The Effect of Leadership Styles on the Productivity of an Organization.

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ABSTRACT

This paper evaluated the effect of leadership styles on the productivity of an organization to ascertain their roles in determining organizational efficiency and efficacy. A comprehensive review of foundational literature on leadership and management paradigms was compiled to ground this study. The findings reveal that relying on a singular, rigid leadership style often degrades efficiency, resulting in poor organizational productivity. Given that adaptive leadership is an indispensable mechanism for organizational survival, this paper recommends the strategic adoption of situational leadership frameworks. Leaders must dynamically adjust their styles to optimize subordinate motivation and successfully achieve overarching organizational goals.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Organizational Productivity, Situational Leadership, Performance Management, Employee Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a fundamental prerequisite for any structured organizational framework to fulfill its defined purpose. The rapidly changing nature of contemporary workplace design, paired with the critical need for efficient human resource utilization and advancements in organizational democracy, has collectively placed a heightened emphasis on leadership efficacy. Adebayo in 1994 reported that administrative process inherently requires systematic planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling. These foundational components form the bedrock of public and private administration, particularly where large numbers of employees must be supervised, coordinated, and monitored.

This study centers specifically on prevailing leadership styles within business organizations and analyzes their direct impact on output and productivity. The survival of any business organization depends on the performance of the leaders. He moves the group within the constraints of it maximum capabilities to attain specified objectives. He handle people and motivates them to work with zeal and confidence. He is the architect of the performance of his organization at all times.

Leadership has an effect on the performance of any organization. It affects both employee welfare and the productivity of the organization. For a leader to lead effectively and efficiently, he needs to understand his followers and the situation of the organization. The situational variables that influence leadership efficacy include follower characteristics, task complexity, organizational climate, institutional power balances, and the nature of leader-follower relationships. This dynamic was explicitly noted by Tukur in 2004, referencing Atta in 1971, who highlighted that honest and dedicated leadership serves as a powerful catalyst for stimulating sacrifice and sustaining successful, self-reliant development within a community. In a result-oriented paradigm, executive leadership must inspire confidence through personal example, discipline, diligence, and integrity, steering institutional affairs with firmness and justice. Consequently, effective leadership is an essential, undeniable requirement for business survival.

Basically, leadership relates to followership and there is need to discover why people follow others. People tend to follow those that can be of profit to them by satisfying their needs. The task of the leadership is to encourage people to contribute effectively and willingly toward the accomplishment of organization goals and satisfy their own needs in the process. To also support the above, Asen, Ekepe and Idris (2006) said that leadership skill is helping subordinates solve their problems and this goes a long way to help increase employee productivity. The word “skill” indicates that it is a cultural ability which has to be learnt by those who do not have. In the view of Ejikeme (2006), because of human characteristics of dislike of work, most people coerced, controlled or threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort towards the achievement of organizational goals. From the forgoing, the question is: how effective is the leadership style in bringing about productivity in the business organization taking cognizance of good reaction of employees towards organization work and their environment?

The role of leadership in ensuring high productivity cannot be over emphasized. A leader possesses the distinct ability to align employee behaviour with organizational demands, transforming compulsory tasks into willing contributions. However, an evaluation of contemporary business performance reveals several systemic vulnerabilities. In many organizations, productivity remains low because employees lack structural oversight, frequently resulting in chronic absenteeism, late arrivals, and early departures. Furthermore, deep commitment to duty is often absent, exacerbated by opportunistic behaviours and reported financial mismanagement among administrative officers.

It is important to note that several factors have been identified to be contributing to the dwindling growth and development of some organizations. These among others include corruption, insubordination by employees, poor remuneration, lack of motivation, job insecurity, high employee turnover rate, lack of commitment and what have you. All these factors era solely and squarely embedded in the nucleus of the leadership style adopted and practiced by organizations. Hence a faculty leadership style is said to be the bane of growth and development in organization. Against this background, it is necessary to undertake an evaluative study with the following core objectives:

- To investigate the various styles of leadership utilized within business organizations.
- To identify the structural problems caused by ineffective leadership in the business organization.
- To establish the effect of the leadership styles in productivity.
- To suggest recommendations in overcoming identified problem of leadership style in business organization.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

There are many ways of looking at leadership and many interpretation of its meaning in reviewing the various definitions and concepts of leadership, a lot can be reviewed in this area. Leadership simply mean “an act or process of influencing individuals so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals”.

This concept can however be enlarged to simply not only willingness to work but also willingness to with zeal and confidences. Zeal reflects ardor, earnestness and intensity in the experience and execution of work. Confidence reflects experience and technical ability. From this definition, we could observe that leaders tend to help group achieve objectives with the maximum application of its capabilities. They do not stand behind a group

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to push and to prod but place themselves before the group as they facilitate progress and to inspire the group to accomplish organizational groups. A good example is that of an orchestra leader who responds in aimless fashion or with accuracy and enthusiasm.

Latib. (2003) reviewing from the same angle, defined leadership as "a way of stimulating and motivating subordinates to accomplish assigned tasks". He viewed the leader as being district from the group and are concerned with guiding and directing the group. He moves the group with the constraints of its maximum capabilities to attain certain specific objectives. In order not to lose just like others, the leader takes his place before the group as he inspires the group to accomplish organizational objectives, the group will depend on the capabilities of the leader.

According to Mullins (2007), leaderships is "the relationship through which one person influences the behaviour and actions of other people". This definition means that leadership cannot be separated from the activities of the groups and effective team building viewing leadership from the authorities above, we see it as applied to formally organized businesses or enterprises, as the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization. In other words, an organizational role may encompass definite objectives and plans. To achieve them, clear position duties and the entire nob-personal things an individual must do to carry out a job.

The Challenges of Leadership

According to Ojuotimi, (2006), the structural challenges confronting organizational leadership can be categorized into three distinct internal and external forces:

- Forces in leadership himself
- Force in the subordinate
- Force in the situation
- Forces in leadership himself.

The leader's behaviour in any given situation will be influenced greatly by many forces operating within the individual. He or she will of course perceive leadership problem in a unique way on the basis of individual background, knowledge and experience. Among the important internal forces affecting the individuals are personal valves system, confidence in subordinates, leadership inclination and feelings of security in an uncertain situation. The leaders bring those and highly personal variable to each situation as forces which consciously or unconsciously influence behaviour which he or she can understand that make a subordinates act in a given way and be more effective.

Forces in the Subordinate

A leader cannot effectively carryout all the duties of the organization alone. He must do it with the help of his subordinates. Therefore, before deciding how to lead a certain group, the leader has to consider a number of forces affecting his/her subordinate behaviour. Leaders must remember that each employee is influenced by personal variables and needs. In addition, each subordinate has a set of expectations about how the leader understands these factors, the more acutely he can determine the style of leadership that will enable his subordinate to act more effectively.

Force in the situation

In addition to the forces stated in the two proceeding paragraphs, characteristics of the general situation will also affect the leader's behaviour. Among the more critical environmental pressure that surrounds are those which stem from the organization, the work group, the nature of the problem and the pressure of time. These combine together to influence the leadership style adopted by a particular leader and this will have a simultaneous effect on the productivity of the organization.

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Leadership Style

Attention to leadership as a behavioural phenomenon has highlighted the importance of leadership style. In the work situation it has become increasingly clear that managers can no longer rely solely on the use of their position in the hierarchical structure as a means of exercising the function of leadership. In order to get results from subordinates, the leader must also have regard for the need to encourage high morale a spirit of involvement and cooperation, and a willingness to work. This gives rise to consideration of the style of leadership and provide another heading under which to analyze leadership behaviour.

According to Mullins (2007), the attention given to leadership style is based on the assumption that subordinates are more likely to work effectively to managers who adopt alternative styles. Attention to styles of leadership has come about because of a greater understanding of the needs and expectation of people at work. It has been influenced by factors such as:

i. Increasing business competitiveness and recognition of efficient use of human resources
ii. Changes in the valve system of society
iii. Broader standards of education and training
iv. Advance in scientific and technical knowledge
v. Changes in the work organization
vi. Pressure on a greater social responsibility towards employees for instance through schemes of participation in decision making
vii. Government legislation, for instance, in the areas of employment, protection, and the influence of factors such as politics, culture and tribalism.

According to Ram (2001), Melling and Little (2004), the most prominent leadership styles in use are as follows:

i. Autocratic leadership style
ii. Democratic leadership style
iii. Laissez-faire leadership style

Autocratic Leadership Style

Rom. (2001) says an autocratic leader is a leader who is high handed in his administration. He is the center of all activities that go on in the establishment where he is a leader. Autocratic leaders centralize power and decision making on themselves. They structure and complete work situations for their employees who must do what they are instructed to do. Generally autocratic leadership style is considered negative when based on threats and punishment. But it can be positive when and autocratic leaders chose to give rewards to his subordinates. Disadvantages include:

i. It discourages creativity
ii. It fails to use available expertise
iii. It fails to establish motivation and encouragement
iv. People dislike it especially if it is extreme and the style is negative
v. Frustration, low morale conflict and fear develop easily in autocratic leadership style.

The positive side of autocratic leadership style include:

i. It provides strong motivation and regard for the leader
ii. It permits quick decision making because only one person decide for the group
iii. Less competent subordinate can be used because their main jobs is to carry out orders in addition to planning, organizing or decision making
iv. Finally, they need only little initiative.

However, autocratic leadership style is more effective when:

i. The time is short

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ii. The leader is most knowledgeable person,
iii. Where those who participate will never reach a decision with which they all agree.

Democratic Leadership Style

The democratic leadership style is also called participative leadership or decentralized authority. This is where the focus of power is more with the group as a whole and there is a greater interaction within the group. Here, employees are informed about condition affecting their jobs, which encourage them to express their ideas and suggestions. The world today accepts democracy as the best system of leadership.

The following are the advantages of democratic leadership (participative leadership) style:

i. It improves organizational effectiveness by making use of ideas
ii. It enhances better quality decision an implementation
iii. It makes subordinates to be more committed to decisions in which they contributed in making.

The major disadvantages of democratic style of leadership are as follows:

i. It can be very slow and in some cases, quick decisions are needed to take care of some emergency situation.
ii. When either leader is weak, his subordinate can take advantage of him, mess him up and even destroy the whole organization.

Laissez Faire Leadership Style.

The Laissez Faire leadership style, also known as free rein leadership style is a situation where a leader avoids power and responsibility. The leader depends on group to establish their own goals and find solutions to their own problems. Group members train themselves and also motivate themselves. The leaders only plays a minor role.

Laissez Faire leadership style may be appropriate when the subordinate are well trained, highly knowledgeable self-motivated and ready to assume responsibility.

The Laissez Faire leadership style has two main disadvantages:

i. It can lead to disunity in the organization
ii. It can lead to chaos.

The Laissez faire leadership style can be disadvantageous where employees are very ambitions, dedicated, honest, and self-motivating. However in our present world, especially in Nigeria, most employees are not dedicated.

Which Style of Leadership is Best?

The most effective style for a leader to adopt depends on the context. It depends on the ability of the leader to understand the situation and his environment. The appropriate style depends on a great deal on the task of the organization, the phase of life of the organization and needs at the moment. An example of how the task of an organization affects leadership style is that of a fire department that cannot perform without at least some autocratic leadership. When the time comes for the organization to perform, to do what it was designed to do, autocratic leadership is a must. There is a no time to sit down and discuss how to attract the fire. One trained person has to decide for the group and the group must abide by his decision. Later, there may be a fire discussion on which way will be the best next time.

Organizations go through different phases. During period of rapid growth and expansion, autocratic leadership may work very well, but during period of rapid growth and expansion, autocratic leadership may work very well, but during period of slow growth on consolidation, the organization needs to be much more reflective to become more efficient (Participative) leadership may be in order. Both consideration need to be tempered by the needs of the moment.

The productivity concept and performance appraise according to Schreyer. (2005), productivity is “An average measure of the efficiency of production”. It can be expressed as the ratio between output and input. There is no standard basis of calculation or scale on which productivity may be measured in different solutions. Rather, it is a general heading use to cover the widely carried forms of measurement in different organizations and by different people. Schreyer went further to say that in general use, productivity relates the volume of output to input. Input is often limited to labour while output may be measured in physical units of some form of value. The importance of productivity can hardly be over emphasized. Organization spend millions of naira every year in order to recruit employees who are best suited for their position.

Performance appraisal can be called by many names such as performance review, performance evaluation, personal rating, merit rating, employee appraisal or employee evaluation. Performance appraisal is a structural formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor that usually takes the form of a periodic interview (annual or bi-annual) in which the performance of the staff is examined with a view to identify weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development.

Performance appraisal is also the process of accessing the performance and developmental or training needs of an individual or group of individuals over a specific period of time in an organization. Those who are to appraise are the supervisors, peers, subordinates, consultants, users of services and the employees themselves.

Productivity Organization

In achieving productivity in an organization, goals are centered on:

i. Their need for achievement
ii. Their perception on equity in the system

Their perception of productivity as a means of attaining goals for which they are needed are free and able to pursue.

If a leader sees high productivity as path leading to attainment of one or more of his personal goal he will tend to be higher producer. Conversely, if he sees low productivity as path to the achievement of his goal, he will tend to be a lower producer. His productivity is determined partly by his skills which itself depends both on his natural attitude and on his training and education. It also depends on the efficiency with which his work is organized. Anything which reduces the leader’s productivity is a direct attack on the leader’s interest. To rob a leader of his productivity is like robbing a farmer of his crop.

Causes and Effects of Productivity

Economic Factors: with the reward system employed in organization, there is no correlation between efforts expended by an employee and the reward that he receives in the organization. When an employee believes that equity does not prevail, he is bound to with –hold a message of his productivity in order to restore equity, that is, the inability of the employer to give adequate compensation to employees who as a result put in the barest minimum effort in the attainment of the organizational goal. There appear to be no commitment and no goal. There appear to be no commitment and no goal congruency. To encourage higher productivity, it is essential that a system of reward must be designed that attempt to equate hard work and reward.

Sociological Factor: employees treasure a sense of belonging in an organization and resent any effort on the part of management perceive to treat them only as costs of productivity. Many Nigeria employees lack sense of belonging in their organizations and act so strange. They do the least possible to avoid losing their jobs. As long as employees feel that they do not belong, there is tendency for them not to exert themselves or have a full sense of commitment and dedication. The privileged few in the organizations have more than their own shares of the organization’s wealth. However, in many organizations, there are some vocal but lazy employees who have very poor attitude to work. These demoralize the dedicated ones, consequently productivity falls.

Managerial Factors: as previously stated, that success or failure of an organization depends on the management. An unproductive and indiscipline supervisor can hardly motivates employees. Many managers are lacking in the elementary principle of organizational behaviour for the fact that some were technicians, company secretaries and lawyers, a majority are high school graduates who do not know how to identify employee's goal and link them with organizational rewards in order to motivate the employees.

Some employees do not know what rewards are available or the means (path) to achieve those rewards. Many managers do not appreciate the importance of performance evaluation and feedback, thus employees get frustrated and productivity suffers.

It was also observed that the manager's attitude to work, his quest for excellence and his continued expectation of higher standard of excellence influence the performance of his subordinates. It was also observed that managers that accept low quality mediocre performance or appear to rationalize for employees where quality work is required, is directly encouraging standard performance.

Technology: As used here involve the use ideas, techniques, innovation, methods and materials to achieve results. In Nigeria, the lack of proper information to help entrepreneurs select the appropriate technology is one of the major causes of low productivity. Increased productivity results from a lot of factors which include improving working conditions and taking boredom out of routine tasks. Similarly, it depends upon the attitude of workers towards their work.

In summary, maximizing productivity requires consistent, active management. Ignoring employee efforts breeds professional resentment. Leaving undisciplined behavior uncorrected demoralizes dedicated staff, while failing to provide proper technological and strategic tools artificially limits an organization's output.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, leaders are indeed an indispensable tool in an organization. The survival of every organization depends on the way the leaders conduct themselves. If leaders integrate employees and organizational goals, it will improve the relationship between the management and their subordinates, thus, leading to achieving their desired productivity. The success of an organization depends largely on the degree or level to which the leaders are able to create a good organizational climate that will make employees participate with great enthusiasm towards the attainment of the organizational goals.

Ultimately, effective leadership serves as the lifeblood of the enterprise. Without dynamic, situational direction, the efficient coordination of human capital, financial assets, raw materials, and mechanical infrastructure remains impossible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are provided to improve organizational efficiency and goal attainment:

- Recognizing the fact that leadership is an indispensable tool in organization and as such, leaders should always try to influence and motivates their subordinates for the survival of the organization.
- For sustainable productivity, management must align corporate goals with individual employee needs. When staff see that their professional welfare is tied to institutional success, their output rises naturally.
- Management should know that there is no one best leadership style in all situations when solving a problem, therefore, adopting a particular leadership style should depend on the problem at hand, the analysis of the situation and the way the leaders perceive the situations as at that time.
- To foster a good relationship between the employee's and the employers in the organization, leaders should try to operate the leadership style that gives room for employee's participation in decision making. This will give the employees sense of belonging which gives them enthusiasm towards the achievement of the organizational goals.

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