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Leadership As an Effective Means in Management Activities

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issues of effective leadership in different organizations. The authors describe and analyze the elements of situational leadership and consider the relationship between personal characteristics of a person and his leadership abilities. Illustrative examples of leadership qualities in different historical persons are given.

Keywords:

Leadership, effective leadership, situational leadership, management, manager.

**«The art of leadership cannot be taught,
it can only be learned.
(Harold Jenin)**

What makes a person an effective leader? This question has long been of interest to scientists. One of the best known and simplest answers is provided by the theory of great men. Its supporters can be found among historians, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists. Great person theory (great person theory) argues that a person who has a certain set of personality traits will be a good leader, regardless of the nature of the situation in which he is. The absolute embodiment of great person theory is the concept of a charismatic

leader, who is worshipped by others (from the Greek charisma - a gift, the grace of God, the grace of the gods).

If this theory is true, then there must be some key personality traits that make a person a great leader and an outstanding leader[3]. What are they: high intelligence, charisma (charm), sociability, courage? Or a combination of both? Which is better: to be an extrovert or an introvert? Should a ruler be absolutely ruthless, as Niccolo Machiavelli suggested in 1513 in his famous treatise "The Sovereign"?

Or are the best leaders the most moral people? Or maybe the great Lao Tzu, who wrote two thousand years ago: "The land is ruled by justice, war is waged by cunning. Or the main thing is not the personality of the leader, but the social characteristics of the environment in which it was formed: family composition, education, previous occupations?"

Psychologists, concerned about this issue, have conducted many special studies. Today their number is already measured in hundreds. And what is it? Almost nothing! Some rather weak correlations can indeed be found. But in general we can say that there are no strong correlations. Surprisingly, it turns out that very few personality traits are directly related to leadership effectiveness, and the interdependence found is usually quite weak.

Here are some of the correlations found between individual personality traits and leadership:

1. Leaders usually have a little more intelligence than their "flock". But not by much. The aspirant to leadership must never be separated from the average intellectual level of his followers. The "overly intelligent" are inevitably rejected by the crowd. They are terribly distant from the people... A highbrow intellectual may take the place of a close aide, a sage, a secret advisor to the leader, or, at best, a gray cardinal. But the "way to the throne" is most often blocked for him. Alas.

2. Power Motivation. Many leaders are driven by a strong desire for power. They have a strong concentration on their own person, a concern for prestige, ambition, and an excess of energy. These leaders tend to be more socially prepared, flexible, and adaptable. Ambition and the ability to intrigue help them to stay "afloat" for a long time. But for them there is a problem of effectiveness. For example, Boris Yeltsin is usually seen as a leader with an extremely strong desire for power. He managed to rule Russia for almost 10 years. However, the question of whether he was an effective leader for the country remains open [2].

3. A study of historical records showed that among 600 famous monarchs, the most famous ones were either very moral or extremely immoral. Hence one can assume that

there are two ways to become famous: one must either be a model of morality and virtue or have Machiavelli's unscrupulousness[6].

4. Simonton, an American psychologist, collected information on 100 personality traits of all U.S. presidents. These included the characteristics of the families they grew up in, their education, previous occupations and personality traits themselves. Only three of these variables - height, family size and number of books published by the president before he took office - correlated with the president's performance in office (as measured by historians' estimates). Simonton found that U.S. presidents who grew up in small families were more likely to go down in history as great political figures. For example, Franklin Roosevelt, considered one of America's most distinguished presidents, was an only child. The other 97 characteristics, including personality traits, according to this study, have nothing to do with a person's effectiveness as a leader at all.

5. There is a small positive correlation between a person's height and the probability that he or she will become the leader of the group. Thus, almost all elections in the United States have been won by a taller candidate, with only two exceptions: Richard Nixon's victory over George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter's victory over Gerald Ford in 1976. In 1992, Bill Clinton was four inches (10 cm) taller than George W. Bush. In 1996, he was only half an inch (about 1.5 cm) taller than Robert Dole. Once in the White House, tall presidents are more likely to become notable historical figures[3]. It could be argued that a tall man has a slightly better chance of becoming a leader. However, we should not forget that the greatest leaders were Napoleon, Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, and many others who could not boast of being tall.

6. Ironically, there is very little evidence that traits such as charisma (charm), courage, dominance or self-confidence are indicators of a person's effectiveness as a leader.

7. So, some modest correlation between personal characteristics and leadership abilities can be found. But in general it is very difficult to predict how good a leader a person

will be based on his personality traits alone. Therefore, over time, researchers have tended to believe that it is not enough to look at personality traits alone. One must also consider the situation in which these traits manifest themselves. This does not mean that personality traits do not affect the chances of becoming a leader at all. It is simply that one must consider both the person's personality as well as the nature of the situation in which he or she has to play a leadership role. According to this view, one does not need to be a "great person" to be an effective leader. Rather, one must be the right person in the right place at the right time [4].

A leader cannot be a leader always and everywhere. He can demonstrate his leadership qualities only in the right situation. For example, a business leader can be very successful in some situations and fail in others. Consider the example of Steve Jobs, who at the age of 21 founded the legendary company "Apple Computers" with Stephan Wozniak. The eccentric Jobs was the least like a traditional corporate executive. He had been raised in the counterculture of the 1960s, and he turned to computers after a lifetime of LSD, a trip to India, and life in a commune. In those days, when there were still no personal computers, Jobs' unusual style was just what was needed to create a new industry. Within five years, he had become the leader of a multibillion-dollar corporation. It turned out, however, that Jobs' unorthodox manner was ill-suited to the delicate and complex business of running a large corporation in a competitive marketplace. Apple began to suffer losses, losing out in competition with its competitors. In 1985 Jobs was forced out of the business under the pressure of John Scully, a man Jobs himself had once invited to run his firm. Interestingly, a few years later, Apple was taken over again by Steve Jobs[8]. This happened when the company was faced with the need to make a technological breakthrough: to qualitatively improve the operating system of its Macintoshes, to restore the trust of customers and the former position on the market.

You have probably already realized that a corporate leader who wants to remain effective

for a long time must be able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and flexibly vary his behavior. Not everyone succeeds. Very few do. Much more often the manager gets hung up on one style of behavior, which, for example, was effective in the days of formation of the company, but is completely unsuitable for the period of intense growth and retention of the positions won. As a result the firm eventually loses the ability to compete on the market. Another typical example is the sad fate of the legendary John Ackers, IBM's CEO, who was infamously fired from the corporation in 1993, after years of a bright and successful career. Having made IBM the flagship of the computer industry in the 1980s, Ackers found himself unable to cope with the rapid technological changes that had gripped the computer industry since the early 1990s. It is no coincidence that in today's Western HighTech business, it is rare for top management to rest safely in their chairs for more than five years. Periodic "changing of the guard" allows corporations to remain dynamic and adequately navigate the rapidly changing world.

There are several leadership theories that focus simultaneously on the personal qualities of the leader and on the situation in which he or she acts. The most famous one is the contingency theory of leadership by Fred Fiedler. The situational theory of leadership states that the effectiveness of a leader depends both on how task- or relationship-oriented the leader is and to what extent the leader controls the group and exercises his influence on it. Fiedler's assumption is that leaders can be divided into two broad types. Representatives of the first are mainly task-oriented, the second - relationship-oriented. The task-oriented leader is more concerned with getting the job done right. He is not interested in the relationships and feelings of the workers. Potential advantages of this style are speed of decision making, subordinate to a common goal, and stern control over subordinates. A relationship-oriented leader is primarily interested in the feelings and relationships that arise among workers. He seeks to improve work efficiency by improving

human relations: encourages mutual assistance, allows subordinates to participate in making important decisions, takes into account the moods and needs of workers, etc. Of course, it was later found that the style of some managers can be both work-oriented and person-oriented at the same time.

Fiedler argued that neither of these two types of leader is more effective than the other. It all depends on the circumstances and on the nature of the situation, namely how much control the leader has and how much influence he has among the group members. This is the cornerstone of his situational theory. In a "high control" situation the leader has excellent interpersonal relations with his subordinates, his position in the group is unquestioningly recognized as influential and commanding, and the work the group does is well structured and clearly defined. In a "low control" situation, the opposite is true - the leader has a poor relationship with his subordinates, and the work to be done by the group is not clearly defined.

Task-oriented leaders are most effective in situations with either very high or very low control. In the case of very high control, people are happy and content, everything runs smoothly, and there is no need to worry about the feelings of subordinates or their relationships. This is the case when "the leader has a big cudgel in his hands, but everyone loves it" . This is where the leader, who concentrates only on the task at hand, gets the best results. When control of the situation is very low, the task-oriented leader is better at organizing the situation. Using his authority, he can bring at least some order to a confused and uncertain work environment through orders and disciplinary action. This is a case of direct coercion: "Nobody likes a big cudgel in the hands of the head, but everybody obeys it". However, it must be kept in mind that task orientation and dictatorship (or insulting subordinates) are not the same thing [7].

In medium-control situations, relationship-oriented leaders are the most effective. In this case all the cogs of the working mechanism turn quite smoothly, but still it is necessary to pay some attention to

"malfunctions" arising from bad relationships and hurt feelings. A leader who is able to smooth over these rough edges acts most successfully in such a situation. Situational theory has been tested on numerous groups of leaders, from the presidents of multinational corporations to army commanders. The results of all these studies tend to be consistent with Fiedler's assumptions.

When we discussed the characteristics of task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders, did that remind you of anything? Be honest: didn't it seem to you that male leaders were more task-oriented and female leaders were more relationship-oriented? If so, you are not alone: gender (i.e. gender-role) stereotypes regarding the leadership style of men and women are very widespread. It is believed that women think more about the feelings of their employees, have better communication skills and are therefore more relationship-oriented. Men are often seen as rigid, authoritarian, Machiavellian leaders who do not pay much attention to the feelings of their subordinates and are much less concerned about their relationships.

Psychologists have studied hundreds of scientific studies in search of an answer to the question of how women's leadership style differs from men's leadership style. They found that indeed, as is commonly believed, women tend to practice a more democratic leadership style than men. Perhaps this is because women have better communication skills. This allows them to use the abilities of group members when making decisions and, if necessary, politely reject their advice [4].

Does this mean that women are better leaders than men? As we can surmise from situational leadership theory, it depends on the nature of the situation. Women tend to be the best leaders (both in objective performance and in peer evaluations) in areas where communication skills are particularly important, such as education. Men tend to be more successful leaders where the ability to decisively give orders and exercise control is required, such as in the military.

Before drawing far-reaching conclusions from these data, we must consider some

additional factors. First, the differences found are not that great. There are many women quite capable of adopting a "masculine" (male) leadership style, especially if the nature of the work requires it. And there are many men who have no less communication skills than women. In addition, any research on leadership effectiveness raises the following problem: Do the data collected really reflect differences or only common stereotypes about leadership? If, for example, a woman is characterized as a less effective leader than a man, is it because she really is the worst leader or because her coworkers use a different scale to evaluate her actions?

Old wisdom says that because of gender discrimination, a woman must be "twice as good as a man" in order to succeed. Unfortunately, differences in the evaluation of male and female leaders do in fact exist. If a woman practices a stereotypical "masculine" leadership style, if she is a typical "boss" and task-oriented, she is evaluated more negatively than a male leader with the same style. This is especially pronounced when evaluations are made by men. Psychologists Dore Butler and Florence Geis (Butler & Geis) asked their female and male assistants to play a leadership role in a group of students discussing a business problem[4]. The leaders, both male and female, were assertive but friendly and took the discussion firmly into their own hands. How did the rest of the group respond to such a leader? The results were disappointing for the women. When a man asserted himself as the leader of the group and acted assertively, the other group members reacted favorably. When a woman acted in this way, the group members, especially the men, reacted much more negatively. It turns out that men feel very uncomfortable if a woman uses the same leadership style that men usually allow themselves.

The terms "leader" and "manager" are similar in meaning, so they are often used synonymously. But they are not identical. Leadership is a psychological phenomenon, while leadership is purely managerial. A leader spontaneously occupies a dominant position in a group with the explicit or implicit consent of

the majority of its members. His influence and authority are mostly informal [3]. A leader is a formal boss holding a formal position. Therefore, the actual leader of a group is not always its official leader and vice versa.

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