency factors. Transactional leadership assumes that rewards and punishments motivate people to do or not to do certain things. Transformational leadership considers motives of others where the leader acts as change agent or visionary. Here leaders let people do what is required to be done by injecting energy and enthusiasm. Another important leadership is known as Meta-Leadership which allows a leader to work across organizations (IAAP, 2009). However, according to Barling, Christie, and Hopton (n.d) the term leadership has been controversial and witnessed much debate. Nevertheless, leadership is a developmental process and leaders can be made. Dynamic theory of leadership believes that leader is made (Emerald Group, n.d). Wu and Li (2011) explored new leadership theory known as “PM Theory” which evaluates on site leadership behaviors. Authentic leadership is another leadership style on which Walumbwa et al. (2008) made experiments and validated it using a theory based approach. Their research revealed that there is relationship between the performance improvement and authentic leadership. studied on instructional leadership in education domain and found that there is relationship between the students’ performance and instructional leadership of teachers both learning and leadership for organizational growth.) focused on resource dependence theory for the growth of organizations as platform leaders maximize the relationship with RDT.

Wang (2011) opined that delivery managers with respect to real world projects should possess leadership traits. In their study pertaining to project management theory, they revealed the fact that delivery project manager needs leadership. throws light into the youth leadership which is essential for the faster growth of any organization or country. They opine that more focused research is required to measure youth leadership and improve it further. Ibieta (2006) studied action learning and advocated it as a tool for bringing about high potential leaders with concurrent problem solving abilities in IT organizations. Leilei and Peilanl (2009) studied

authentic leadership and established the positive relationship between such leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. studied the distributed leadership (DL) which involved at leader two people work in cooperative pattern. They established the positive relationship between DL and organizational performance. studied the concept of entrepreneurial leadership using a project based approach which proved to be very effective. Hilgers et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of diffusion theory, change management, leadership and shared vision. From their research they proved that organizations need information systems (ISs) alignment with other leadership practices. studied different contexts and their effect on the leadership behavior. They could prove that various contexts and attributes have influence in the leadership behavior. Schoephoerster and Golding (n.d) identified the need for a new paradigm for leadership engineering which involves technology, innovation, ethics, business and social sciences. Plotnick et al. (2008) studied the issues pertaining to leadership and communication in the context of collaborative software development. Their study revealed certain leadership roles to help software teams to work in harmony and innovation. Mallette (2005) proposed theory Pi to describe the behavior a group of people in a work place and the need for a particular leadership method to excel in growth. They proved that high competent and high commitment leadership style is required in such environments.

VI. Conclusions

This paper throws light into leadership traits, leadership styles besides focusing on the application of such things in the life of author with reflection. The essence of the paper is to enlighten its readers to know clearly about what are leadership and the traits a good leader should possess. It then moves on to discuss about leadership styles that suit to different situations. The essence of this paper is that leadership can be developed and a good leader should be a good follower too. It needs more careful thought and the method of influencing others should be based on ideal practices but not by force. Therefore it is essential to understand the different types of leadership or styles of leadership and acquire skills in order to be a better leader who can influence his followers without using force. This paper also discussed about application of leadership theory.

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