Leadership essay samples

Business, Management

Abstract

The scientific project deals with leadership styles, their types, and influence on workplace attitudes and behavior. There are two major categories of styles, such as leader-centered and follower-centered styles. The first category includes authoritative, aka autocratic, transactional, and charismatic styles where leader's personality is the focal one. The second category includes participative, servant, and transformational styles that cultivate employees as the most valuable organizational assets. Such additional styles as laissez-faire, quiet leader, and coercive one are given scientific scrutiny. The influence of each style on working attitudes and employees' behavior are also considered based on the opinions of subject-field experts and specialists.

Keywords: leadership, style, workplace, employee, subordinate, approach
Whether on the battlefield, or in the workplace, people require to be led by leaders, inasmuch as few are born such with an innate or acquired ability of steering armies and teams of employees to professional victories by resorting to a variety of techniques and styles. As of these days, business managers and leaders are in demand and within the scope of scientific studies. Depending on style, leaders may be authoritative, coercive, democratic, inspiring, or cooperating, which may either cause employees to grow dissatisfied with how they are managed or be inspired with respect for those in charge. The outcome largely depends on the variety of professional tools and approaches that every leadership style implies. The point is that there are different leadership styles that have their unique influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors.

A doctoral Student at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership, Lena Maslennikova (2007) opines that leadership styles fall into two major categories, such as leader-centered and follower-centered approaches, leaders to belong to either of two categories being visionaries, mission,- and goal-achievers. Where both differ is in their individual approach to achieving objectives. Self-projection and self-realization are central to leader-centered styles found in organizations counting on authority, stringent deadlines, and specific guidelines. The main peculiarity of such organizations is a hierarchal structure, which means organizations have orders move in a top-down direction. Leaders have the final say on everything, and orders are obligatory to follow, with no ifs or buts on employees' part. One of leader-centered style subdivisions is authoritarian leadership type. They exert absolute power on their inferiors, and they are seen as being irreproachable leaders in their organization. More than that, they shoulder responsibility for identifying organizational objectives and tracing strategic paths to follow. According to Wagner (2007), employees receive clear-cut expectations of tasks to be accomplished, the ways of them being accomplished, and the deadline (cited in Maslennikova 2007).

Lewin, and Llippit and White (1939) believe that these task-oriented leaders seek little-to-no contribution from followers (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Wagner (2007) the approach is applicable in time of significant changes, and he, who possesses the biggest expert knowledge of anyone in the team, makes decisions, seeing that there may be not much time left to make these (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Based on the attributes given, employees under such leadership are barred from decision-making, which may be

temporary of nature in large due to instability. It may be after an organization copes with crisis that they will be able to make themselves heard once again. For the time being, initiatives coming from grass roots go unnoticed by senior management. Though referring to such type of leaders as autocratic, Johnson (n. d.) agrees that no one dare challenge their authority and will that they impose on workers. A scientific opinion has it that, employees who require supervising only benefit from being managed by such individuals. Creative employees, in turn, entertain abhorrence towards such leaders, which shapes a counterproductive attitude and takes its toll on overall results (Johnson n. d.). According to author, psychologist, and science journalist, Daniel Goleman (2000, pp. 83-84), block initiatives as it may, authoritative style applied when company stock is at its lowest does leave room for a leeway from general tools of achieving objectives.

Staff are free to take calculated risks and avail themselves of innovative approaches. What authoritative leaders do is interpret their vision and issue guidelines to follow. In other words, rather than watching that employees will not sidestep their guidelines, leaders show their employees a course, without restricting the range of methods to the selected number of approaches. He also believes that leaders employ this approach if they are to get a company going. When managed by such leaders, employees may receive bonuses for their efforts, which boost their professional morale. If applied vis-à-vis peers or employees who appear to be more competent than leaders themselves do, the authoritative approach may be instrumental in shaping a negative attitude towards such leaders. In the eyes of such subordinates, they may appear out-of-touch, arrogant and dictatorial, which is bound to destroy the

spirit of egalitarianism or equality of an efficient and productive team. Once ruined, such spirit unhinges teamwork, morale, and productivity unlikely to be shown by frustrated employees. These are positive attitudes of employees in the workplace. The expert goes on to note that the authoritative management mode should be resorted to at times and with great caution (Goleman, 2000, pp. 83-84). Mikoluk (2013) opines that North Korea is a classic example of autocratic approach based on force and fear. Unilateral decisions meet with no opposition. This approach fits companies that lack for discipline and need some economies (Mikoluk, 2013). According to MindTools. com (n. d.), transactional leaders' mindset is that employees are hired for them to do their jobs and receive payment for efforts and abidance by the rules. The style practitioners expect employees to follow their exact orders. The approach, in itself, is based on carrot and stick principle, with good work rewarded and unsatisfactory performance punished. The style does not encourage such workplace attitude as employees' creativity. Nor does it promote them taking ownership of their work. Transactional leaders tend to set unambiguous standards as well as applying recognition and reward system as labor motivators (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Such style fits short-term tasks and projects where creativity and innovation are not needed (Maslennikova, 2007). The system of reward does influence such attitude as morale in a positive way; however, what go unrewarded are initiatives and creativity. Johnson (n. d.) also believes that employees are granted special bonuses for following guidelines and accomplishing well-articulated tasks. The CEO of the internet marketing company ByReputation. com, Brandon Gaille (2013) notes that transactional

leaders demonstrate less such empathy, or the ability of sharing feelings and emotions, which is a must-have constituent of emotional intelligence and establish a clear-cut chain of commands, US Senator Joseph McCarthy being the most prominent transactional leader.

According to ChangingMinds. org (n. d.), charismatic leaders instil enthusiasm into their employees in order to steer them to success. There is a larger degree of communication with followers as compared to authoritative and transactional leaders. Still, such leaders is inclined to believe in his professional abilities and vision rather than those of their subordinates (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). According to MindTools. com (n. d.), always attractive in the eyes of employees and image-oriented, charismatic leaders command loyalty, being individuals, on whom the entire success of an organization largely depends (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Besides attracting followers and building positive attitude towards themselves, this type of leaders inspire subordinates with faith and trust, being indispensable to organizations when it comes to drastic turnarounds, as they are excellent at motivating personnel, if need be (Maslennikova, 2007). This type of management nurtures productive attitudes that will dominate such work teams. Frankly speaking, charismatic leaders translate their sole presence into motivation, let alone financial bonuses. Gaille (2013) opines that charismatic leaders build their trust by showing empathy, such as interest and concern in their inferiors and establishing friendly connections, with Bill Clinton representing this style. Who Bill Clinton is, is the president to have given its country the longest peacetime economic expansion. Quaere, is not it charisma, the ability to let people be heard, empathy, and comfortable,

nay, friendly working atmosphere through the instrumentality of which the USA prosperity was secured? If it were not for his charisma, oratorical skills and the ability of prepossessing subordinates, he would have hardly enjoyed presidential commissions in the course of an eight-year tenure. Professor Paul Thornton (2013) cites Ronald Reagan and Martin Luther King as the personification of inspirational approach. Blanken (2013) opines that leaders' feeling of invincibility can well ruin the entire team. Team success, in itself, depends on the presence of a leader, whose quitting may leave it floundering (Blanken, 2013).

Follower-centered leaders see value in promoting their employees growth, realization, and development. Such individuals consider their personnel the most valuable of assets, investing organizational resources into their growth. Based on egalitarian principle, whatever professional rank, this approach levels both subordinates and senior management staff. Not only do employees have what is called voice, but also they can be a part of decision-making (Maslennikova, 2007). Clearly, follower-centered approach to managing employees fosters democratic ways and attitudes, being prerequisite to teamwork, high level of morale, and an increase in productivity, since contribution on a day-to-day basis, managerial appreciation, and participation in what shapes the course of an organization gives personnel the feeling of corporate responsibility and importance, which boosts morale to unprecedented heights.

Wagner (2007) believes that participative leadership style is theirs who calculate on knowledge, abilities, and feedback of all the team members. While they have their final say on matters, such leaders are no strangers to

hearing employees out and let them participate in decision-making or problem-solving activities. So long as no leaders are absolute experts in all professional areas, participative approach invites interesting opinions and results in efficient and accurate decisions on various matters (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). According to Changing Minds. org (n. d.), followers are motivated and encouraged when managed by participative leaders. The bigger an increase in employees influence is, the larger the extent to which followers commit themselves to achieving organizational success becomes. Interesting is the fact that such approach not only hones the decision-making skills of employees, but also it helps them morph into full-fledged leaders-to-be (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Apart from being fixated on objective, participative leaders consider it their priority to develop followers, or subordinates. Whenever team building, innovative ideas, creativity, and quality decisions are valued, this type of leadership is put to a good use (Maslennikova, 2007). With employees contributing to the process of making decisions and feeling appreciated, their morale goes up. What with the recognition of their playing role in an organization, employees are quick to accept changes in the time of organizational rearrangement (Johnson, n. d.). Gaille (2013) suggests that acting like facilitators, not dictators, is what distinguishes participative leaders from their charismatic counterparts. Majoring in articulating ideas, such individuals look to find likeminded decision with followers always given floor, with multibillionaire Donald Trump belonging to this management type. Information sharing serves the purpose of arriving at a conclusion (Gaille, 2013). Referring to this approach as the democratic style, Goleman (2000, p. 85) believes this leadership mode to

increase and develop staff responsibility, flexibility, morale, and respect. Beyond doubt, spending too much time holding consultations targets such attitude as productivity. What is more, employees may fall to feeling leaderless due to decision-making abuse. Leaders may come to use this style to make up for their lack of competence. Lastly and most importantly is dangerous, with poorly qualified employees in the team (Goleman, 2000, p. 85).

According to MindTools. com (n. d.), servant leadership is the case when both followers and leaders bring ideals and values into the workplace. Leaders are more focused on the success of their subordinates than their own. They keep an eye on their employees' needs and watch that they may reach their full potential and put on a qualitative performance (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). According to ChangingMinds. org (n. d.), staff members are not devoid of their decision-making and operational processes participation. Such senior management officials hold subordinate in high esteem, cultivate positive attitude, and motivate them. Servant leaders think of their inferiors as being equal with them like partners, which allows them to take ownership of organizational results. Organizational success is said to be realized when all participants do what they do best. Situation requiring, such leaders may assume the role of a follower (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). Gaille (2013) notes that this type of leadership suits selfless senior officials whose professional mentality leaves room for love and compassion. Overall, those being in charge act as servants to their inferiors, doing their utmost to give full discretion to subordinates in lieu of foisting their vision and professional beliefs on employees. George Washington was one of such

leaders (Gaille, 2013). Professor Paul Thornton (2013) cites Mother Theresa, Oprah Winfrey, the chairperson of Harpo Inc., and Max DePree, the CEO of Herman Miller furniture company as prominent examples of servant leadership, creating perfect working environment that eliminate power, fame, and wealth priorities. Blanken (2013) thinks that this style may result in high morale and positive culture.

According to MindTools. com (n. d.), transformational leadership approach revolves round leaders' inspiring their subordinates to attain a shared vision of organizational future (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). According to ChangingMinds. org (n. d.), Transformational top managers invest their energy and passion into whatever they do. They wish their employees to succeed in what they do. To this end, leaders spend effort on their training, development, and growth. What they do is sell the vision of organization future to their followers (cited in Maslennikova, 2007). In doing so, a leader builds trustworthy relationships with inferiors. It is actions and attitudes that help them perform their leading duties. Commitment to their vision and integrity are the focal workplace attitudes. Apart from transforming organizations, such leaders go as far as to transform employees themselves (Maslennikova, 2007). Johnson (n. d.) opines that this approach makes it possible for those in charge to increase efficiency and productivity by means of high visibility and communication. As leaders concentrate on a bigger picture, they tend to entrust minor tasks to employees. Gaille (2013) suggests that motivating followers in implemented through likeminded ideas and morals. Subordinates are empowered by leaders' letting them apply their personal beliefs and abilities. Walt Disney is one of such

transformational leaders (Gaille, 2013).

Since laissez-faire leadership does not imply the presence of a strong leader, is may be classified as a follower-centered style. Johnson (n. d.) claims that it is the case when there is the shortage of supervision and feedback on the part of a leader. The point is that highly qualified and experienced employees require no supervision as such; however, there always are those inferiors who are in need of close control, which is unavailable due to laissez-faire leadership. Such approach results in low production levels, increasing costs, and the lack of control (Johnson, n. d.). Blanken (2013) thinks that this type of leadership is likely to result in job satisfaction and increased productivity. Situation leader, according to Gaille (n. d.) is capable of adjusting to any limitations and showing inspirational dynamism, with Dwight Eisenhower belonging to this leadership style. The quiet leader are powerful as well as requiring a measure of understanding, compassion, and problem solving capacity. They are successful and popular with followers for their ability to lead rather than bark. Rather than producing loud speeches, the quiet leaders inspire subordinates by influencing them to do right things, with Abraham Lincoln being one of them (Gaille, 2013).

Goleman (2000) thinks that coercive style of leadership is brutal and dangerous, as it may lead to reversal results. Senior management may start firing employees without any good reason, practice shouting for slightest missteps, deducting from employees' professional value, and establish the reign of terror. An alienating internal attitude may get the point when valuable employees will defect to other companies or their discipline and morale will hit all-time lows. Short-term improvements may result in

productivity decrease, poor performance, and personnel thinning (Goleman, 2000). Stifling inventiveness and flexibility, this approach should be applied very carefully, if at all (Benincasa, 2012).

Conclusions

Leadership styles are many and all of them have their unique peculiarities and consequences for organization where they are practiced. As per one of classifications, leadership styles fall into two main categories of leader-centered and follower-centered. The first category implies stringent deadlines, guidelines, and hierarchical structure of organizations, with employees not enjoying the rights of influencing decision-making or coming up with innovative ideas. Authoritarian approach is one of subdivisions of leader-centered style that leaves little space for employees' professional freedom of speech and participation in organizational processes. Subordinates develop negative attitude towards such leaders, which takes its toll on overall results and organizational productivity. Opposing views suggest that this type of leaders only issue guidelines and trace out the course of actions, rather than imposing their will and controlling the tools of achieving objectives determined. Employees may receive bonuses for their efforts; however, when leaders manage peers or employees that are more professional, a negative attitude may also be shaped, destroying the spirit of egalitarianism, which means the approach should be applied in carefully selected cases.

Transactional leaders employ the tactics of punishment for faults and rewards for a job well done. Transactional leaders do not welcome innovation and creativity; what is more, they do not put empathy on display. Instead,

they articulate a clear-cut chain of command to follow. Charismatic leaders inspire employees with faith, trust, and enthusiasm that drive them to success. Their professional vision and abilities are far more important to them than those of employees are. The second category of follower-centered leaders put more value into their subordinates, their development, and professional evolution. Such leaders think them the most valuable assets worth investing. Their organizational efforts and leadership approaches boost morale to unprecedented heights, which makes this category so popular with employees. Participative leadership rely largely on feedback, abilities, and knowledge of employees who are given floor and the opportunity of partaking in decision-making and solution-finding processes, which enables accurate and professional decisions passed by leaders in conjunction with employees. Subordinates feeling that they contribute to organizational success and that they are appreciated creates a positive influence on morale. Participative leaders invest into their inferiors to such a degree that they may become fully-fledged leaders themselves. Creativity, quality decisions, and innovative ideas are the key priorities of such leaders. Servant leaders concentrate mostly on their employees' success, forfeiting that of their own. Those in charge watch that their subordinates can reach their full potential and demonstrate a qualitative performance. Leaders treat them as partners who share the responsibility for undulate results and participate in decision-making. In some cases, such leaders come to take over the role of followers. Transformational leaders inspire their employees to achieve a shared vision of organizational future. They come to place their passion and energy into any activity. Subordinates are supposed to succeed

in whatever they do, which is achievable through development, training, and growth. The leading workplace attitudes are commitment to vision and integrity, with employees permitted to take advantage of their own abilities and beliefs.

Laissez-faire style may be classified as a follow-centered type, as it allows plenty of freedom for employees; however, it is only experienced subordinates who will benefit from such non-involvement. Those employees who need close supervision will feel the negative effects of such leadership mode. Experts say this style to increase satisfaction and work productivity. The quiet leader resort to influencing employees instead of delivering loud speeches as charismatic leaders do. They show understanding, compassion, and problem solving capacity, which helps them win supporters over and build a harmonious working atmosphere. Finally, coercive style involves a measure of terror, unlawful firings, illegitimate disciplinary penalties, and other rigid measures. Overall, it contributes to morale decrease and employees' defection to other companies. Such are the main leadership styles and their influence on workplace attitudes and behavior.

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