

LEADERSHIP THEORY TODAY

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a discussion on the basis of data collected with the help of a survey and a summary of the results of the data analysis. It also presents the research questions in context to their respective hypothesis and the analytical techniques to arrive at the conclusion. 360-degree leadership style feedback, readiness matrix software, and composite profile were used as a statistical analysis by the Centre for Leadership Studies Inc.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership*

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INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH VARIABLES

Hersey's and Blanchard's SLT (1996) stated that leadership styles have a major impact on employee performance. A leader has the power and ability to influence the subordinate's bi rating their readiness to do the work from high to low at the same time using the appropriate leadership style to assure the readiness of the subordinates. The readiness of the subordinate can be regressive because of various factors within the workplace environment; the leader should have empathy with their subordinates by being flexible in behaviour and leadership style. For instance, an employee with high responsibility and motivation can show depressive attitude whenever they experience a particular work. This example represents regression and the leader should include various steps to enhance the supervision at the same time providing the necessary instructions so that the subordinates should have the required level of readiness.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research structure of the study is based on the impact of the leadership style on the employees' performance. This is outlined in this article that discusses the Situational Leadership Theory reviewed in Chapter II. The variable of manager leadership behavior comprises of four leadership styles:

- S1: high task and no relationship-oriented behavior.
- S2: high task and high relationship-oriented behavior.
- S3: low task and high relationship-oriented behavior.
- S4: low task and low relationship-oriented behavior.

The intimidating variable based on the situation is the readiness level of the subordinate, which comprises of the task and psychological readiness levels (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson 2001). There are four levels of readiness:

- R1: low readiness. The subordinate is unwilling and unable.
- R2: low medium readiness. The subordinate is willing but unable.
- R3: medium-high readiness. The subordinate is unwilling but able.
- R4: high readiness. The subordinate is willing and able.

On the basis of the situational leadership theory, the study identifies if there is a significant difference between the variables when all the leadership behaviors, as well as readiness levels, are matched, for example, when S1 matches R1, S2 with R2, and so on (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson 2001). The research design analyzes the situational leadership theory, questioning if it supports and understands the impact of leadership styles and the levels of readiness on the distribution corporation.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The following are the research questions along with hypothesis:

1. Which leadership style is primarily followed in a Distribution Corporation?

Ho1: There is no primary leadership style in the distribution corporation. Ha1: There is a primary leadership style in the distribution corporation.

2. Which is the secondary leadership style followed in the distribution corporation?

Ho2: There is no secondary leadership style followed in the distribution corporation. Ha2: There is a secondary leadership style followed in the distribution corporation. For the testing of this hypothesis, a K-Means Cluster Analysis was utilized. The purpose of this analysis was to identify homogeneous groups in leadership styles.

3. What is the perception of the leader towards the adaptability of the leadership style in the distribution corporation?

Ho3: There is no perception of the leader towards the adaptability of the leadership style in the distribution corporation. Ha3: There is a significant difference in the perception of the leader towards the adaptability of the leadership style in the distribution corporation. For testing of hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, cluster analysis, and a non-parametric rank correlation test were performed. Along with this, the calculation of similarities among the variables was also done.

4. Is there a variation among the operations section and the support section in their perception of the entire leadership style adaptability in the distribution corporation?

Ho4: There is no variation among the operations section and the support section in their perception of the entire leadership style adaptability in the distribution corporation.

Ha4: There is a variation among the operations section and the support section in their perception of the entire leadership style adaptability in the distribution corporation.

5. Is there a difference in the leadership style adaptability of the followers among the operations section and support section?

Ho5: There is no difference in the leadership style adaptability of the followers among the operations section and support section. Ha5: There is a difference in the leadership style adaptability of the followers among the operations

section and support section. For testing this hypothesis, correlation analysis, a comparison test of medians of the two sections, and the Kruskal-Wallis test were done.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The given demographic information for the research was gathered from the respondents in this study which comprises the gender, age, Manager or supervisor, department, and length of service. The purpose of obtaining all this information is to test the leadership style.

INSTRUMENTS

The measuring instruments utilized in the study are LEAD-Self and LEAD-Other instruments. Both the instruments are utilized to know if given leadership style is based on the perception of the leader and the perception of the staff. The assessment of the leadership is done by the LEAD-Self and the staff members are done by LEAD-Other which helps to validate the leader's perception. The LEAD-Self instrument is available commercially. It presents 12 different circumstances involving the immediate subordinates of the leader. All the 12 situations given in the questionnaire necessitates the respondent to select one out of the four possible answers. The respondent has to select the best option which describes their probable behavior in the specific situation. The items are then scored on the basis of four groups where each group represents a different level of readiness for the job.

The information obtained with the help of LEAD-Self gives an insight into the prevailing strengths as well as areas for leadership skill development. It provides information regarding the leadership behavior used and the intensity to which the behaviors are matched with the needs of others. The LEAD-Other is an instrument used to compare with the instruments of the Lead-self. It represents the perception of the subordinates towards their supervisors or managers' leadership style, adaptability, and effectiveness. The information collected with the Lead-Other instrument gives information on the perception of the subordinates for the leader's ability to influence. It provides information regarding the most appropriate leadership behavior and the intensity to which the behavior fulfil the needs of others.

LEADERSHIP THEORY

The basic assumption of the situation and leadership theory is that the task leadership and readiness of the follower moderates the relationship behavior. The level of readiness of the follower represents the appropriate level of task leadership as well as related behavior. With the change in the level of readiness of the follower, the amount of relationship behavior and task leadership should also change. As the task relationship behavior of the leader matches with the readiness of the follower, the effectiveness of the behavior will be inculcated in the performance of followers and satisfaction with the leader. The theory examines the match between relationship behavior and task leadership. It also examines the readiness of the follower in various types of organizations and at various levels.

RESEARCH DOMAIN

The researcher collected the relationship data between the leader and follower in various organizations having major distribution corporation. The test comprises the stratum of managers and supervisors that took an initiative to participate. The study is relevant because it provides the hierarchy of the leader and follower and the knowledge in the setting which are not subject to the previous study.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

Between 1998 and 2001, round 220 professional managers and supervisors of distribution corporations from various areas of the US participated in the situational leadership training. All these professionals worked in the warehouse environment based on the shifts in the shipping and receiving areas. The sample obtained is from the workers working in the distribution corporation of various metropolitan cities of the US. The organisations are categorised in chemical, direct shipment, technology, and consumer sectors. 41 supervisors and managers participated in the technology sector in the lead self-survey. Around 220 managers and supervisors participated in training in the situational leadership theory training given by the corporation. The lead others survey was taken by 42 associates, 77 subordinates, and 41 superiors.

In an attempt to obtain the sampling ratio of 10%, the sampling technique used in the study was stratified random sampling. The questionnaires were coded so that the results of workers and managers can be matched.

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT AND TECHNIQUE

Every participant was told to fill the lead survey and give it back within three weeks. Along with this, each manager was also provided with three to five lead other questionnaire for their employees to rate the leadership style and effectiveness. The data was collected through interoffice mail. The questionnaire was distributed to various people chosen for the study. Email, personal contacts and telephone were used to follow up on the contacts. It was estimated that the information will be collected within 8-week time period. There are two implications of the research: utility of the subordinate and associate input in the effective evaluation of the leadership and identifying the need for the development of leader with the help of 360-degree leadership style feedback.

The validity and reliability of the data gathered were interpreted by the Center for Leadership Studies located in Escondido California. The analysis of LEAD data presented in Paul Hersey's (2001), "Situational Leadership: Some Aspects of its Influence on Organizational Development," doctoral dissertation at the University of Massachusetts in 1975. The analysis of both the lead tests, the information was gathered from the sample of 20000 leadership events in 14 cultures (Hersey and Blanchard, 2001). Out of all the respondents, 2000 middle manager was interviewed from the education and industry. The interviews comprised the self-perception of the leadership style along with subordinates and peers.

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