Role of Cultural and Status Factors In Leadership Style and Organizational Effectiveness - An Overview

Mishra, G.P. & Mishra, K.L.
Birla Institute of Technology Mesra International Center Muscat
Corresponding Auther: Mishra, G.P

ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the literature review on role of cultural and status factors in Leadership style and organizational effectiveness. Some of the authors views have been expressed in this paper.*

I   LEADERSHIP STYLES AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Lewin, Lippitt and White (1943) found that the Leadership style gets affected by the cultural factors and is also an important factor for organizational effectiveness. Their findings had a cultural context as they were of the view that the basic cultural assumption in a democratic society and in democratic Leadership is desirable Lewin, Lippitt and White (1943). Considering these reasons, Meade applied the Lippitt and White's working in India. Meade (1967) found that the groups of ten year old boys and girls working under democratic Leadership recorded a higher degree of absenteeism and required more time to finish their work than the groups under authoritarian Leadership. Meade (1967) further found that the latter recorded better quality work, more group attraction and a stronger preference for the Leader. Meade's (1967) findings highlights that the work is done only under the influence of external pressure from the top, but again since the research was conducted on the group of boys and girls who are nor mature, the reasons are well understood, again the same may or may not be true when the sample taken are employees. Ganguli (1964) also confirmed that Indian workers and managers do not dislike autocratic leaders unless they are incompetent and fail to discharge their duties. Kakar (1971) investigated rather extensively the authority patterns in Indian society and found that the main source and the legitimacy of authority was traditional – moral which occurred in eighty four percent of the cases. Kakar (1971) further found that the image of the superior in all the cases was that of an autocrat and there was not a single case in which a superior had been depicted as permissive and relatively equalitarian. In an experiment of five cultures namely Rhodesia, Arabia, Northern India, Hong – Kong and Brazil, Meade and Whittaker (1967) found that Indians and Rhodesians taken together were more authoritarian than all other cultures tested and that the mean scores were significantly lower for Americans than for any other group. Meade and Whittaker (1967) found that the status inhibits information exchange and accurate evaluation of ideas among the members and Low – status members are usually reluctant to criticize or disagree with high – status members. More over, the ideas and opinions of high – status members exercise more influence and tend to be evaluated more favorably, even when the basis of their status is irrelevant to the decision problem Meade and Whittaker (1967). Harvey (1953) conducted an experimental study of status differentials in informal groups at the University of Oklahoma which consisted of individuals from professional families and the other six experimental cliques came from families of unskilled laborers, living in an inter – ethnic slum neighborhood of a large city. According to Harvey (1953) from the results of the experiment, the following conclusions were reached- (a) The higher the group status of a given individual, the greater the tendency of other group members to over – rate his performance (b) The higher one's status in the group, the greater the tendency to overestimate his own future performance on a given task. (c) The correlation between the extent of over estimation of performance on a given task and status in the group was higher for individuals from slum areas of a large city than for those from a higher socio – economic background. This was taken as suggestive of greater solidarity among the cliques from the slum areas.

In the research conducted by Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966), they found that the satisfaction of the people can be found in the roots of the system and that Indian Managers had "Security needs" on the top priority. Implementing Maslow's need hierarchy, Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) compared the need satisfaction of over three thousand six hundred managers from one hundred and fourteen countries including one hundred and fourteen managers from India and found that for the Indian managers, the order was as- the satisfied needs are security, esteem, social, autonomy and self – actualization. Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) found that the Scandinavian countries had highest need satisfaction in "autonomy" and "self – actualization" and in the esteem needs area, Argentina and Sweden were the highest and the lowest were India, United States,

England and Denmark. Thus the broad finding that came out was first, influence of the levels of industrialization and secondly was the existence of recognizable cultural values Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966). The similar results were obtained by Clark and Mccabe (1972). They found that the Australian managers had a little lower on self – actualization, somewhat higher on autonomy and markedly higher positions on security Clark and Mccabe (1972). Similarly Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) found that self – actualization and need for autonomy were under least satisfied criteria.

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