

Leadership and Work Attitude: A Symbiosis Relationship that Shape Organization Performance

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1. Introduction

The term leadership tends to conjure in our minds picture of great military commanders such as General Patton, stirring politicians and statesmen such as Winston Churchill, or charismatic leaders of national movements such as Gandhi. But while people such as these were undoubtedly great leaders, they are only the most visible and obvious examples of leadership in action. Infact, every time a person attempts to get other people to do something that the person wants them to do, he or she is functioning as a leader. Seen in this perspective, leadership is exercised in organizations from the chief executive officer right down to the first-level supervisor on the shop floor. Leadership is a core variable in the management of human and material resources without which organizations or groups may not function effectively. Concepts like mob or crowd simply define an assembly of people without leadership. On the other hand, a situation of anarchy describes a group with apparent leadership disintegration. When an economic venture is undertaken by an organization, with a view to maximizing economic opportunities, it calls for a person or persons to supervise, direct, control, and co-ordinate the activities of production and workers co-operation. This example simply points to the role of leadership in an organization.

Keywords: Leaders, Workers, Influence, Symbiosis, Organization, Performance.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the interrelationship between leaders' leadership styles as a source of influence on the behaviour and actions of the workers and how the actions and reactions of the workers affect the performance of leaders in organizations. The article wants to x-ray the symbiosis relationship that exists between leaders leadership styles and workers attitude to work in organization. To show that their relationship is symbiosis in nature as they depend on each other and equally benefit from one another.

1.3 Meaning of Leadership

Leadership involves the exercise of influence on the part of the leader over the behaviour of subordinates. In other words, leadership essentially involves one person consciously trying to get other people to do something that he or she wants them to do. Leadership is all about how a leader can influence the thought, feelings, and actions of the followers. Leaders should encourage their subordinates not only to develop the willingness to work but also the willingness to work with zeal and confidence knowing that people tend to follow those whom they see as providing a means of achieving their own desires, wants, and needs. In other words, leaders should facilitate progress and inspire subordinates to accomplish organizational goals through good leadership.

In an ideal situation with all things being equal, a leader shows the way by his own example, and pulls the followers along the desired parts to be followed. In the same vein, effective leadership can trigger a person's will to do, and transform lukewarm attitude for achievement into passion for successful accomplishment.

1.4 Factors of Leadership

Leadership has faced a lot of research. There is research that direct attention to identifying and distinguishing characteristics or traits of leaders. There is also the behavioural approach which holds that leaders are best characterized by behaviour patterns rather than by individual traits (Filley and House, 1969). Filley and House further explained that the difference between trait and behavioural theory of leadership is that trait theory attempts to explain leadership on the basis of what the leader is and behavioural theory approaches it on the basis of what a leader does. They claim that the behavioural approach appears sounder for a more general explanation hence in essence; leadership study is the search for factors that will best serve the leader in motivating and integrating followers to the achievement of organizational goals. It is now known that leadership is affected by the leader, the led, and the situation. Based on this notion, it is acclaimed that leadership function in an organization is determined, shaped, or affected by three factors and these factors are:

- (a). the leader
- (b). the subordinates
- (c). the situation

The Leader: The study of leadership, initially by the Great Man Theory, searched for a set of personal traits that make for successful leadership. Although the trait theory is now considered inadequate, there are some traits found to be common for successful leadership. They are listed to include intelligence, initiative, imagination, enthusiasm, optimism, individualism, courage, originality, communication ability, and sense of fair play, human

understanding, supervisory ability, and self-assurance. In the opinion of some writers, the traits are better grouped into four, namely, strong will, extroversion, power need, and achievement need. However, no matter how wide the list is stretched, in practice, the traits that may be used for prediction of success in leadership can simply be classified into two groups. These are those traits relevant for equipping the leader to acquire the necessary technical skills which consist of knowledge of the field of operation in which the group is involved, and the human skills which include communication ability and ability to make use of the human need factor to motivate and to integrate followers. Although various studies suggest that certain traits are necessary and relevant to leadership effectiveness, it is equally important to recognize that other studies show that no two leaders are the same. For instance, military leadership differs from civilian leadership. Again, the things that leaders do to influence followers – the ability to motivate and integrate followers varies from person to person and from one situation to another.

The Subordinates: Without the led (followers), there will be no leader. To manage human beings is not an easy task. This is because every individual is unique although there are some common needs among individuals. Thus, in exploring what leadership does and how it does it to be effective, we have to recognize the importance of the followers. First, individuals differ in their personalities. Some may have high need of independent status, and recognition. Others may have need for order, security, and stability. Equally, some other members may have variation in expectations. While some members may expect to be consulted on decision making, others may not care. Again, the perception and understanding of the followers are of critical important to the leader if he is to effectively manage the subordinates. All these go to the point that the modern view about the effectiveness in leadership does not only cover what a leader will do to influence the behaviour of the followers but also include how the actions and reactions of the followers influence the performance of the leader.

The Situation: The current view of leadership effectiveness is that it is the situation that determines which traits, which ability – task-oriented or group maintenance ability to call forth in any given situation. What this means is that effective leadership is a function of many factors including the technological environment/the task-oriented skills needed and the expectations of subordinates, all of which together make up the situation. The basic idea behind all these is that leadership effectiveness depends upon the existence of a “fit” between the leader’s behaviour and the demands of the situation.

1.5 Sources of Leaders’ Influence on Subordinates

What provides a leader with the capacity to influence followers? Why will subordinates respond to the influence attempts of a leader by doing what the leader wishes them to do? An easy way to get answers for the above questions is to have a look at the sources of influence available to leaders in the process of discharging their day-to-day activities. Basically, there are five distinct sources of leader influence available to leaders in carrying out their duties and in practice; a leader may have one or a combination of these sources at his disposal.

1.5.1 Reward Power: This is the capacity of a leader to advance one form of reward or another to subordinates. The amount and nature of reward that a leader possesses and controls greatly determine the degree of influence the leader will have over the followers. Rewards such as praise, recognition, and attention are sources of personal power possessed by the leader as an individual. In addition, a leader also controls certain organizational rewards such as pay increase, and promotion. These are position powers because they depend on the leader’s position in the organization.

1.5.2 Coercive Power: A leader’s coercive power is basically the power to punish followers. Sources of coercive power are equally of two types – personal and positional. A leader’s ability to issue criticism or show lack of recognition to followers is seen as an aspect of punishment. Because these emanate from the leader as a human being, they are termed personal source. Equally, a leader’s position in the organization permits him to administer organizational sources of punishment like demotion, withdrawal of pay increase, and the ultimate firing to subordinates.

1.5.3 Legitimate Power: This is the power that a leader possesses as a result of occupying a particular position or role in the organization. These are made up of directives and official requests issued by leaders to followers which they (followers) are expected to obey and accept as the norms and procedures in the organization. Legitimate power is a function of the leader’s position in the organization and has nothing to do with the leader’s personal characteristics.

1.5.4 Expert Power: This refers to the power that a leader possesses as a result of his knowledge and expertise regarding the work at hand. Here, the amount of influence that the leader will have over the followers depends on the degree of dependence of the followers on the leader’s expert knowledge. The more the followers depend on the leader, the higher the influence and vice versa. Expert power is a function of the leader’s personal characteristics and therefore does not depend on the leader’s position in the organization.

1.5.5 Referent Power: Referent power depends on the leader’s ability to attract respect and admiration from

followers as they identify with him, look- up to him or wish to emulate him in one way or the other. The more the followers wish to identify with and emulate the leader, the higher the leader will have influence over their behaviour. Referent power is solely a function of the personal characteristics of the leader and has nothing to do with the position the leader occupies in the organization.

Naturally, the more sources of power that a leader has at his disposal, the more likely he will be successful in influencing subordinates to do those things he would like them to do. However, possessing a higher degree of power is no guarantee that a leader will be effective. Leadership effectiveness will depend on not only upon the leader's power, but also upon what the leader uses his or her influence to encourage subordinates to achieve. Most importantly, leaders should understand that power is not needed for its own sake. It is meant to be used for solving organizational problems by displaying good leadership that will inspire the followers to put in their best.

2. Theories of Leadership Over the years, various models of leadership have been presented by different researchers on leadership. According to McGommick and Ilgen(1980),these models include the trait, behavioural, and the situation moderator theories. Although the validity of the above classification is not in doubt, for the purpose of this article, we shall sum-up the theories and discuss them under two broad contexts – the traditional and modern theories of leadership.

2.1 Traditional Concept of Leadership

The prevailing assumption among early researchers interested in leadership was that leaders are born, not made. This approach has also been characterized as the “Great Person” theory of leadership. It was assumed that some are set apart from others by virtue of their possession of some qualities of “greatness” and that it is such great persons who become leaders. The great men of history according to this view simply assume power and authority to lead others by virtue of their leadership capabilities and as such, their subordinates simply take orders and obey them. Leaders like Hitler, Napoleon, De Gaulle, and others, who influenced world history were such “Great Man” model leaders.

Another view of leadership under this context argues that the emergence or choice of a leader by a group is related to the immediate needs or circumstance that the group may find itself at any point in time. Such circumstance requires a special kind of leadership. Thus, a war time leader may not necessarily become the best peace time leader.

Both the “Great Man” model of leadership and the emergence model of leadership make a number of theoretical assumptions about leadership. First, they rely on the traits and charisma concepts of leadership. Thus leaders are assumed to possess certain traits such as intelligence, aggressiveness, or other personal characteristics that mark them out from non-leaders or followers. It is these leadership potentialities that induce leader-subordinate relationship and explain leader effectiveness. It is also these leadership qualities that enable leaders mobilize and exercise their power or influence over others in the group. The second assumption is that these qualities are in-born. This approach of leadership implies that understanding leadership requires the identification and measurement of those personal traits that differentiate leaders from followers.

While it is clear that leader traits alone cannot completely explain leadership effectiveness, it is equally clear that such traits are not irrelevant to effective leadership. A balanced and complete approach to leadership effectiveness in organization must take into account the personal traits and skills of the leader and this will now take us to the next part of our discussion of leadership theories – the modern approach to leadership.

2.2 Modern Concept of Leadership

The modern approach to leadership behaviour takes a more descriptive/analytical case study focus. This is because of the apparent dissatisfaction with the trait concept of leadership which does not account for group antecedent variables. The concept of modern leadership advocates an analysis of leadership behaviour that focus on the structure and ecology of organizations that determine how a leader behaves or what a leader does in a given situation instead of on what a leader is.

According to Fiedler (1978), the behaviour of leaders in organizations are contingent upon organizational variables, rather than leadership behaviours being solely shaped by the personal variables of the leader. This is the contingency theory of leadership and is in line with the behavioural concept of leadership. The model argues that leadership behaviour is contingent upon situations and that leadership effectiveness can be measured in terms of situational variables as they affect leadership styles.

Another theory of leadership based on situation-moderator variables is the Vroom-Yetton model. According to Vroom and Yetton (1973), leadership behaviour centers on decision-making. A leader's effectiveness is related to the way and manner he distributes decision-making functions in the organization. They argue that a leader's option to distribute functions is related to situational factors such as time, subordinates ability to execute functions and the level of subordinates' commitment to the organization. Under this theoretical view point, a leader's effectiveness is measured by his appropriateness in delegating authority and functions.

We shall not conclude our discussion on the modern concept of leadership without a look at the Path-Goal Theory. This concept of leadership is based upon the research by Martin Evans (1970) and by Robert House and his colleagues (1971). The basic idea behind the theory is that a leader can influence the satisfaction, motivation, and performance of subordinates primarily by (1) providing subordinates with rewards; (2) making the attainment of those rewards contingent upon the accomplishment of performance goals; (3) helping subordinates obtain rewards by clarifying the path to the goals. That is, helping subordinates understand exactly what they must do to obtain rewards and making these paths easier to travel. Making the paths easier involves providing subordinates with coaching, direction, and assistance when needed. The theory argues that in order to accomplish the foregoing, a leader will have to engage in different types of leadership behaviours in response to the nature and demands of the particular situation.

3. Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are all about the behaviour patterns of the leader when integrating organizational personnel interests in pursuit of some goals or objectives. There are various classifications of leadership styles by different management writers and researchers. Some classified the styles as consisting of exploitative and benevolent, autocratic and participative while others are of the opinion that they are made up of autocratic, paternalistic, participative, and laissez fair leadership. In this article, we shall adopt the following classification mentioned below as our guide in the pursuit of what the article wants to achieve.

3.1 Autocratic Leadership

The autocratic style is at one end of leadership continuum. Decision making in this leadership style is located solely within the province of the leader. The autocratic leader assigns tasks, provides facilities and direction without consultation with the individual carrying out the work. Such leaders can employ either positive or negative approaches. If the approach used to stimulate and influence is grounded primarily on fear, threat, and force, it is labeled negative leadership, and its methods looked at as coercive. The coercive leader is one who commands and expects compliance. The leader is dogmatic and leads by his or her ability to give or withhold rewards, and punishment.

If the leader's methods are based on incentive and reward, it is characterized as positive leadership. Such autocratic leader can implement his decisions through benevolence, and/or manipulation. The benevolent leader uses positive techniques such as praise - **"a pat on the back"**, tact, and diplomacy to get the desired results. The manipulative leader, allows the subordinates to participate in the decision-making process, but he nevertheless **"pulls the strings"** behind. He has a subtle way of taking the decision by himself while creating an impression of participation by the followers.

Some situations where autocratic leadership may be a better option of leadership include (a) a situation of emergency, (b) where a heterogeneous work force is involved, and (c) where the leader is wise, just, and considerably in advance of the wisdom and understanding of the followers. Under these situations, the ideal leadership may be the autocratic style. But autocratic leadership in any case has serious short-comings. It does not develop among the followers a pride of accomplishment, personal development or satisfaction from self-actualization. Autocratic leadership is likely to antagonize subordinates and rob the organization of lasting loyalty and co-operation.

3.2 Paternalistic Leadership

Paternalistic leadership stresses a paternal or fatherly influence in the relationship between the leader and the subordinates and is manifest in a watchful care for the comfort and welfare of the followers. It aims to protect and guide. In some instances, the approach may be too sentimental. The basic idea here is that the leader should make each worker feel useful and important. He should equally keep his subordinates informed and listen to their objections to his plans and allows them to exercise some self-control on routine matters. It is this type of leadership that made Japan what it is today. But western critics say that although the intentions are usually good, it results in subordinates not being able to develop self-reliance and independence. They equally asserted that for the most part, paternalism yields successful performance, but not on continuous future basis because that success depends upon the continuation of the paternalistic leader's services. The critics conclude that this type of leadership is deficient in providing the necessary elements of continuity in performance.

However, the history of success of Japanese paternalism in economic and social development has been such as to make the western world describe the Japanese achievement in industrialization as a miracle. Solomon Levine (1958), described it as a phenomenal conversion from backward agrarianism to advanced industrialization. That success has maintained its continuity, again to a point that the western world are seriously considering what in Japanese paternalism could be adopted in western practices.

3.3 Participative Leadership

Participative leadership also known as democratic leadership is claimed to have been nearly as old as

mankind but its practice in management is comparatively new. Among the behavioural scientists that contributed to make managers or leaders conscious of it as a management practice is Rensis Likert in his system 3 of management. In it, the manager discusses with the subordinates before he issues broad orders from which subordinates feel free to act on. The leader suggests possible actions with his recommendations but awaits the reaction of the subordinates before putting them into effect. In some situations, participative leadership is merely a manipulative approach because behind the open discussion, the leader **“pulls the strings”**. Such a leader discusses a problem with the subordinates, gets their ideas and suggestions to the problem solutions with the pros and cons of each possibility, and then, after a full discussion, him alone will decide on the action to take. But where it is honestly experimented, it is broadly a mental and emotional involvement of the followers to make contributions to goals and to assure their share of the responsibility for achieving the goals. This principle is based on the assumption that people want to participate, from which they feel that they are recognized or have contributed to the ultimate decisions made. The leader allows them an opportunity to use their own initiative and make contributions. He also supports them in accomplishing their tasks. This system applies especially in situation where the leader and the subordinate group are knowledge workers.

Participative leadership, however, does not mean that the subordinates decide what is done or what is not. This is because the ultimate responsibility for the decision still rest with the leader. It is the decision making process that is shared among the group members.

Ross A. Weber (1975), has tacitly outlined some of the benefits of participative leadership. According to him, the follower who has participated in determining what is to be done, will probably understand the decision and agree that a certain course of action is necessary and proper. He thus, exercises some power and has the opportunity to express himself and exercise his abilities. It motivates followers to contribute, and encourage them to accept responsibility. In the same vein, participative leadership will afford the leader the opportunity to recognize the follower's power and expertise which he can solicit and combine with his own to reach joint and perhaps better decision. Weber in his conclusion pointed out that most practicing managers are not enthusiastic about participative leadership because (a) the fear of losing their power, (b) it is difficult to apply, and (c) it is time consuming.

3.4 Laissez- Faire Leadership

The laissez- faire style of leadership is at the other end of the continuum from the autocratic style. With this style, the leader attempts to pass the responsibility for decision making to the subordinates. The leader gives little or no direction and allows subordinates a great deal of freedom. Also subordinates are loosely structured. The decision making process with this type of leadership is slow, and there can be a great deal of **“bulk passing”**. As a result, the task may not be undertaken, and conditions may become somewhat chaotic. The implications of this leadership style appear to be so negative that McGregor (1960), would not presume that the parties involved are Theory y oriented. He had expressed doubt about the existence in the real world of people who need little or no direction, even among a group of scientists working in a laboratory. One can safely say that the laissez- faire leadership style would not provide effective leadership at all. This type of leadership can be likened to a family situation where the mother is on her own, the children are on their own, and the father goes on his own. Everybody is on his or her own. There is no co-ordination, direction, and control. Just like an organization where the leader employs laissez-faire leadership style, the family needs the grace of God to survive.

4. Summary and Conclusion

What we have discussed so far are questions of organizational behaviour which are conditioned by the environment and social influence. Organizational behaviour as social influence are actions of the people in an organization conditioned by the expectations of others – the leader and the led.

In this article, we have reviewed a wide variety of approaches and theories regarding leadership in organization. While our discussion has made it clear that there is no single theory of leadership that we can endorse as the correct or valid theory, an overall look at what we know about leadership does permit us to develop some relatively clear implications for managers regarding leadership in organization.

The very term leadership naturally serves to draw our attention to leaders themselves and focus our interest on the ways on which leaders influence their followers. As a result, research on leadership has tried to understand how different types of leaders and different types of leader behaviours course followers to react in different ways.

An important contribution of recent researches on leadership has been to point out the shortsightedness of this view of leader-follower relations. While it is obviously true that leaders can and do influence their followers, it is equally true that leaders and followers engage in interactions with one another, which necessarily implies the existence of mutual influence i. e. **give and take relationship**. In other words, not only is it true that leaders

influence followers, but it is also true that followers influence leaders.

The validity of this claim has been demonstrated in a variety of recent research studies among which include that of Farris G. F. and Lim F. G. Jr. (1969). In their own research to support the claim of mutual influence between the leader and followers, Lowin A. and Craig J. R. (1968) found that the performance of subordinates can have a strong causal impact upon the behaviour of their leaders. Buttressing their point, they opined that leaders whose subordinates have performed incompetently tend to begin supervising them (subordinates) much more closely, to remind them of their mistakes, to criticize unauthorized breaks, and to spend more time checking on their whereabouts and activities. In his own contribution, Greene C. N. (1979) stated that incompetence performance by followers tends to result in leaders becoming more directive and insistent about how work should be carried out and more likely to refuse a subordinate's request to switch from one task to another. He went further to assert that leaders of incompetent subordinates also tend to become less considerate and less friendly toward their subordinates. Looking at the positive side of subordinates' performance, he claimed that subordinates who perform effectively tend to elicit behaviour from their leaders that is less directive, more personal supportive, and more oriented towards delegating authority to their followers.

Thus it is clear that when we are studying leadership, we are studying a mutual influence process wherein leaders influence followers and followers also influence leaders and that is the central message that this article is preaching to everybody. The outward appearance of the behaviour and actions of the workers is a function of the leadership style of the leaders while the degree of performance of the leaders is also greatly influenced by the behaviour and actions of the workers. They depend on each other in some way and each gets something from other. They are inter-dependent. Any action in one attracts reactions from the other and that is the symbiosis in their relationship. A leader that exhibits good leadership makes followers happy, gives them sense of belonging, increases their morale, and creates conducive environment for the leader to effectively manage the organization. On the other hand, a bad leader creates anxiety in the minds of the followers, breeds distrust, hatred, and other dysfunctional behaviours on the part of the followers. These negative behaviours from the followers will make administration/management of the organization difficult for the leader and this can be likened to the proverb which says: "a child that says the mother will not sleep will also not sleep". It is equally in line with the biblical injunction which states that: "the measure you give is the measure you receive". A good leader enjoys good followership while a bad leader battles with bad followership. **A leader reaps what he or she sows.**

Any approach that views leadership as one-way influence process by showing how leaders influence their followers without any consideration of how the behaviour of the followers affect the performance of the leaders is to say the least incomplete and incompatible with the contemporary approach to organization management.

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