Enhancing Employee Engagement through Leadership Styles: A Literature Overview

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Abstract

Leadership is an art of leading a team. Leader acts as a bridge between management and team members. Employees have been a real concern for an organisation in the path of increasing their efficiency level and productivity. Employee engagement plays an eminent role in enriching an organisation's growth. Leadership styles are directly related with employee engagement. The style a leader adapts that affects an individual's outcome and satisfaction. This paper is purely conceptual in nature. It tries to review the relationship established between employee engagement and leadership styles. It identifies various drivers affecting the employee engagement. This paper tries to explore and identify various dimensions in employee engagement and leadership styles.

Keywords

Employee Engagement, Leadership Styles and Productivity

Introduction

In this competitive environment an organisation focuses towards sustainability and survival. Due to the changing market scenario every organisation has to be advanced in terms of manpower to sustain. An organisation considers every employee as an asset which will add worth to its business. Every organisation believes in the concept of engaging employee which is responsible for achievement and success.

Leader has an impact over employee engagement in an organisation. Leaders lead a cluster of talented people to actively engage them to enhance the productivity level of an organisation. As per Gallup (2002) employee engagement is identified into three types such as engaged employees, not engaged employees, and actively disengaged employees. Engaged employees are constructive, dedicated and creative workers who are responsible for strengthening an organisation. Not engaged employees are directionlessand ambitionless followers those who believe to follow guidelineswithout determination. Actively disengaged employees are harmful to an organization because of their adversefeaturessuch as not interested towards their accomplishment of goals and task.

Leadership has an influence in improving employees' performance and increasing the chance to attain organizations' goals, as well as enhancing employees' engagement with the organization (Daft and Marcic, 2006). As per Northouse (2012) a good leader with outstanding leadership abilities is capable to encourage a group or team to achieve a pre-determined objective.

Employee Engagement

The word engagement in the workplace was coined by Kahn (1990) he defined it as the 'harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances. According to Kahn (1990), engagement is defined psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.

Employee engagement is also defined as emotional commitment to the organization (Baumruk 2004, Richman 2006 and Shaw 2005). It was also further defined as the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al 2004).

According, to Brown (1996) engagement is closely associated with job involvement and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). According to Kanungo (1982), job involvement is a 'cognitive or belief state of psychological identification'. There is a strong link between the leadership, productivity and engagement as per DDI's Leadership Forecast 2003 Study Show. Sufficient revenues can only be realized by an organization through optimal engagement of its employees. According to the findings of a study the employees with strong leaders are more engaged, satisfied and loyal than those with weak leaders.

According, to the study undertaken by the Institute on Employment studies on the service profit chain entitled "From People to Profits" indicate that an increase in employee commitment has a considerable influence on sales directly and indirectly. The January 2003 issue of the Harvard Business Review stated that there is a substantial need of employees to be engagement in their work to gain employee commitment. According, to Gibbons (2008) describes that there is sole authority or single definition that represents the right or wrong way of thinking about employee engagement. According, to Robinson et al's (2004) engagement is a two way relationship between the employer and employee. According, to the Gallup Organization (2004) there exist a critical link between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth and profitability. According, to Robert (2006) employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations give companies crucial competitive advantages including higher productivity and lower employee turnover.

Leadership

Leadership is the capability to constantly inspire a team of individuals and incorporate many significant characteristics. Leadership is energetic, stimulating, and motivating. Leadership is a vital managerial function which acts as a support system to organisation to enhance the productivity level. The thought of leadership has been evolved from the decades of Plato, Caesar (Bass, 1981). With the passing years researchers has added more value to strengthen this idealised term leadership. In traditional terms leadership has been described by various researchers but in today's context modern thoughts are more inclined and acceptable. In modern days some of the styles adopted by an organisation for sustainability are identified.

Charismatic Leadership

Max weber was the first scholar to converse charismatic leadership. Robert House was the first investigator to reflect charismatic leadership in terms of organizational behaviour. Charismatic leadership is a quality to spread charm among others to create a distinct environment .They is social and is comfortable to get along with others.

Transformational Leadership

Burns (1978) describes transformational leadership as a mode of progression which arises when every employee gets engaged with each other in such a manner that leaders and followers upgrades their skills and level of motivation to achieve profitability. There are certain identified dimensions of transformational leadership those are:

- **Idealised Influence :** It deals with building confidence and faith
- **Inspirational motivation:** Itdeals with encouraging the complete organization
- **Intellectual Stimulation:** It deals with changing perspective of an individual towards enhancing awareness regarding problem solving capacity.
- **Individualised Consideration:** It involves reacting to specific needs of its followers to involve them into transformation process.

Transformational leaders are more popular form of acceptable leaderthose who are more vigilant towards vision and are more passionate. Transformational leaders encourage and authorise their followers, often surpassing short-term goals by concentrating on higher order intrinsic needs (Meyer &Allen, 1997).

Transactional Leadership

Bass (1985) stated transactional leadership as "an interchange of leadership skills that inspires employees to achieve the desired outcomes by explaining, demonstrating and clarifying its employees the proper procedure. Transactional leaders tend to adopt this style of leadership to motivate and influence its employees to enhance the productivity and commitment towards organisation.

Authentic Leadership

Bill George came up with this concept which stated leaders to be genuine and real ones in an organisation. Authentic leaders create trust, honesty and inspire transparent leadership quality in an organisation. Webster's dictionary identified authenticity as "the excellence of being authentic or establishing authority for accuracy and precision and excellence of being genuine. Harter, 2002 defined authenticity as "possessing one's personal involvements such as emotions, feelings, thoughts, preferences, or beliefs, procedures to recognise oneself.

Leadership and Employee Engagement

An organisations productivity and profitability is affected by the relationship between the leader and follower. Leadership has a remarkable influence on engaging employees within an organization. Though, transformational leadership restricts the leader from implementing reward based behaviours in order to accomplish higher goals. Transformational leadership stated by Kaiser, Hogan, and Craig (2008) describes the method followers observe themselves-from isolated individuals to member of a larger group. Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang, and Lawler (2005) advocated that executing transformational leadership style leads to improved organizational obligation and assured work contentment.

Studies authenticated that transactional leadership style deliver high level of satisfaction. "Transactional leadership" is also referred as "managerial leadership". These leaders accomplish their tasks by identifying the needs of their subordinate. Transactional leadership describe numerous components that adds to highly satisfied and loyal and subordinates as compared to others (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

 Bass (1985) described charismatic leaders as having immense control and authority. A charismatic leader serves as an inspiration to subordinates and avoid ambiguity for them(Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Jacobsen & House, 2001). In addition, charismatic leaders will communicate high performance expectations and demonstrate confidence (Shamir, 1991; Ehrhart & Klein; Jacobsen & House).

Authentic leaders are appreciated always for their sincerity, transparency and integrity. As per certain researchers adopting these characteristics leader can develop employee commitment (Rego et al., 2016), Work Engagement (Walumbwa et al., 2010), and performance (Peterson et al., 2012). Authentic Leadership provide employees assets to sustain in an organization (Alok and Israel, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2010; Wang and Hsieh, 2013). As a result, authentic Leadership may predict employee's commitment and dedication level which makes the task more simplifier.

Conclusion

Employee engagement is a broader aspect for an organisation and our study stated some of the areas yet other aspects are to be identified. Our study was over literature that exists related to relationship between employee engagement and leadership. The literature indicates that leadership behaviours are more favourable to growing engagement at the workplace. Leaders play a significant part in the growth of engagement by projecting the principles and description that are attached to engagement drivers. Organizations need to develop wide-ranging strategy for executive which will provide tools to enrich the skills for building trust, sharing their vision, and creating effective relationships between employees and the organization. Leaders those who adopt these skills are accepted more optimistically by their employees (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996). In our review of leadership styles, transformational leaders appear to be more confident and this style is widely accepted by every organisation. In an unstable environment, many factor add towards the delivering of sustainability of employee development and organizational. This paper also suggested that authentic leadership quality contributes towards engaged employees and charismatic leadership can influence a not engaged employee by clarifying all its queries. Basically, there exists a significant relationship between leadership and employee engagement which contributes to an organisation's profitability.

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