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Strategic Leadership and Practice
Establishing and Applying a Leadership Style to an Organization and the Actions to Take

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1. INTRODUCTION

As Alexander the Great quoted "I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep rather I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion" (UNICAF, topic 1, p.7). This quote shows how much leadership plays a significant role in the organization performance. Indeed most organizations do not figure out the significance of leadership and as a result fails to achieve organizational objectives. Leadership has been defined by many scholars and authors in a different way in the past. Among the recent definitions and the one stated by UNICAF University Strategic Leadership and Practice Module Week 1 by referring the definition of Lussier and Achua (2015, p.5);

"Leadership is the influencing process between leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change"

As we can understand from the definition, leadership is a kind of influencing process for the attainment of organizational goals. In order to influence subordinates and stakeholders within the organization leadership style is undeniable component which leads the coordinated effort to successful achievement. Without effective leadership style and successful application within the organization leaders may not guide themselves towards the attainment of organizational goals (UNICAF, Topic 1, p.7).

In this essay we are going to cover a range of leadership styles and the impact of each leadership styles on the organization performance and productivity of employees. Then after, we go through each leadership style evaluation critically and suggest as well as apply to the presumed Company that I am considered to be a new senior manager that having 57 employees under my leadership.

2. MAIN CONCEPTS OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

According to Bhargavi and Yaseen, by stating the definition of Yukl (2010), defined leadership as "the process of influencing others and make them understand what has to be done, how it should be done, how to facilitate people for the common direction towards the organization goals". In addition to this definition, they also incorporated Northouse`s (2010) definition, which states "leadership is a process of a given person encouragement of a group of people towards a common shared vision or aim" (Bhargavi and Yaseen, 2016, p. 89).

2.1 Leadership and Management

In the UNICAF strategic leadership and practice week 2 module, the main differences between leaders and managers have been outlined. The main capabilities and adoption of leadership style of each individual identified as the main differences between and manager and leader. For instance, control based leadership and trust based leadership has been set as a difference between manager and leader respectively. In addition to this leaders are characterized by their attitude and responsiveness to employees need by implementing the necessary action to direct them effectively (UNICAF, topic 2, 2019, p.2).

Leadership emphasizes on motivating employees to execute extraordinary performance, advances expertise and capabilities for better achievement, and focuses on nurturing work progresses. It also concentrates on peoples in the organization to be proactive and forward looking unlike to be only operational. As a result of these characteristics, leadership floats over management due to its nature of superior and extraordinary expectation of performance UNICAF, topic 2, 2019, p. 3).For further elaboration of the differences between Manager and Leader please refer Appendix 1.

2.2 Leadership Styles

According to Bhargavi and Yaseen, the first research regarding leadership styles was conducted by Kurt Lewin in 1939 to know the different leadership styles. Bhargavi and Yaseen have included what is meant by leadership style. As per their inclusion of their research paper, a leadership style is the way and methodology of providing effecting plans, direction and inspiring people. They also stated that, on view of employees, leadership styles incorporate all clear and inherent activities which accomplished by their leader. Based on the study of Kurt Lewin, Leader of a group of researchers at that time, the leadership styles categorized in to three major leadership styles; *Autocratic or Authoritarian, Democratic or Participative, and Delegating.* Based the foundation on this study, Bhargavi and Yaseen included one additional theory i.e. *trait theory*(Bhargavi and Yaseen, 2016, p. 90).

Ogbonna and Harris classified leadership theories/styles in to four phases; 'trait' theory, 'style' and 'behavioral' theory, 'situational' and 'contingency' theory, and 'transactional' and 'transformational' (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767-768). UNICAF University also used this classification in the strategic leadership and practice topic 1 and 2. According to UNICAF, the leadership styles/theories categorized in to four phases like Ogbonna and Harris; 'trait' theory, 'behavioral' theory, 'contingency' theory, and 'contemporary' theory (UNICAF, topic 2, p. 4-6).In the contemporary theory, transactional vs. transformational style of leadership and participative or democratic style of leadership mentioned (UNICAF, topic 1, p. 1-6).

In agreement with Ogbonna and Harris and UNICAF`s leadership theories/ style classification, we critically evaluate each leadership theories/styles and we bring them to applicability of our deemed Company scenario.

2.2.1   Trait Theory

According to this theory successful leaders are born and they got innate characteristics that emanate from inheritance (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767). The theory assumes leaders certain characteristics or traits that originate from inheritance make them effective leader. The theory identified six qualitative characteristics that make the leader to be effective leader and

differentiate them from non-leaders. These characteristics or traits are enthusiasm, humility, toughness, integrity, warmth, and confidence (UNICAF, topic 1, p.3). However, these characteristics` or traits` are intrinsic and cannot be authenticated and difficult to categorize the theory failed down to criticisms and leading the establishment of 'style' and 'behavioral' approach to leadership (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767).

2.2.2   Style and Behavioral Theories

In contrary to trait theory style and behavioral theorists argue that successful leaders are made not born (UNICAF, topic 2, p.5). The theory depends on the argument that through training and observation people can become effective leaders and it focuses on the action of the leaders not on internal or intellectual value of the leaders(UNICAF, topic 1, p.5). These theorists shifted the characteristics of the leader to another theory that argue the style and behavior the leader adopted. This theory`s major conclusion is leaders who adopted democratic or participatory style of leadership are more successful. Such concept leads to 'one best way of leadership' like trait theory (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767). Again, this theory failed to incorporate main aspects regarding other situational factors which need to be considered in determining the successfulness of leaders. The ignorance of the importance of the situational factors role play and criticisms regarding this argument has led to the emergence of 'situational' and 'contingency' theory of leadership (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767).

Besides, UNICAF has outlined the argument of the contributors of behavioral theorists, Blake and Mouton- Ohio and Michigan University, 'task-oriented' and 'relationship-oriented' arguments. Task-oriented leaders idea is that job is the first priority and it doesn't matter whether they liked by their employees and subordinates or not. Whereas, the relationship-oriented leaders want to be liked by their employees and subordinates and getting the job done is the second priority. The managerial grid has in place to reconcile these two extremes. Concern for people is important as concern for production measuring on scale one to nine (UNICAF, topic 2, p.5).

2.2.3   Situational and Contingency Theories

The criticisms on 'one best way of leadership' shifted the focus to context-sensitive leadership theory called 'situational' and 'contingency' theory (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767). These theories came up with the idea that in order to be successful, leaders need first to understand each situational factors and then based on this understanding they adopt the necessary leadership style to deal with each circumstance (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 767).

In contingency theory, the work of Fiedler in 1967 has found great attention which suggests that leaders can use a specific leadership style based on their personal traits but also they use different style of leadership based on the situations. He delineated three vital magnitudes that impact the effectiveness of the leader. These are; 'position power', 'task structure', and 'leader-member relations'. According to Fiedler, position power is the power that the leader has in the organization and the power that influence the activities of the organization. Task structure is the attitude of the leader to allocate the activities to individuals. Leader-member relation is the degree of trust and respect that individuals have for their leader to follow him/her(UNICAF, topic 1, p. 4).

2.2.4   Transactional and Transformational Leadership

According to Bass and Avolio, the two of most important contemporary leadership styles are transactional and transformational leadership styles. Transactional leadership is based on the basic relationship between the employee and the leader. The exchange between the leader and subordinates is based on contract. Reward would be given if objectives set by the leader are met (Bass and Avolio, 1990). While, transformational leadership is based on trust by the leader on the subordinates and employees and make them deliver the ultimate aim set by the leader (Bass and Avolio, 1990).

As per Ogbonna and Harris, transactional leadership said to be 'instrumental' and highly focused on the exchange relation with employees. Transformational leadership said to passionate and visionary with an intrinsic ability to inspire employees (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000, p. 768).

2.3 Application To The Scenario

2.3.1   Trait Theory

The characteristics mentioned in the trait theory enthusiasm, humility, toughness, integrity, warmth, and confidence may help for organizational change. Enthusiasm would be much more suitable for innovation and organizational learning. Subordinates and employees want respect and courtesy in any culture and this will help to smooth the work process and to create conducive environment. Some objectives may need more effort than the others and in order to achieve such kind of objectives toughness regarding to challenges, complex work flows, and challenging staffs might be appropriate. Developing integrity as a leader is vital characteristic of a successful leader and helpful in the relationship-oriented perspective. The integrity of my leadership may result for being inspirational and liked by subordinates and employees. Warmth and confidence characteristics should be developed and applied in this Company`s leadership because in some circumstances cordiality gets the job done in a simple way. Without confidence trait it is difficult to accomplish the aim set by the Company.

Although, these traits are intrinsic and difficult to be categorized in oneself, they can be developed through training, observation, and application. Even if the trait theory believes that leaders are born, I consider that the six qualitative characteristics are very important and should be developed in my day to day leadership style. However, I strongly believe that 'one best way of leadership' is not important for my leadership style.

2.3.2   Behavioral Theory

Although I disagree with the argument that this theory not focuses on internal or intellectual value of the leaders, the argument that people can become effective leaders through training and observation is much helpful for my leadership style. Since competitive advantage enhanced from organizational learning, leaders cannot be effective leaders without regular training and observation. However, like trait theory, 'one best way of leadership' assumption is not suitable for my leadership style and there might be other situational factors need to be considered.

2.3.3 Situational and Contingency Theories

Understanding each situations and based on understanding of the situations adopt the appropriate leadership style to deal with each circumstance might be necessary for my leadership style. What I agreed here is that I can use specific leadership style based on my personal traits, for instance democratic style of leadership, but also I can use different style of leadership based on situations. As Fiedler outlined; 'position power', 'task structure', and 'leader-member relations' are crucial dimensions in my leadership styles.

As a leader I concentrate on power so that I can influence the activities of the Company. Allocation of tasks to individuals is core dimension of my leadership style. The degree of trust and respect would be balanced between me and subordinates, between subordinates and employees and within employees so that this trust and respect would result for better performance and employee satisfaction in the Company.

2.3.4 Transactional and Transformational Leadership

These two leadership styles are the most applicable leadership styles in my Company that I am intended to be a senior manager. In the transformational leadership style; I have four dimensions that the leadership style signaled; idealized influence, inspirational stimulation, intellectual motivation, and individualized consideration.

Dimension 1: idealized influence

I intended be hold in high regard and my employees seek to identify with me which we call it 'idealized influence'. In our company, representing idealized influence means act as a role model, are venerated, esteemed, and relied. As a transformational leader I share risks with others, I consider the needs of other over my own, and demeanor myself ethically.

Dimension 2: Inspirational stimulation

As a leader, I identify new opportunities, provide meaning and challenge, develop strong vision for the future. Communication of clear vision and demonstrating commitment to shared vision is vital in our Company.

Dimension 3: Intellectual motivation

I contest employees re-scrutinize some of their suppositions and inspire innovation and creativity over problem reconstruction, thoughts, intellectual inquisitiveness, and innovative approaches.

Dimension 4: Individualized consideration

I emphasize on my employees needs for attainment of objectives, growth, development and values that nurtures change and development. I maintain new learning opportunities, involve in coaching and mentoring, worthmultiplicity in my followers.

Transactional Leadership

Like transformational leadership style, transactional leadership is also necessary for our Company`s performance. However, I use each leadership style in different ways to motivate employees. Transformational leadership would be suitable to challenge the status quo. Transactional leadership would be more appropriate when there is a need to attain specific goals linking performance with rewards. This would be appropriate for the Company departments like; production and sales.

3. CONCLUSION

Nowadays the importance of strategic leadership is undeniable. Although there is a great concern as to the significance of leadership, selecting the appropriate leadership style that fit to the organization real case is another issue. Indeed, most researchers agree that 'there is no one way of leadership style', the concern for leadership style is much more study area for most researchers.

Before it reached the contemporary concept the leadership concept passed through different stages over years. The early concept of leadership i.e. trait theory has laid down for the emergence of the new argument of behavioral theory of leadership. Leaders are born argument and the six qualitative characteristics of effective leaders arguments were the debating area over the years. The criticisms and weakness identified in trait theory resulted for the conception of new leadership theories; behavioral theory, situational and contingency theory, transformational and transactional theory, democratic theory, autocratic theory, and laissez faire theory.

Of these leadership theories, transformational and transactional leadership styles are the most important leadership theories ever. However, each leadership theories have their own contributions and criticisms. Despite the fact that transformational leadership has got much space in the most researchers regarding leadership style and performance, both leadership styles cannot be seen two extreme poles. In our case scenario both leadership styles have gotten much emphasis to lead our deemed company. But, either both leadership styles and other theories require empirical evidence as to their effectiveness on different organizations. Although, the four magnitude of transformational leadership; *idealized influence, inspirational stimulation, intellectual motivation,* and *individualized consideration* were found to be the characteristics of transformational leader and some successful individuals mentioned in this regard. Besides, the contribution of transactional leadership style also became undeniable.

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UNICAF University (2019) Strategic Leadership and Practice Module, topic 1- 3

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: the main differences between Manager and Leader (taken from UNICAF University Strategic Leadership and Practice Module Week 2 page 3).

Manager	Leader
Reproduces	Creates
Depend on control	Encourages trust
Administers	Invents
Sustains	Advances
Emphasizesmainly on performance and figures	Emphasizes on people
Does things right	Does the right thing