EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Dr. Jayshree Suresh
and
Kavitha Sethuraman

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to bring out the importance of understanding the subordinate’s ability and willingness to perform a task and how it could attribute for effective leadership based on LMX theory. The concepts used for carrying out this study are the MBTI and situational leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership as always has gained a significant importance and there has been a lot of research undergone on the same. Organizations in order to achieve great results focus of effective leadership. Leadership involves many responsibilities as having a clear vision, ensuring the vision is communicated to the team members, assisting them with the required information, managing the team without any conflict at the same time maintaining their motivation levels and so on. Hence for a leader to ensure effective performance the leader member exchange (LMX) is important but do leaders ensure the exchange is effective if not how to make it effective? The Leader member exchange can be carried out effectively only if the leader is aware about his/her leadership style with their followers knowing their readiness levels. Leader in order to know their leadership styles it is important that they understand what their personality style is. Hence it becomes easier for them to moderate their leadership style appropriately.

LEADER MEMBER EXCHANGE THEORY (LMX)

LMX theory was originally referred to as Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) theory (Dansereau, Graen and Haga, 1975). This theory was developed based on the relationship of the leaders with their followers as in most of the situations, leaders do not treat all their subordinates in the same way, they either fall under the category of “in” group or “out” group relationship with their leaders. This relationship of course will be determined based of the
expertise of the followers, the task, trust and time available for the leaders with which we can conclude high or low leader member exchange (Fred, 2010). In-group will comprise of less number of followers who are most trusted and will have high exchange with their leader, on the other hand the Out-group will have the other followers with whom the exchange will be low and more formal this is primarily because of the limited time available for the leaders (Gerstner and Day, 1997). In general high quality LMX will have a positive impact on the followers which will enhance their performance and productivity. Hence leaders with high Emotional intelligence will be able to achieve by ensuring and maintaining strong relationship with their followers there by creating opportunity for two way communication. This will arbitrate correlation between emotional intelligence of a leader, Job satisfaction and performance of the followers (Fong and Ho, 2010).

**SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL**

The situational leadership model was developed in the late 1960s by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey (Paul and Kenneth, 1972). This model says that there are different styles of leadership and it is the responsibility of a leader to choose an appropriate style for his/her subordinates based on the situation. This will depend upon the expertise and commitment level of the followers (Shelley, 2008). A leader should adopt a style based on the situation, follower’s readiness to perform a task and the possible outcomes. Based on this a leader chooses one of the four leadership style (i.e.) S1(Directing), S2(Coaching), S3(Joining), and S4(Delegating) these styles have to be appropriately used as per the followers readiness levels (i.e.) R1(Low Competence/High Commitment), R2(Low Competence/Low Commitment), R3(High Competence/ Variable commitment) and R4(High competence/High Commitment). These leadership styles will be task behavior or support behavior. Task behavior is more of a one way communication where it helps in directing the followers to perform a task whereas the supportive behavior is to ensure the leaders gives the socio emotional support to the followers for accomplishing the task (Module 16 Update).

**MBTI**

MBTI is a psychological instrument developed by Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katharine Cook Briggs, this has been used by people around the world over 60yeras to understand their personality and interests. They had created 16types with the description explaining individual’s personality (Joseph, 2009). The report will also help in understanding the differences in each type. These personality types are derived from four letters based on their four preferences namely Extroversion/Introversion (E/I), Sensing/Intuitive(S/N), Thinking/Feeling(T/F),Judging/Perceiving(J/P). These terms used, have a technical meaning relating to MBTI rather than the word by itself means (CPP, 2009). This instrument helps to a great extent for leaders in leading virtual teams which indeed has been a great challenge as because of less interaction between the leaders and subordinates. A leader has to know their subordinates in order to keep them motivated so as to change his/ or her leadership style for the getting the task done and ensuring their subordinates stay motivated. In this regard knowing the MBTI personality style of their subordinates will help the leaders lead effectively (Pearl, 2001).
PILOT STUDY

In order to understand the correlation between MBTI, situational leadership, and the LMX theory, a questionnaire was developed and circulated to a group of leaders having reportees. These leaders had already taken the MBTI test and were aware of their personality style. In parallel, there was a type description written for all 16 MBTI types based on their leadership styles at different readiness levels like R1, R2, R3, and R4.

As a pilot study, this questionnaire was tested with 150 individuals out of which 129 leaders' results matched (i.e., the questionnaire helped in knowing their leadership style for their followers at various readiness levels). This was also validated against their 360 feedback for more clarity and was matching with those reports as well.

FINDINGS

As a leader, holding a major responsibility of leading others, this becomes a biggest challenge as the end results or the output depends on the performance of their followers. This research is an attempt to find a solution to it. As depicted in the above Fig.1.1 and from the pilot study, if a leader knows his MBTI personality type along with the situational leadership concept, it will help him to understand his/her leadership style applied to followers at various readiness levels R1, R2, R3, or R4. His or her leadership style might be appropriate, overleading (subordinates feeling leaders are overdoing) or underleading (subordinates feel leaders are not giving them the required guidance) to their followers at various readiness levels. Understanding this will enable a leader to adjust his/her leadership style according to the readiness levels of the followers, which helps in achieving high leader-member exchange both in-group and out-group situations.

For example: if a leader’s MBTI profile is ESFJ, his or her leadership style will be more appropriate to R3 because ESFJs would be highly interested in two-way communication and will not be guiding their subordinates. R3 are able but unwilling, hence they need more of supportive behavior in order to stay motivated. These leaders will come across as underleading for followers at R1 and R2 as they would need more of direction than supportive leadership style. For R4 followers, they will be experienced as overleading because of their more of supportive behavior.
CONCLUSION

This paper brings out the connectivity between the MBTI, Situational leadership and LMX theory. This connectivity helps in effective leadership as it helps the leaders in understanding their followers and motivating them which will in turn help in ensuring great performance.

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