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1. LEADERSHIP

1.1. Overview of Leadership

Leadership is vital for the functioning of the family, group, society, business, government or any other organization. Since planning, executing, reviewing and controlling are the functions linked with every organization, they require a critical force in the form of a leader to design, execute, coordinate and control all these functions to help accomplish the desired objective with efficiency. The human relations movement of 1940's and 1950's gave further emphasis to the concept of leadership indispensability to business and government. Since then, a lot of research has been done in the area of leadership, which is still considered to be incomplete because each piece of empirical research illustrates less known aspects of leadership.

The concept of leadership has undergone change over the period. Upto 1930, leadership was believed to be something of the nature of personal traits - a characteristic of the people, which was the monopoly of only few persons. The supporter of this theory held the view that their characteristics or traits are intrinsic. Therefore, the concept of "born leadership" or the concept of "leaders are born not made" became popular. Later on others had the view that these traits may be acquired. Leadership is regarding coping with change.

Leaders always develop a vision for future and there by establish direction. After that, they communicate their vision to their disciples and motivate them to overcome the hurdles. In other words, leadership is defined as ability to influence a group towards achieving the desired goals. Organizations do need strong leadership as well as strong management for the real effectiveness in their achieving of objectives. In today's dynamic world, we need creative leadership with dominating vision for future and effective skill in inspiring organizations and the employees to achieve their objectives.

The most common traits in the characteristic of leadership are:

- ✓ **Empathy:** Creating a good rapport with your staff makes it less likely that personal issues and resentment can come in and derail the group. When your team knows that you are empathetic to their concerns, they will be more likely to work with you and share in your vision, rather than have negative feelings.
- ✓ **Consistency:** Being a consistent leader will gain you respect and credibility, which is vital to getting buy-in from the group. By setting an example of fairness and credibility, the team will want to act the same way.
- ✓ **Honesty:** Another characteristic of leadership that lends itself to credibility. Those who are honest, especially about concerns, make it far more likely that problems will be addressed rather than avoided. Honesty also allows for better evaluation and growth.
- ✓ **Direction:** Having the vision to break out of the norm and aim for great things --then the wherewithal to set the steps necessary to get there-- is an essential feature of good leadership. By seeing what can be and managing the goals on how to get there, a good leader can create important change.

- ✓ **Communication:** Effective communication helps keep the team working on the right projects with the right attitude. If you communicate efficiently about expectations, issues and advice, your staff will be more likely to react and meet your goals.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** Not every problem requires the same solution. By being flexible to new ideas and open-minded enough to consider them, you increase the chances that you will find the best possible answer. You will set a good example for your team and reward good ideas.
- ✓ **Conviction:** A strong vision and the willingness to see it through is one of the most important features of leadership. The leader who believes in the mission and works toward it will be an inspiration and a resource to their followers.

1.2. Leadership Style

Different types of leadership styles exist in work environments. Advantages and disadvantages exist within each leadership style. The culture and goals of an organization determine which leadership style fits the firm best. Some companies offer several leadership styles within the organization, dependent upon the necessary tasks to complete and departmental needs.

Laissez-Faire - A laissez-faire leader lacks direct supervision of employees and fails to provide regular feedback to those under his supervision. Highly experienced and trained employees requiring little supervision fall under the laissez-faire leadership style. However, not all employees possess those characteristics. This leadership style hinders the production of employees needing supervision. The laissez-faire style produces no leadership or supervision efforts from managers, which can lead to poor production, lack of control and increasing costs.

A person may be in a leadership position without providing leadership, leaving the group to deal situations by themselves. Subordinates are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods. The subordinates are motivated to be creative and innovative.

Autocratic - The autocratic leadership style allows managers to make decisions alone without the input of others. Managers possess total authority and impose their will on employees. No one challenges the decisions of autocratic leaders. Countries such as Cuba and North Korea operate under the autocratic leadership style. This leadership style benefits employees who require close supervision. Creative employees who thrive in group functions detest this leadership style.

Under the autocratic leadership style, all decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with dictators. Leaders do not listen to any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has proved advantageous as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It allows quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to him/herself until he/she feels it needs to be shared with the rest of the group.

Participative - Often called the democratic leadership style, participative leadership values the input of team members and peers, but the responsibility of making the final decision rests with the participative leader. Participative leadership boosts employee morale because employees make contributions to the decision-making process. It causes them to feel as if their opinions matter. When a company needs to make changes within the organization, the participative leadership style helps employees accept changes easily because they play a role in the process. This style meets challenges when companies need to make a decision in a short period.

The democratic leadership style consists of the leader sharing the decision-making abilities with group members by endorsing the interests of the group members and by practicing social equality. This has also been called shared leadership.

Transactional - Managers using the transactional leadership style receive certain tasks to perform and provide rewards or punishments to team members based on performance results. Managers and team members set predetermined goals together, and employees agree to follow the direction and leadership of the manager to accomplish those goals. The manager possesses power to review results and train or correct employees when team members fail to meet goals. Employees receive rewards, such as bonuses, when they accomplish goals.

Transformational - The transformational leadership style depends on high levels of communication from management to meet goals. Leaders motivate employees and enhance productivity and efficiency through communication and high visibility. This style of leadership requires the involvement of management to meet goals. Leaders focus on the big picture within an organization and delegate smaller tasks to the team to accomplish goals.

Narcissistic - Narcissistic leadership is a leadership style in which the leader is only interested in him/herself. Their priority is themselves - at the expense of their people/group members. This leader showcases the characteristics of a narcissist: arrogance, dominance and hostility. It is a common leadership style. The narcissism maybe anywhere between positive and harmful. To critics, "narcissistic leadership (preferably destructive) is driven by uncompromising arrogance, self-absorption, and a personal need for power and admiration."

Toxic - A toxic leader is someone who has responsibility over a group of people or an organization, and who exploits the leader-follower relationship by leaving the group or organization in a shoddier condition than when he/she joined it.

Task-oriented and relationship-oriented - Task-oriented leadership is a style in which the leader pays attention on the tasks that need to be performed in order to meet a certain production goal. Task-oriented leaders are usually more concerned with producing a step-by-step solution for given problem or goal, strictly making sure these deadlines are met, results and reaching target outcomes. Relationship-oriented leadership is a contrasting style in which the leader is more concerned with the relationships amongst the group and is generally more concerned with the overall well-being and satisfaction of group members. Relationship-oriented leaders emphasize communication within the group, show trust and confidence in group members, and shows appreciation for work done.

Task-oriented leaders are usually less concerned with the idea of catering to group members and more concerned with acquiring a certain solution to meet a production goal. For this reason, they usually are able to make sure that deadlines are met, yet their group members' well-being may suffer. Relationship-oriented leaders are focused on developing the team and the relationships in it. The positives to having this kind of environment are that team members are more motivated and have support. Hence, the focus on relations as opposed to getting a job done might make productivity suffer.

Gender Difference

Another factor that goes with leadership style is whether the person is male or female. When men and women come together in groups, they tend to utilize different leadership styles. Men generally take on a leadership style where they are in control of their subordinates. They are task-oriented, active, decision centric and goal oriented. Women, on the other hand, are usually more social when they assume a leadership position; they aim to be helpful towards others, warm in relation to others, understanding, and mindful of others' feelings. Usually, when women are asked to describe themselves to others in newly formed groups, they emphasize their open, fair, responsible, and pleasant communal qualities. They give advice, offer assurances, and manage conflicts in an attempt to sustain positive relationships among group members. As leaders, men are primarily task-oriented, but women tend to be both task- and relationship-oriented. Therefore, it is important to note that these sex differences are only tendencies, and do not establish themselves within men and women across all groups and situations.

The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid

The Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid was published in 1964, and it highlights the most appropriate style to use, based on your concern for your people and your concern for production/tasks.

With a people-oriented style, you focus on organizing, supporting, and developing your team members. This participatory style encourages good teamwork and creative collaboration.

With task-oriented leadership, you focus on getting the job done. You define the work and the roles required, put structures in place, and plan, organize, and monitor work.

According to this model, the best style to use is one that has both a high concern for people and a high concern for the task - it argues that you should aim for both, rather than trying to offset one against the other. Clearly, this is an important idea!

Path-Goal Theory

You may also have to think about what your team members want and need. This is where Path-Goal Theory - published in 1971 - is useful.

For example, highly-capable people, who are assigned to a complex task, will need a different leadership approach from people with low ability, who are assigned to an ambiguous task. (The former will want a participative approach, while the latter need to be told what to do.)

With Path-Goal Theory, you can identify the best leadership approach to use, based on your people's needs, the task that they're doing, and the environment that they're working in.

Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership resembles transformational leadership: both types of leaders inspire and motivate their team members. The difference lies in their intent. Transformational leaders want to transform their teams and organizations, while leaders who rely on charisma often focus on themselves and their own ambitions, and they may not want to change anything.

Charismatic leaders might believe that they can do no wrong, even when others warn them about the path that they're on. This feeling of invincibility can severely damage a team or an organization, as was shown in the 2008 financial crisis.

Servant Leadership

A "servant leader" is someone, regardless of level, who leads simply by meeting the needs of the team. The term sometimes describes a person without formal recognition as a leader. These people often lead by example. They have high integrity and lead with generosity. Their approach can create a positive corporate culture, and it can lead to high morale among team members.

Supporters of the servant leadership model suggest that it's a good way to move ahead in a world where values are increasingly important, and where servant leaders can achieve power because of their values, ideals, and ethics.

However, others believe that people who practice servant leadership can find themselves "left behind" by other leaders, particularly in competitive situations. This style also takes time to apply correctly: it's ill-suited to situations where you have to make quick decisions or meet tight deadlines.

1.3. Leadership Theories

Three main theoretical frameworks have dominated leadership research at different points in time. These included the trait approach (1930s and 1940s), the behavioural approach (1940s and 1950s), and the contingency or situational approach (1960s and 1970s).

Trait approach

The scientific study of leadership began with a focus on the traits of effective leaders. The basic premise behind trait theory was that effective leaders are born, not made, thus the name sometimes applied to early versions of this idea, the "great man" theory. Many leadership studies based on this theoretical framework were conducted in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

Leader trait research examined the physical, mental, and social characteristics of individuals. In general, these studies simply looked for significant associations between individual traits and measures of leadership effectiveness. Physical traits such as height, mental traits such as intelligence, and social traits such as personality attributes were all subjects of empirical research.

The initial conclusion from studies of leader traits was that there were no universal traits that consistently separated effective leaders from other individuals. In an important review of the leadership literature published in 1948, Ralph Stogdill concluded that the existing research had not demonstrated the utility of the trait approach.

Several problems with early trait research might explain the perceived lack of significant findings. First, measurement theory at the time was not highly sophisticated. Little was known about the psychometric properties of the measures used to operationalize traits. As a result, different studies were likely to use different measures to assess the same construct, which made it very difficult to replicate findings. In addition, many of the trait studies relied on samples of teenagers or lower-level managers.

Early trait research was largely a theoretical, offering no explanations for the proposed relationship between individual characteristics and leadership.

Finally, early trait research did not consider the impact of situational variables that might moderate the relationship between leader traits and measures of leader effectiveness. As a result of the lack of consistent findings linking individual traits to leadership effectiveness, empirical studies of leader traits were largely abandoned in the 1950s.

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