

Inclusive and Authentic Leadership Theory and Practice Reflection

Posted on December 17, 2024

Introduction

In today's ever-changing work environment, guidance is pivotal in directing folks, teams, and companies toward achievement. Direction may be described as the artwork of influencing and inspiring others to accomplish mutual goals, incorporating the flexibility to communicate, inspire, and produce strategic selections successfully. Its importance at the workplace is undeniable, with several vital facets highlighting its importance. Management cultivates the way by placing clear aims and visions, enabling employees to align their initiatives and work cooperatively towards shared dreams. Additionally, it promotes helpful teamwork and collaboration, facilitating the harnessing of diverse abilities and perspectives toward innovative problem-solving. In the context of this mission, the focus is on examining leadership events in the workplace, aligning with the learning aims of critically evaluating leader theories to enhance adaptive leader-member relationships and applying these leadership skills to real-world difficulties. This analysis will shed light on the multifaceted part of management in addressing workplace issues and driving sustainable success.

Module 1 Events: Leadership Challenges

Event 1: Path-Goal Leadership Issue

Path-goal leadership theory, rooted in organizational study, highlights a supervisor's duty in elucidating routes to accomplishing aims for their personnel (House,1971. p.321). This belief proposes that capable leaders modify their management design, relying on the needs and qualities of their followers, attempting to remove obstacles, provide direction, and offer rewards that align with personal and team goals (House,1971. p.322). By managing uncertainties and improving the work environment, guidance leaders increase motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance, eventually fostering a more goal-oriented and fruitful team.

In the workplace, I observed a leadership problem developed during an important project that demanded high cooperation and new ideas from the group (Northouse,2021). However, our project head appeared to adopt a rigidly commanding approach, offering little assistance to achieve the aims and little flexibility to adapt to difficulties. This lack of clarity about the path to succeeding puzzled individuals in the team, who were uncertain about the best strategy and what the manager anticipated. As a result, motivation and participation noticeably declined, and the team's performance

started to worsen. The scenario highlighted the importance of a leader's role in providing apparent guidance and removing obstacles to make sure team members are empowered to effectively navigate the path to succeeding.

Facing this particular experience broke down the core of my preset notions about authoritative direction. Previously, I securely accepted the conviction that flourishing authority necessitated an inherently adaptable and participatory manner. In my apprehension, a head's role was to build an environment nourishing available conversation and collaborative problem-resolving (Northouse,2021). This approach aimed to empower singular team individuals, recognizing their exceptional strengths and perspectives as worthwhile assets in facing challenges collectively. However, the stark comparison between this idea and the seen path-goal authority approach brought about a profound reassessment of my viewpoint.

The realization emerged that leading others, far from being a one-size-fits-all idea, thrives when flexible. The intricacies of diverse situations and teams demand varying strategies for guidance. Providing clearer instruction and more explicit structuring of tasks through directive path-goal leadership may have its place where needed. This recognition highlighted the complexity of leadership, emphasizing cultivating a versatile collection of approaches to use prudently. As a result, an appreciation of leadership was compelled to become more nuanced, one that champions adaptability and awareness of circumstances, ultimately reshaping earlier convictions into a more complete grasp of leadership's multifaceted nature.

In pursuit of addressing the leadership matters on the path and goals in this case, a practical choice could have been for the project manager to pivot towards a more participating and encouraging leadership style (Saide et al.,2019. p.560). This would involve actively involving members of the team and facilitating channels of communication that are transparent and open (McShane et al.,2018). By taking such an approach, the manager could foster a setting where the group feels comfortable openly exchanging their thoughts, worries, and queries. For example, regular team meetings could be organized where each member is urged to contribute their understanding and discuss potential solutions collectively.

Moreover, the individual overseeing the work could have acted to clarify expectations and aims. This would involve establishing clear goals for progress, detailing the project's checkpoints, and determining specific duties within the group. Such clarity would provide a map for individuals and decrease uncertainty, enabling everybody to correctly coordinate their work. Furthermore, recognizing and crediting separate efforts is most important (Saide et al.,2019. p.563). The lead could have consciously acknowledged crew associates' work, underlining their talents and territories of skill. By doing so, crew partners would feel significant and inspired to willingly participate, realizing their attempts are fundamental to the project's achievement.

This experience prompted an examination of leadership theories applicable to addressing challenges. The path-goal theory itself, as well as transformational leadership perspectives, became

considerations of importance (Rana et al.,2019. p.140). From this event, learning goals emerged, focused on comprehending the nuances of different leadership manners and adjusting them to altering circumstances. These goals are prepared to guide upcoming actions by emphasizing the significance of clear communication, empowerment, and adaptability in leadership. By embracing these goals, my approach to leadership will be transformed, leading to more effective problem-addressing and a flexible leadership style tailored to the precise demands of each scenario.

Leader Behaviour Taxonomy

The Leader Behaviour Classification refers to an arrangement system that groups management behaviours based on noticeable deeds and interactions shown by leaders. According to Kolb and Kolb (2009), this categorization aims to build an organized means of understanding and analysing diverse management styles and deeds.

Situation Description

The issue regarding leadership approaches emerged from a significant project meant to create a brand-new product for a fiercely competitive market. The director's main displays of work-focused behaviours became noticeably clear in this situation. The director's strategy focused on establishing well-outlined objectives, separating specific duties, and carefully tracking the team's advancement. This style, rooted in wanting to boost efficiency and maintain rigid quality benchmarks, inadvertently caused unintended effects. The excessive emphasis on work-focused behaviours inadvertently created an environment with restricted open communication and involvement opportunities (Northouse,2021). As a direct result, members found themselves navigating a limited area where their participation seemed confined to the roles and duties appointed to them. This limitation curtailed their willingness to add innovative ideas that extended outside their designated responsibilities.

Challenge to Prior Beliefs

This encounter starkly challenged my preconceived idea that effective leadership is predominantly based on a job-focused method aimed only at completing duties and operational efficiency. My past understanding embraced the notion that effective leadership inherently involves a balanced mix of job-centered actions and relationship-focused gestures, including cultivating open communication and encouraging team members' development (Zulu& Khosrowshahi,2021. p.566). However, this situation was a powerful revelation that excessive concentration on job-focused behaviors can inadvertently limit team creativity, suppress cooperative dynamics, and, most significantly, obstruct fertile ground for pioneering solutions. The experience illuminated the reality that an unbalanced emphasis on job-focused leadership can hinder exploring innovative ways, underscoring that a well-rounded leadership style is key for harnessing the full spectrum of team potential and yielding transformative outcomes.

Possible Actions and Solutions

A creative method of addressing the leadership style taxonomy endeavor could involve the head embracing a well-balanced technique that naturally weaves duties-focused behaviours with relationship-centered ones (Kolb and Kolb 2009). By cultivating an environment of open communication, the head could proactively request input from team individuals during undertaking conversations and choice-making processes. This inclusion would empower team individuals to contribute their diverse viewpoints, building a setting where their insights are valued and respected. For example, the head could encourage brainstorming sessions where every team individual can share their ideas, regardless of how distant they may initially appear (Zulu& Khosrowshahi,2021.p.570). By actively paying attention and demonstrating an authentic appreciation for contrasting perspectives, the head could inspire team individuals to engage more profoundly in the project's difficulties, potentially uncovering groundbreaking solutions that may have otherwise stayed obscured.

In addition to promoting discussion, regularly organizing events for the group to do things together could be very helpful in strengthening the feeling of friendship among members of the team. Activities for the whole team to work on, like workshops, collaborative problem-solving exercises, or outings together, could help relationships grow beyond just the tasks of projects. Making a consistent effort to reinforce bonds between people would contribute to a more cohesive and united team, creating an environment where mutual respect and trust thrive. Such a change toward behaviors centered around relationships would effectively mitigate the earlier struggles caused by focusing too much on just getting the work done (Bengtsson et al.,2019. p.400). The new atmosphere of inclusion and openness would encourage team members to offer their creative ideas without fear they may be quickly dismissed, leading to enriched collaboration and potentially groundbreaking solutions that use the team's diverse skills and knowledge.

Learning Objectives and Future Action Plan

The meeting with the top officials on leadership styles has highlighted the relevance of theories such as Transformational Guidance and Servant Administration (Northouse, 2021). From this occasion, the goals for learning have taken shape, emphasizing the importance of balancing job-oriented and relationship-oriented actions within the administration. Understanding this equilibrium's potential to nourish team innovation and encourage elevated participation is central to advancing. Moving onward, I am committed to embodying a more comprehensive administrative approach that combines the efficiency-driven aspects of task management with the human-centered nature of relationship building (Bengtsson et al.,2019. p.403). The transformative impact of this experience is evident in my renewed dedication to cultivating an inclusive environment where team members are empowered to contribute their insights, inevitably amplifying problem-solving abilities and fostering a culture of enriched collaboration.

Module 2 Events: Leader-Member Relationships and Authentic Leadership

Event 1: Leader-Member Exchange Issue

A Leader-Member Engagement (LME) issue relates to scenarios where a director develops preferential bonds with a subset of team individuals, generating unequal trades of notice, assets, and developmental changes. Thus according to (Cropanzano et al., 2017. p.233) this can cause a divide within the team, influencing spirit and hindering the team's overall performance. The leader-member engagement issue became clear when a new overseer joined our group. This chief appeared to establish strong connections and exchanges with just a few team individuals, forming an "in-group," while the rest felt excluded, forming an "out-group." This uneven circulation of notice and chances resulted in disparities in access to information, assets, and developmental chances, which impacted team cohesion and overall spirit.

This encounter immediately disputed my view that those in control prioritize balanced relationships across all group members. My presumption was founded on the notion that leaders are devoted to cultivating an inclusive environment where each individual has equal chances to contribute and grow. However, the obvious exchange difference between our new overseer and a select few team members contradicted this belief, highlighting the intricate nature of leader-member dynamics (Cropanzano et al., 2017. p.245). This contradiction prompted a realization that leader-member relationships can unintentionally give rise to uneven treatment, demonstrating the potential for unintentional favouritism and underscoring the multifaceted nature of leadership interactions.

To address the leader-member exchange difficulty, an efficient solution may involve utilizing an inclusive tactic by the supervisor. For example, the supervisor may start a routine of shifting team individuals through various jobs and initiatives, ensuring each person can engage carefully with the leader. According to Cropanzano et al. (2017. p.247) strategy advances fairness by diversifying communications and avoiding the development of exclusive inside gatherings, nurturing a culture where every team member feels respected.

Instead of occasionally sharing updates individually, establishing steady discussions where the whole team talks maintain consistency. Freely exchanging recent events, conclusions, and realizations during gatherings removes uneven access to information. By describing these actions to foster a sense of oneness and fairness among the group, the head can relieve potential anger or exclusion (Martin et al., 2016. p.86). For example, suppose a supervisor transparently communicates that rotating responsibilities aim to provide everybody with equal chances to contribute and study. In that case, members are more likely to see the habit as impartial and supportive of their progress.

This occurrence aligns with the principles highlighted in the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory,

which stresses the significance of positive relations between leaders and members for a team's effectiveness (Martin et al., 2016, p.87). One lesson extracted from this instance is to enhance my comprehension of the subtleties of LMX theory and its implications on team dynamics. Progressing forward, I aim to proactively cultivate an environment of inclusion, valuing each member's contributions and providing equal development opportunities. This shift in approach stems from realizing that authentic leadership involves constructing connections beyond individual preferences, and it will guide my future interactions with associates, promoting an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual assistance.

Event 2: Authentic Leadership Issue

A real leadership concern develops when the habits and activities of someone guiding deviate from the rules of accessibility, straightforwardness, and genuineness that characterize real leadership (Schwartz, 2021). This mismatch can cause a breakdown in trust and believability inside the group as the pioneer's genuineness and solidarity are inspected. The real leadership worry emerged when a senior individual inside our association looked in the face of an emergency. Rather than sincerely managing the circumstance with straightforwardness and authenticity, the overseer picked to downplay the issue and keep up a facade of unwavering certainty. This created a detachment between the director's outer conduct and the reality of the circumstance, leaving the group feeling anxious and examining the director's genuineness.

This event directly opposed my earlier perspective of authentic leadership as a path that respects transparency, honesty, and harmony between a manager's actions and principles. I had, ahead of time, thought that real leaders would directly handle troubles, acknowledge weaknesses, and give sincere understanding (Schwartz, 2021). Seeing this lack of matching between the director's behaviours and the policies of authentic leadership drove me to realize that true leadership can be jeopardized when chiefs' priority looks over candid interaction.

According to Schwartz (2021) to solve the authentic leadership issues the leader would have considered being honest and have clear ways of doing things. Recognizing the presence of the emergency and openly expressing the strategies employed to address it would have been pivotal in building a sense of trust and security within the group. Furthermore, starting open discussions centered around personal feelings and worries could make the leader seem human, fostering an environment where group members perceive the leader as approachable and caring. This level of authenticity in communication would align with the principles of true leadership and cultivate a strong foundation of trust and rapport, enabling the group to weather challenges with confidence.

By selecting these choices, the leader would have shown a powerful dedication to the basic beliefs of genuine leadership (Kight, 2022). Choosing this path would not merely guarantee visibility and liability but also function as an example for the party, promoting an organizational culture characterized by sincere and truthful interaction. Ultimately, this strategy would establish a

framework of trust and understanding that reinforces the party's strength against difficulties, changing the view of leadership and facilitating the communal pursuit of mutual goals.

This journey has brought me closer to real leadership, focusing on self-knowledge, clarity, and moral actions. My goal now is enhancing how I understand true direction and seeing why it's key to building trust and keeping respect. I plan to use this insight when solving problems, putting open talk and clarity first even in tough times. That way, I aim to create an environment of honesty and authenticity, allowing leadership to work with what people expect and what's important to them.

Conclusion

The exploration of different leadership situation in working environment highlighted in module 1 and 2 provides a profound insight on matters regarding dynamics that leads to powerful management in working environment. Through path-goal leadership issues and head behavior taxonomies, the boundaries of conventional management beliefs have been tested, ushering in a realization that adaptability and context sensitivity are essential. Similarly, examining leader-member exchange issues and authentic leadership predicaments has underscored the need for equitable relationships and transparent, authentic communication. These experiences collectively emphasize that management is a multifaceted journey, demanding a nuanced grasp of theories, behaviours, and the transformative potential of proactive leadership actions. This reflective analysis bridges theoretical concepts and practical application, shaping a future approach to management that seeks to foster inclusivity, trust, and authenticity, driving positive change across varied national and international contexts.

Bibliography

Bengtsson, P., Ledin, K. and Ärlemalm, T., 2019. What do they do? a taxonomy of team leader interventions in various meeting scenarios. In *Advances in Human Factors, Business Management and Society: Proceedings of the AHFE 2018 International Conference on Human Factors, Business Management and Society, July 21-25, 2018, Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida, USA 9* (pp. 399-404). Springer International Publishing.

Cropanzano, R., Dasborough, M. T., & Weiss, H. M. (2017). Affective events and the development of leader-member exchange. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), 233-258.

House, R.J., 1971. A path goal theory of leader effectiveness. *Administrative science quarterly*, pp.321-339.

Kight, D. (2022). *Council Post: The Five Qualities Of Authentic Leadership*. [online] Forbes. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2022/09/08/the-five-qualities-of-authentic-leaders>

hip/.

Kolb, A.Y. and Kolb, D.A., 2009. Experiential learning theory: A dynamic, holistic approach to management learning, education and development. *The SAGE handbook of management learning, education and development*, 7, p.42.

Martin, R., Guillaume, Y., Thomas, G., Lee, A. and Epitropaki, O., 2016. Leader-member exchange (LMX) and performance: A meta-analytic review. *Personnel psychology*, 69(1), pp.67-121.

McShane, S., Olekalns, M., Newman, A. and Martin, A., 2018. *Organisational behaviour*. University Of Tasmania.

Northouse, P.G., 2021. *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Sage publications.

Rana, R., K'Aol, G. and Kirubi, M., 2019. Influence of directive and achievement oriented path-goal leadership styles on employee performance of coffee trading companies in Kenya. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478), 8(6), pp.137-147.

Saide, S., Indrajit, R.E., Trialih, R., Ramadhani, S. and Najamuddin, N., 2019. A theoretical and empirical validation of information technology and path-goal leadership on knowledge creation in university: Leaders support and social media trend. *Journal of science and technology policy management*, 10(3), pp.551-568.

Schwartz, S.H., 2021. A repository of Schwartz value scales with instructions and an introduction. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(2), p.9.

Zulu, S. L., & Khosrowshahi, F. (2021). A taxonomy of digital leadership in the construction industry. *Construction Management and Economics*, 39(7), 565-578.