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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR EXCELLENCE: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to review the leadership development in recent times and the impact of excellent leadership on the success of any organization. A review showed that excellent leaders endorse better performance. On a practical level the findings suggest that excellent leadership in organizations is the key to success in a highly competitive environment.

KEYWORDS

development, excellence and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

In human resource management (HRM) terms, Coleman and Earley (2005) draw attention to the worldwide trend to decentralizing the management of organization that has moved the responsibility for managing people to the unit level. This involves getting the right people to do the job (managing the organization), ensuring that the job is done well (performance management) and supporting managers' ability to achieve organizational goals and promotion (development and succession). Leadership supply remains a vital element in the life of any organization. To appoint someone to leadership positions within organization has potentially profound implication, not only for those individuals, but also for their colleagues and the organization in which they work. This study offers a basis to bring forward helpful practices related to different organizations in different contexts. In any organization, it is important to identify the level at which grievance is settled, the level of employee satisfaction, industrial relations, the interpersonal relations between the employer and the employee, the effectiveness of communication, the level of motivation and the turnover ratio which indicates the culture in that organization and a positive strong culture is develop by the excellent leaders. Now days, the business environment has become very fluid and turbulent. Today's market is highly competitive and factors like quality, flexibility, innovation and creativity are prerequisites for survival. The new concept of workers' participation gives a feeling of belongingness and commitment to the employee. It has been proved that leaders of an organization can lead it on the path of success. Indeed, to lead, organization needs excellent leadership. The concept of retaining and nurturing talent within the organization has become imperative for the development of an organization. Leaders are the key player, to make the organization survive and success in a highly competitive environment. The success of an organization is logically linked to the actions of the leader in charge of that organization. Changes in managerial effectiveness are directly related to changes in organizational effectiveness (House, 1988). If modern leaders are by definition a reflection of modern society, then their contribution to the betterment of society depends largely on their ability to function effectively within the specific situation of the time. Given the impact of a potential leadership crisis, the present study has been commissioned to explore practices, drivers and barriers to leadership development. Understanding practices and potentialities with regard to these issues is important. As one, possible solution to a leadership crisis is to emphasize the growth of leadership talent within an organization, therefore the notion of 'growing your own leaders' has emerged. (Rhodes and Brundrett, 2005; 2006). At the same time, it is also important to understand the role of a leader in the success of an organization and how important it is for any organization to foster and development excellent leadership within the organization.

AN OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES

The field of leadership study has resulted in numerous theories, some of which were useful in understanding this study. These theories are mentioned briefly.

TRAIT APPROACH

The systematic social scientific study of leadership did not begin until the early 1930s, and almost all prevailing theories of leadership that have been developed since that time are distinctly American in character (House & Aditya, 1997). The dominant research and subsequent literature concerning leadership during the 1930s and 1940s concentrated on leadership trait theories (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 1996). This was the belief that personal characteristics such as gender and appearance and psychological traits such as authoritarianism and intelligence were the determinants of successful leadership. The early works of Gibb (1947), Jenkins (1947), and Stogdill (1948) identified numerous traits that were associated with measures of leader effectiveness. These leadership traits were commonly grouped by characteristic. Examples of traits within the characteristics groups include: personal characteristics (age, appearance), social background characteristics (education, social status), intelligence and ability characteristics (intelligence, judgment), personality characteristics (enthusiasm, self-confidence), task-related characteristics (desire to excel, persistence), and social characteristics (ability to enlist cooperation, administrative ability) (Bass, 1990).

BEHAVIORAL APPROACH

Disenchantment with the limitations of trait theories by the 1950s caused a shift to research that focused on the predisposition of leaders toward particular behaviours. These studies were either performed in controlled laboratory settings or in the field by asking individuals to record personal observations of leader behaviour. Leadership studies initiated by the Bureau of Business research at Ohio State University in 1945 attempted to identify specific leader behaviours. An instrument was created to collect the observations called the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire. Participants were asked to judge the frequency that they observed the leader engaging in these specific behaviours. The early works of the Ohio State staff revealed that initiating structure and consideration were separate and distinct dimensions of leader behaviour. In these studies, the two categories were considered separate axes rather than linked on a single Continuum. (Stogdill & Coons, 1957). Leadership studies were also taking place at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan during this same time period (Kahn & Katz, 1953; Likert, 1961; Mann, 1965). These studies identified two similar leadership constructs for those identified at Ohio State, which the researchers referred to as production orientation and employee orientation. Research interest in the two dimensions of leadership behaviours suggested by the Ohio State and Michigan studies eventually found its way into the management field, resulting in the creation of the Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton (1964). The two dimensions were listed as concern for production along the X-axis and concern for people along the Y-axis. A simple scoring scale of 1 to 9 (1 low, 9 high) allowed Blake and Mouton to identify five distinct management styles: (a) impoverished management (low production, low people), (b) country club management (low production, high people), (c) authority-obedience management (high production, low people), (d) organizational man management (medium production, medium people), and (e) team management (high production, high people).

SITUATIONAL APPROACH

A contrast to the early works of the trait and behavioural theorists was the situational approach to leadership. Murphy (1941) felt that leadership was not found within the person but was a function of the occasion. The specific aspects of the situation that either enhance or nullify the effect of leadership traits or behaviours were referred to as situational moderator variables. Theories that explain leadership effectiveness in terms of these variables were called situational theories of leadership. These theories describe aspects of leadership that apply better to some situations than to others. Situational leadership theorists insisted that there is no one best way to influence people. A Harvard Business review article by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1957/1973) was one of the initial attempts to

describe leadership based on the situation. The result was a description of leader behaviour along the democratic (relationship-orientation) to authoritarian (task-orientation) continuum, based on the source of the leader's authority (Tannenbaum & Schmidt). The authoritarian style of leadership assumes power comes from the position itself, while the democratic style of leadership believes that power is granted by the followers. A wide variety of leadership styles were identified between the two extremes.

The effects of change and studies of change management influenced leadership research by the 1990s. Despite all the work that had been done in change management over the past few decades, the concept of change had not been successfully integrated into existing leadership theory (Yukl, 2002b). In 1991, Scandinavian researchers Ekvall and Arvonen suggested that a three-dimensional taxonomy related to change provided the most useful way to group specific leader behaviours into general categories. Yukl (2002b) formalized this acknowledgement of the significant effect that change has on business practices with the introduction of change-oriented behaviour as a distinct new behavioural category. The resultant tri-dimensional leadership theory added the third dimension of change to the traditional two dimensions of task and relations. Tri-dimensional leadership theory was developed to address the shortcomings of existing leadership models. Previous studies that focused on task and relations behaviours showed a positive but weak correlation with subordinate performance (Fisher & Edwards, 1988). Tri-dimensional leadership theory uses a hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviours with three behaviour metacategories: task oriented, relations oriented, and change oriented. Each metacategory includes specific component behaviours that correspond closely to behaviours identified in prior research on effective leadership over the last half century (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). The 13 leadership behaviours described by the tri-dimensional leadership theory are:

1. **Short-term planning:** deciding what to do, how to do it, who will do it, and when it will be done;
2. **Clarifying roles and responsibilities:** the communication of plans, policies, and role expectations;
3. **Monitoring operations and performance:** gathering information about the operation, including progress and performance;
4. **Supporting:** showing consideration, acceptance, and concern for the needs and feelings of people;
5. **Recognizing:** giving praise and showing appreciation to others for effective performance, achievements, and contributions;
6. **Consulting:** involving the followers in making important decisions;
7. **Empowering:** delegating more autonomy and discretion to subordinates;
8. **Developing:** providing the opportunity to develop skills and confidence;
9. **External monitoring:** observing and recording the external environment in order to identify threats and opportunities;
10. **Envisioning change:** articulating and inspiring a concept of a better future;
11. **Encouraging innovative thinking:** providing an environment where subordinates are inspired to create new ideas for improving the organization;
12. **Taking risks for change:** willingness to stray from the accepted norms in order to improve organizational performance; and
13. **Explaining the need for change:** communicating the importance and inevitability of change within the organization.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND EXCELLENCE

The corporate world is now facing recruitment problems for leadership positions. These problems are especially severe for the recruitment of higher level managers. Traditionally associated with a single individual, notably the head, leadership in organizations has increasingly become associated with individuals at different levels. Ensuring a supply of able middle and senior leaders in organizations is of key strategic importance to the success of an organization and the nation as whole. Another major problem is the high attrition and growth aspirations of the workforce. At least 60,000 of the 171,000 workforce change jobs every year. About 80% of them look for better leaders. Team leaders want to upgrade to supervisors, quality professionals or operations heads. The HR problem threatens to soon become grave.

Following is the table showing the Attrition Rates in different countries in the year 2008 from a survey which was done by a magazine in UK.

TABLE 1

| Attrition rates | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| USA | 42% |
| Australia | 29% |
| Europe | 24% |
| India | 18% |
| Global Average | 24% |

The findings in the field of leadership development has revealed that without talent development, a rich source of human potential remains untapped and untrained and may be lost. In commercial organizations this typically involves the organization taking a long-term view so that future requirements for leadership roles and skills can be addressed. It involves well-targeted career development for talented individuals and senior managers working together to recognize and value the leadership potential of others. Much commercial sector literature emphasizes that the adoption of a laissez faire attitude to future leaders is irresponsible, as performance motivation and retention are seen as important outcomes of active succession planning.

In India, a number of individual studies are beginning to offer a picture of some of the issues involved in leadership development. In her book, "Leadership Development in the New Millennium", Jyoti Budhraj focuses on the application of leadership development practices in diverse contexts and analyses its relative implications.

Leaders who have a strong concern for the goals of the organization were considered to be task-oriented (Bass, 1967). Their assumptions about roles, purposes, and behaviour reflected their interest in completing assignments (Bass, 1990). Misumi (1985) conceived task-oriented leadership behaviour as performance leadership, behaviour that prompts and motivates the group's achievement of goals.

The importance of leadership is denoted in the works of Bass and Avolio (1993) and Schein (1992), according to these writers, if culture is seen as an integral part of the organization, then the culture is molded by the leader of that organization (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Schein, 1992).

Schein (1992) observes that, during the process of organizational formation, the founder of a company creates an organization which reflects their values and beliefs. In this sense, the founder creates and shapes the performance of their organization. However, as the organization develops and time passes, the created culture of the organization exerts an influence on the leader and shapes the actions and style of the leader. Through this dynamic ongoing process, the leader creates and is in turn shaped by the organizational culture. In summarizing the consensus of leadership development and excellence, Bass and Avolio (1993) mirror the argument of Schein (1992) by suggesting that leader shapes the culture and is responsible for the performance and success of any organization.

Bass (1985) demonstrates the leadership by examining the impact of different styles of leadership on organization. Similarly, Brown (1992) observes that good leaders need to develop the skills that enable them to alter aspects of their organization in order to improve their organizational performance.

Leaders do not command excellence, they build excellence. Excellence is "being all you can be" within the bounds of doing what is right for your organization. To reach excellence a person must first be a leader of good character. Organizations will not achieve excellence by figuring out where it wants to go, then having leaders do whatever they have to in order to get the job done, and then hope their leaders acted with good character. This type of thinking is backward. Pursuing excellence should not be confused with accomplishing a job or task. Excellence starts with leaders of good and strong character who engage in the entire process of leadership and the first process is being a person of honorable character.

Character develops over time. A person's observable behavior is an indication of his/her character. This behavior can be strong or weak, good or bad. A person with strong character shows drive, energy, determination, self-discipline, willpower, and nerve. He sees what he wants and goes after it. He attracts followers. On the other hand, a person with weak character shows none of these traits. His traits are disorganized, he vacillates and is inconsistent. An organization needs leaders with both strong and good characteristics, people who will guide them to the future and show that they can be trusted.

To be an effective or an excellent leader, followers must have trust in him and they need to be sold on his vision. Korn-Ferry International, an executive search company, performed a survey on what organizations want from their leaders. The respondents said they wanted people who were both ethical and who convey a strong vision of the future. In any organization, a leader's actions set the pace. This behavior wins trust, loyalty, and ensures the organization's continued vitality.

As correctly said by Mr. Asim Khan, CEO, BMG, the success of any company depends in part on the match between individuals and the skills of leader of the organization. Leaders need an accurate understanding of the organization's culture in order to direct activities in a productive way and to avoid the destructive influence of having employees who are not committed to the company's goals. A shared sense of purpose starts with the hiring process and continues with careful attention to how employees are motivated and rewarded for their efforts. Leaders need to continually transmit the values through efforts such as story telling, rituals and firm-sponsored social events, as well as consistent positive feedback that gives each member of the organization a sense of importance.

Excellent leaders usually set the tone by exerting core values that form the overall dominant culture shared by the majority of an organization's members. So, if management does not take the time to understand the drives that motivates an organization, problems are inevitable. New procedures and activities will be very difficult to implement if they do not mesh with the organization's culture. Creating an environment where people enjoy and value their work is a key to success and it is the responsibility of a leader. Here comes the important role of leader. To do this effectively, leaders must be sure to communicate clear expectations from every member of the organization. These expectations should be supported by the words and actions of leaders who regularly let people know how their work is important to the organization.. The bottom line for leaders who want to create a culture of success is to start with creating a positive environment. Bring in people whose values are in line with the organization's values and continue to acknowledge success and involve the whole organization in maintaining an environment that allows people to enjoy working hard to meet the company's goals. All this can be done by a leader who is excellent.

Some of the leading organizations and their steps towards creating excellent leaders and taking measures for leadership development are mentioned below:

CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Centre for Leadership Development, established in partnership with the Initiatives of Change, an international body headed by Mr. Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Hans Raj Bhardwaj, the Governor of Karnataka. The Centre's mission is to contribute to the development of leadership not only in private enterprises but also in public institutions in India.

INFOSYS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TO NURTURE NEXT GENERATION LEADERS

Infosys Technologies had set up its Leadership Institute at Mysore. The Infosys Leadership Institute is the cornerstone of an Infosys Leadership System for Infosys all over the world. The Institute is to help manage Infosys' growth, to prepare Infosys to face the complexities of the rapidly changing marketplace and to bring about a paradigm shift in the work culture by instilling leadership qualities.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP TALENT IN WIPRO

The process adopted by WIPRO for Leadership Development follows a lifecycle pattern. To develop leaders, WIPRO trains its employees on a regular basis. It has created development programs along the lifecycle pattern of leadership. There are five programs that focus on sharpening leadership skills of individual leaders. 1 Entry Level Program (ELP), 2 New Leaders' Program (NLP), 3 Wipro Leaders' Program (WLP), 4 Business Leaders' Program (BLP), 5 Strategic Leaders' Program (SLP)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN ICICI BANK (INDIA)

ICICI Bank is India's second largest bank and largest private sector bank with over 50 years' presence in financial services. ICICI Bank has built leadership capabilities for global markets and investing in high-level executive education programs such as a new Leadership Development Program, designed by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania for senior managers of the ICICI Group. This leadership training program has the strong support and involvement of ICICI's top leaders.

CONCLUSION

It is mandatory to have development mechanisms based on good Human Resource Development and Human Resource Management practices to ensure reasoned and systematic decision-making with respect to leadership development. Some of these mechanisms are already in place and are rooted in the effectiveness of development mechanisms. Although, many organizations are careful to produce and implement leadership development policies and practice, the mindset of senior leaders, the culture they have created within the organization, the static influences of context such as organization size and the more flexible immediate context of organizational performance all appear to be influential. Therefore, organizations need to engage effective mechanisms of leadership development such as mentoring, job rotation, training & development, shadowing, networking, peer-coaching and learning walks in other organizations. It is recommended that the organizations should encourage teamwork, engender trust, offer clear route mapping for career development and make time for leadership development.

It is observed that the most important indicator of organizational success is the leadership style of the most senior person in the organization and his or her team. Senior organizational members act as powerful role models through their behavior. These findings underline the key importance of senior managers being visibly committed to the development and encouragement of leadership talent within the middle level managers. The most crucial thing for retention of staff is their perception of whether they will be able to develop within an organization in a way that meets their aspirations, therefore, with the attitude and efforts for leadership development, organizations can positively contribute to the growth of their own leaders, thus, contribute in the success overall.

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