

660 5

Business



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Contingency Leadership Theories Contingency Leadership Theories

Introduction Situational leadership theory (SLT) is a leadership style whereby the leader/the one in charge emits behavior that he/she thinks fits suitably to handle the situation at hand. The behavior may be geared towards the completion of a certain task or even enhancing the relationship of one's followers or subjects. Task behavior in this case entails the leader explicitly explaining how a certain task is to be performed or ought to be. On the other hand, relationship behavior entails how the leader generally communicates or associates with his/her followers in the running of day to day activities.

1. Elements of Situational Leadership Theory Application to Jacobs Situation

Situational leadership model has outlined three critical elements that come into play in the situational leadership theory. Among them is the leader, the followers and the circumstance/situation at hand that has to be handled.

Applying this theory to Windber Medical centre and its administration by F. Nicholas Jacob, we get all the three factors of the theory coming into play.

First we have Jacob as the leader, the followers being the workers and the situation being the poor state of performance of the hospital in terms of service delivery and its remuneration to its workers.

Jacobs' approach to the situation was one that depicted his task behavior and at the same time relationship behavior. He talked to the workers in a bid to know what they would want done about their workplace to improve the situation. More so he reached talks with the surrounding community in his efforts to establishing good relations with them. He got engaged in instructing the workers what to do, selling ; by extending his relations to the surrounding community, participating and delegating some duty to his juniors for instance putting somebody in charge of the food service.

Followers' Readiness

This refers to a follower's ability and willingness to successfully accomplish a specific given task. This does not evaluate the individual/group's innate values and qualities. In applying this to Jacobs' case we find that 32 employees who were not willing and ready to cope up with the new working conditions were laid off as others joined the institution amidst impressive economic and developmental performance. A continuum ranging from R1(lowest readiness) to R4(highest readiness) has been crafted to show the extent of this ability and willingness by the followers to perform task.

Situation

The task to be accomplished by Jacobs as the president of Windber was to raise the performance of the institution and make sure it's not closed down. Jacobs had to ensure the old structures are renovated and state of the art buildings put in place so as to enhance the health services as well as the welfare of his employees.

2. Performance of Jacobs on the Least preferred Co-worker Scale (LPC)

The least preferred Co-worker Scale is an instrument that was devised by Fiedler to help a leader determine a worker with whom he/she has had difficulties working with and then use bi-polar adjectives to describe his/her behavior and/or attitudes.

According to the LPC scale Jacobs would be termed as High LPC leader. This is because upon arrival at Windber Jacob heavily consults with his employees and holds discussions with them, the community and all other key personalities around. This means that his primary motivation is the establishment of relationships and then move to the secondary one, which is task accomplishment.

3. Situational favorability of Jacobs

Situational favorability refers to the sum of power a leader has over his followers. This is determined by three elements; leader-follower relations, task structure, and position power.

Leader-follower relations refer to the kind of association that exist between the leader and his/her followers, either friendly or strained relations. Tasks structure on the other hand refers to the descriptions of the task performance and how it's to be accomplished. Power position on its part refers to the authority the leader has to reward or punish a follower according to his/her behavior.

The performance of Jacob was impressive and successful at Windber as he enjoyed high levels of situational favorability. This is because, he had good leader-member relations, highly structured jobs and more so, had position power. For instance he was able to lay off thirty two employees, he created a good rapport with the workers and the community around and also hired with appropriate skills to oversee various tasks performed. Thus Jacobs could have scored in octants 1 or 2.

Conclusion

Leaders should effectively and efficiently be able to apply all the elements of the contingency leadership theories to maximize the output of their firms as well as those of their employees. Poor leadership skills can cripple an institution but whenever a leader employs the right and appropriate strategies then the performance is bound to improve as was the case with Windber Medical Centre and the entry of Jacobs to its helm of administration.

Reference

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