

Studying the Leadership Styles in the UAE

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Abstract--*In this article, the authors have reviewed and summarized the main leadership styles in management. These leadership styles are represented by the participative style and democratic leadership styles that usually empower employees and gives them more freedom to maneuver on the one hand. On the other hand, there is the authoritative style, which is a leadership style that limits the creativity and action taking by employees. Then, the researchers conducted a pilot study to have a preliminary idea about the attitudes of leaders regarding two leadership styles, each on each end of a spectrum; namely the participative style and the authoritative style.*

Key words--*participative, authoritative, democratic, leadership style, attitudes, leaders*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles can have an effect on an organization performance. In this article, we will define three main leadership styles; mainly participative, authoritative and democratic styles. Our research also consisted of a pilot study that looked at the attitudes of leaders regarding the participative and authoritative leadership style.

Performance and Leadership Style

It is worthwhile mentioning that performance may be affected by leadership style. Indeed, research has shown that leadership styles can have an impact on the performance of a given entity, organization or company. It is worth noting that leadership is a skill like any other. In as much as there are people who are always better than others are, this skill needs constant sharpening and strengthening. Leadership development is highly dependent on the performance of the leader as well as the people who are around him or her (Day et al. 63). When a leader develops, the capacity to perform his or her roles within the specific position improves. One can handle issues that are more complex and gets better at making decisions that affect the entire organization that one leads. One has to invest in leadership development through the performance that they adopt. Notably, performance can be improved by several actions that a leader can deliberately apply. It depends on the personal characteristics of an individual as well as the environment that they work. In as much as people can gain new and effective behavior; some leaders decline to accept change, thus affecting the way they perform in their capacities. In addition, future events, including the predictable and the unpredictable ones also affect the performance of leaders. Training in leadership skills also contributes significantly to leadership performance. These factors can lead to positive or negative leadership development, depending on how one approaches them. Organization performance is a crucial element in any organization. It is defined as: "Organization performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). It is a broad construct which captures what organizations do, produce,

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and accomplish for the various constituencies with which they interact"... "Measure of efficiency and effectiveness, with which administrators take advantage of resources to satisfy customers and achieve the goals of the organization" (IGI Global, 2019, p. n.p.). Organization performance is determined by the performance of the employees and leadership style largely. According to research, leadership style contributes to the profitability performance of the companies. Moreover, leadership style creates a positive work atmosphere based on responsibility, flexibility, standards, employee well-being, rewards, leadership training, commitment and clarity. Profit involves the positive outcome of an activity. In leadership, the actions that individual leaders use can determine the outcome of the respective groups or organizations that they lead. The effectiveness of a leader is directly related to a more profitable venture (Antonakis and House, 13). Consistent improvement is achieved in a setting where the leadership initiatives and development are strong. To be able to realize constant growth and improved outcomes, the leadership development and model have to be linked to the immediate activities of the group that the person leads. Profit levels provide a distinction between effective and non-effective leaders. In essence, effective leadership leads to a higher value, both social and economic, for an organization. On the other hand, a leadership that is inconsistent and unreliable leads to deterioration of profit. On this note, leadership development and style play a crucial role in determining how a group progresses. Good governance involves a situation where the leadership observes the human rights of the followers (Stahl and Luque 235). It entails promotion of gender equality and equitable distribution of resources among all the people under the particular leadership. Good governance is mostly used in international affairs to ensure that governments observe all the fundamental human rights of their respective citizens. It focuses on the responsibility of national leadership in meeting the needs of the people. In essence, good governance focuses on the democratic style that is used in the western nations. The concept of good governance focuses on some essential qualities of leadership that promote the equal distribution of resources in an entity. For instance, participation is a characteristic that involves getting all the people to take part in decision-making. Participation of all individuals promotes the freedom of speech that is fundamental. Apart from that, transparency entails adopting accessibility between the leader and the followers. The leader should be accountable to all the people that one leads.

Strategic vision

Strategic vision is another quality of good governance that involves focusing on the development of the people in the short-term as well as the long-term. Leadership needs to ensure that it sets a clear path for the followers. Further, leadership under good governance adopts consensus orientation of all the followers. The leader can bring all the people on board and make them feel part of the group. Achievement in leadership development involves attaining the results that a leader sets for the followers and organization at large. Effective leaders influence positive performance among the followers. Therefore, they attain a collective achievement. They know how to balance the various talents that the people have and tuning them to work on achieving a common goal. It is worth noting that motivating all the followers is not an easy task. Leaders who achieve this are resilient and know the exact needs of the people they lead. They inspire the followers through their behavior and how they interact with them. Achieving the targets is a deliberate effort that leadership undertakes by focusing resources on the results. The leader develops a suitable culture that all the followers can observe. The culture is centered towards the vision that guides the attainment

of the targets that are set. The leader also observes the strengths and weaknesses of the people and takes appropriate action.

Leadership styles

Participative style

The participative model of leadership involves a situation where the leader takes part in the daily operations of the group that one leads (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy 57). The leader invites the subordinates in decision-making and setting of goals for the organization. However, the final decision rests with the leader. He or she acts as the facilitator during the interactions with the followers. Every person is given an equal opportunity to express his or her views and concerns. A person who practices participative leadership has certain qualities that enable them to achieve it. Notably, the leader is a team builder. He or she knows how to engage the subordinates amid their differences and unique capabilities and weaknesses. Apart from that, the leader can empower the followers and enable them to achieve their full potentials. They are willing to give the subordinates a chance to express their skills, giving them confidence and motivation. In addition, the leader is always there to help the employees when they make mistakes. She observes the growth of all the followers and guides them accordingly. Chawla and Sharma define the participative leadership as: “The leader shares the decision-making ability with the group members. It is also often called democratic leadership style. Ideas move freely amongst the group. The discussion is free flowing. This style is required in rapid and dynamic changing environment where very little can be taken as a constant” (Chawla & Sharma, 2017, p. 201). Yukl defines this type of leadership as: “Participative leadership involves the use of various *decision procedures* that allow other people some influence over the leader’s decisions. Other terms commonly used to refer to aspects of participative leadership include *consultation, joint decision-making, power sharing, decentralization, empowerment, and democratic management*. Participative leadership can take many forms and includes several specific decision procedures. Although primarily a relation- oriented behavior, participative leadership also has implications for achieving task objectives and implementing change”. One advantage of the participative style of leadership is that the leader boosts the morale of the followers, making them function at their optimal levels. Further, the subordinates can easily accept the changes that a leader introduces because they trust the leader. Despite these, the style also has disadvantages. For instance, the leader may lose the authority over the subordinates. It could lead to poor performance in the organization.

Democratic style

Democratic style of leadership entails the flow of ideas within a group. It is similar to the participative model because they both focus on enabling subordinates to contribute ideas over important matters (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy 57). The model applies more effectively in environments that experience rapid change. The leaders who adopt this model are flexible and can adapt to change faster and guide the followers to do the same effectively. Democratic leadership looks at the unique skills and abilities of individual followers and lets them bond to form a strong force that can propel the group to grow. The leader distributes responsibilities and encourages the group members to work hard and achieve the targets. Democratic leadership style keeps the employees and other members motivated, increases their productivity and performance with guidance, facilities, and support to improve the overall

organizational performance. The democratic leadership style has an advantage in that the leader encourages the followers to come up with creative ideas and solutions for problems. Further, the leadership helps in creating satisfaction among the followers. Since the leader earns the trust of the subordinates, he or she can easily make them look at issues from his or her point of view. However, a setback of this model entails lack of clarity at times, especially when there is little time to accomplish a specific task. Pares et al define democratic leadership as “Even though democratic leadership could be understood as leaderless – there is no need for a leader – it cannot be devoid of leadership. Rather than leaderless, democratic leadership is a form of collective and concurrent leadership...does not need single leaders but it can produce organizations or groups full of leadership, as it requires full participation in leadership and decision-making at all levels of an organization...” (Pares, et al., 2017, p. 42).

Authoritative style

The authoritative style of leadership entails a situation where a leader can create a vision and guide the people in understanding it (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy 57). It involves motivating the followers and showing them the benefits of following on the vision. The leader can also influence the people into full commitment. This style is most effective where a vision is needed or when a particular vision is not clear enough. **Authoritative Leadership:** “The leader makes all the decisions alone without the effort of the others. The leader possesses all the authority and can enforce his or her decisions on team members. The judgment of autocratic leader cannot be challenged. This leadership style benefits the team members who need close supervision” (Chawla & Sharma, 2017, p. 201). One aspect of an authoritative leader is that they can control the people that they lead. The leader has total influence on the followers. Apart from that, the leader has little concern for the needs of the followers and ensures that all efforts are geared towards understanding the vision. At times the leader could use coercion or punishment to enforce the desired behavior among the followers. Another aspect of authoritative leadership is that in situations that are urgent, the leader can make quick and effective decisions that lead to success. In addition, in a situation where the people lack a clear focus, authoritative leadership helps in providing the focus. However, one setback of the model is that it could lead to negative outcomes among the followers. They could have a negative mentality on the leader and drop their performance levels. The style of leadership also reduces the morale of the subordinates and decreases their willingness to cooperate with the leader. Authoritative leadership style involves leaders having control over every activity and directs members to act as per instructions. This style does not allow participation of members in decision-making, and it is adapted to manage scarce resources and to meet deadlines for some projects or activities, considering financial stability.

Pilot study

The researchers conducted a pilot study by comparing two leadership styles in a public organization (Municipality of Al-Ain) in the UAE. This pilot study showcased results and highlighted the leadership style of a small number of leaders in this organization. The participants consisted of 20 leaders. There were 8 female leaders and 12 male leaders.

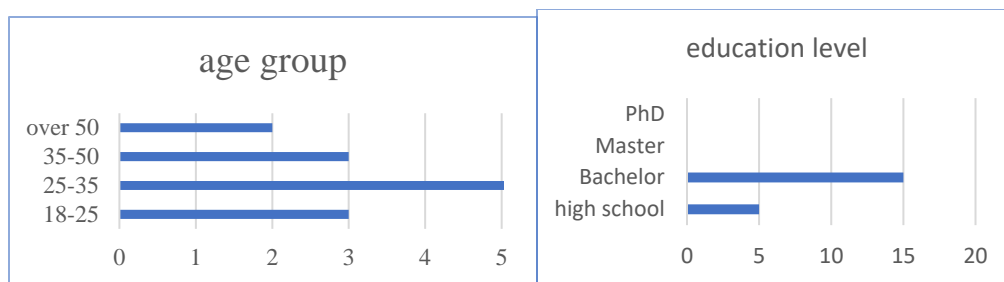


Fig:1

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following charts show the preliminary results from some questions that were asked in the questionnaire for the leaders.

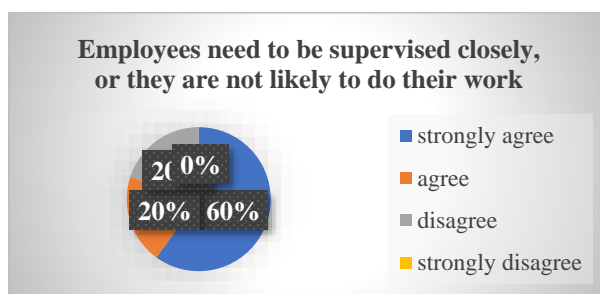


Fig:2

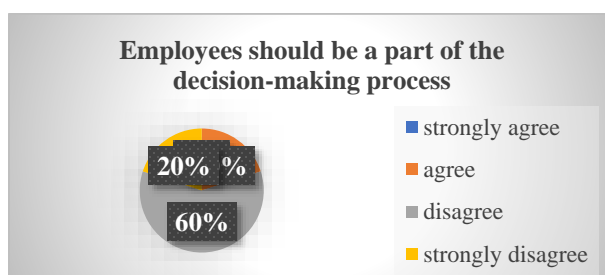


Fig:3

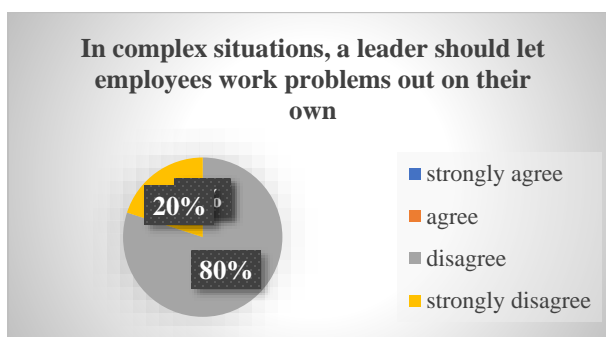


Fig:4

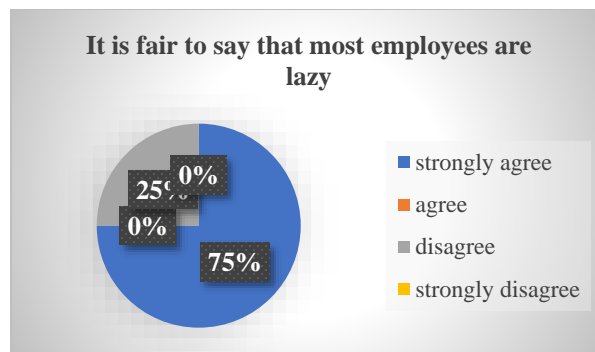


Fig:5



Fig:6



Fig:7

The leaders of the Al-Ain Municipality considered the participative leadership style as a good style. This goes well in line with the opinion of Tahir and Naeem (2017) within this leadership, the leaders encourage their subordinates to take part in the decision-making activities as well as the other business activities (Tahir, & Naeem, 2017)

When asked about the authoritative style, all five leaders said they do not use it in their leadership style. However, the results of the questionnaires showed that 60% of these leaders feel they need to supervise their employees very closely.

CONCLUSION

Further research is needed to find out more details about how leaders of public organizations perceive their leadership style and how it affects their interaction with their subordinates. It will be quite interesting to analyze the effects of leadership styles on management of public organizations.

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